

B_C BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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

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: <http://bcfo.ca/>

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COVER STORY

Rock Ptarmigan (Lagopus muta) female
Photo by Peter Candido

This image was made on June 1, 2011 north of Stewart BC during a trip to carry out point counts for the BC Breeding Bird Atlas. This bird was one of a pair observed on the snow and boulders by the roadside.

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

AGM AND MORE

Planning for our Spring AGM, May 10, 11 and 12th, is well underway. The Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney will be our base of operations. Thanks to Wayne Diakow we're booked in, the food arrangements are all in hand, and the good weather has been ordered. Jude, Art and I are working on the Extension Trip, but will wait until we've got everything finalized before confirming the details. Stay tuned. Similarly the conference weekend field trips are in the planning stage. The theme for our Saturday afternoon presentations is *The Salish Sea – Birds and Conservation*. (See conference schedule, p.9, and also pps. 38 and 40. As part of the AGM Saturday afternoon activities, all members in attendance will get to review the Future Directions Committee report (see December 2012 President's Message). The Board believes that members should have a direct say in the future of the organization. Your response to the report, and your thoughts about BCFO's future will be part of a conversation we'll have on May 11th.

Our program of Two-Day Field Trips for members continues to thrive, and you'll see that we have a full slate of four excellent trips for 2013. Check them out in this issue of *BC Birding*. (See p.10.)

The new BCFO website continues to be of interest and value to members, and to the wider birding community. Our first run at providing "As They Come In" results from this season's Christmas Bird Counts drew around 200 views daily over the two week count period. Our biggest draw to the website has been our new 'Featured Photographer' page, which attracted around 600 views on each of the days we published a new showcase. Don't miss our current feature of Peter Candido's excellent photographs. Thanks to Carlo Giovanella for getting this going.

Spring is just starting, our early migrants are showing up, and our resident breeding birds are starting to sing. We all know now that bird song is a complex phenomenon, it has captured people's imaginations for millennia. It's time to enjoy the annual songfest in earnest.

A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.

Chinese Proverb

See you at the AGM.

George Clulow,
President



Marsh Wren
MH

TREASURER'S MESSAGE

"Thank You, Donors!

Your Board of Directors thanks heartily the members who made a record total of 30 donations to their organisation in 2012, amounting to a record total of \$1,039.46. When annual membership dues are only \$7,000 approximately, this is a very significant source of funding that your Board particularly wishes to encourage in order to maintain its financial viability and to undertake new initiatives.

We welcome new and continuing donors, of big or small amounts. Official receipts are issued for tax purposes."

Mike Fung
Treasurer



Black Oystercatchers by John Sprague

EDITORS' NOTES

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2013. It's a bulky issue (40 p.) because we have Lister's Corner (thank you Larry), several interesting articles, notices about our upcoming Annual Meeting, and details for this year's four Two-day Field Trips. With regard to the Annual Meeting, you will find the essential information in this issue, but details about speakers and field trips are still being confirmed. Please keep an eye on our website for more information which will be posted as it becomes available, and/or watch for further communications by e-mail. For members without access to the website or e-mail: we will send you an update via Canada Post or telephone. The meeting cost (registration fee) has increased (+\$10) from last year, as a result of the relatively higher costs of renting space and catering in Sidney as compared to Princeton. We also realize – and apologize for – the clash of conference dates with those of the Skagit Bird Blitz. Other schedules already in place made this superposition of events impossible to avoid.

Special thanks to guest photographer Marie O'Shaughnessy of Victoria who generously provided the images that we have used in this issue for advertising the Annual Meeting, see pages 9, 38 and 40.

A big 'thank you' to all who have contributed to this issue. Lee Harding has written a very special ode to chickadees – including dinosaurs – that will provide you with much food for thought; John Vooys provides comparative views of birding in Holland and in British Columbia and, as usual, Adrian Leather writes a very lively account of CBCs in the cold, central interior of our province. President George Clulow, fortunately, found time to write a very exciting account of the discovery of the Red-flanked Bluetail – a little bird so very far from its home in Asia.

Special thanks also to the members who provide regular material for each issue of the newsletter: to Martin McNichol and Wayne Weber for upcoming events; to Martin for the birding news; to our regular, thought-provoking columnist, Clive Keen, (we are still hoping for letters in response to his ideas); to Carlo Giovannella for his humour; to Michael Church (my husband) for the summaries of amazing bird science that he e-mails to me; to Chris Charlesworth for writing and forwarding the rare bird reports for British Columbia, and last but not least, to Jenny Hards for her cartoons.

Enjoy the spring birding,

June Ryder, Editor



Lincoln's Sparrow MH
(in my backyard Dec –Feb)

ERRATUM

We apologize to Skagit County (Washington) birders Gary Bletsch and Jim McCoy for misspelling their names on p.23 ("Big Duck Shoot") of the December 2012 issue of BC Birding.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Chris Charlesworth
 - Kelowna
- Sophia Chu (Jr. member)
 - Richmond
- Wendy Easton
 - Delta
- Brian Murland
 - Quesnel
- Asher Steed
 - Pitt Meadows
- Robyn Worcester
 - Vancouver

A photograph of four young Barn Swallows in a nest. The birds are dark grey with yellow-orange mouths open, as if they are being fed. The nest is made of dark, textured material.

Young Barn Swallows at the Mackenzie Nature Observatory

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 inter-net access, on BIRDNET at www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/ornithol/birdmeet.html.

EVENTS IN 2013:

March 10 – April 21: BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL. NOTE: There will be no “big day” birding this year. Contact: Rhys Harrison for information: rhys.harrison@shaw.ca; and see <http://brantfestival.bc.ca> for details of other events.

Apr. 8-12 - - SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY and NORTHWEST PARTNERS IN AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION, Squamish, B.C. Contact (no person, address, phone number or e-mail indicated): web-sites: <http://www.the.snvb.org/> OR <http://www.nwparc.org/>

Apr. 13-14 - - O.W.L. [ORPHANED WILDLIFE REHABILITATION SOCIETY] OPEN HOUSE, Delta, B.C. Contact: Bev Day, 3800-72nd St., Delta, B.C.; V4K 3N2; phone (604) 946-3171; e-mail: owlrehab@dcnet.com.

Apr. 16 - - BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Ladner, B.C. Contact: sanctuary staff: 5191 Robertson Rd, Delta, B.C., phone (604) 946-6980; e-mail: bcws@reifelbirdsantuary.com; web-site: www.reifelbirdsantuary.com .

May 2-5 - - B.C. NATURE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Abbotsford. Contact [no individual named]: AGM, Box 612, Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 6Z8; phone (604) 853-4283; e-mail: haroos@shaw.ca web-sites: www.bcnature.ca OR www.AbbbyMissionNatureClub.org .

May 10-12 -- 23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE, B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, Sidney, BC. See schedule p.9.

May 10-12 - - SKAGIT VALLEY BIRD BLITZ, Skagit Valley Provincial Park. Contact: no address or phone number yet announced; e-mail: info@hopemountain.org; web-site: www.hopemountain.org.

May 11 - - INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY, numerous locations. Contact: no individual, address, phone number or e-mail given; web-site: http://www.naturecanada.ca/bird_cons_involved_migratory.asp

June 14-16 - - MANNING PARK BIRD BLITZ, Manning Provincial Park. Contact: no address or phone number yet announced; e-mail: info@hopemountain.org; web-site: www.hopemountain.org .

June 18 – 22 - - BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONGRESS, Ottawa, Ont. Contact [no individual, address or phone number yet announced]; e-mail: kmakela@birdscanada.org; web-site: www.birdlife.org/community/2011/09/the-birdlife-world-congress-2013-information/ .

Aug. 13-17 - - 131ST STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION and 83RD ANNUAL MEETING, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Chicago, Illinois. Contact: Peter E. Lowther, The Field Museum, 1400 South Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60605-2496; phone (312) 665-7953; e-mail: plowther@fieldmuseum.org.

Aug. 26-28 - - 5th INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN FLIGHT CONFERENCE, Snowbird, Utah. Contact (no individual, address, phone number or e-mail yet announced); web-site: www.partnersinflight.org/PIF%20V%20-Save%20date%20-%17%Sept%2020.pdf.

Sep. 12-14 - - 2013 WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Sky Islands Bird Observatory, Arizona. Contact: Pat Leitner, 1805 South Ceylon Pl., Tucson, AZ 95748-7602; phone (520) 256-7147; e-mail: pat@pleitnercpa.com; web-site: <http://www.arizonafolklore.com/nature.org>.

Sep. 19-22 - - B.C. NATURE FALL GENERAL MEETING, Cranbrook. Contact: Betty Davison, B.C. Nature, Heritage Centre, 1620 Mount Seymour Rd., North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2R9; phone (604) 985-3057; e-mail: manager@bcnature.ca.

Sep. 24-29 - - 37TH ANNUAL MEETING, WATERBIRD SOCIETY and 2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE, WADER STUDY GROUP, Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Contact: Peter H. Becker, Institut für Vogelforschung, Vogelwarte Helgoland, An der Vogelwarte 21, Wilhelmshaven D-26386, Germany, phone 49-4421-96890, e-mail: peter.becker@ifv-vogelwarte.de; web-site: <http://www.waterbirds.org>.

Oct. 21 – 24 - - 2013 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE with 3RD NEOTROPICAL RAPTOR CONFERENCE and 7TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIRDS OF PREY AND OWLS, Bariloche, Argentina. Contact: Miguel D. Saggese, College of Western Medicine – Western Univ. of Health Sci., Calif.; no phone number indicated; e-mail: msaggese@westernu.edu OR barilocheraptors2013@gmail.com; web-site: <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference>.

EVENTS IN 2014:

July 31-Aug. 5 - - INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BEHAVIORAL ECOLOGY, New York, NY. Contact [no person, address or phone number yet indicated]; e-mail: ISBE2014@gmail.com; web-site: <http://cabi.hunter.cuny.edu/>.

Aug. - - 26TH INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Tokyo, Japan. Contact: Erik Matthysen [exact date, address and phone number not yet announced] e-mail: erik.matthysen@ua.ac.be OR Keisuke Ueda [address and phone number not yet announced] e-mail: keisuke@rikkyo.ac.jp.

Sep. 24-27 - - ANNUAL MEETINGS, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY and SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS, Estes Park, Colorado. Contact details not yet announced.

B.C. BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

Fred Bodsworth

Although Charles Frederick Bodsworth's many contributions to ornithology were based primarily in Ontario, his world-famous novel, "Last of the Curlews," published in 1955 and never to date out of print, made him a global literary figure. Members of Toronto's Brodie Club were informed by e-mail on 10 Sept. 2012 that Fred had been in hospital after a fall for about a month and had been not communicating for several days. On the 16th, we were informed that he had died on the

15th, one month short of his 94th birthday. As the founding Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Baillie Fund, B.C. ornithological research benefitted from his efforts and he contributed directly to nature education in B.C. by writing the Pacific coast contribution in a series of books on Canada's natural history (published by Natural Science of Canada, Ltd., Toronto in 1970). Fred's life-long interest in nature and the conservation of it started at his childhood home at Fort Burwell on Lake Erie, where he long hosted an annual

gathering of Canadian bird-watching novelists for a spring migration visit to Point Pelee. He was a President of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Honorary Director of the Long Point Bird Observatory (since 1970), regular participant in Toronto area Christmas Bird Counts and winter duck counts, and a prominent member of the Brodie Club, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Toronto Field Naturalists, and Toronto Ornithological Club. –based partly on personal field trips and meetings with him and partly on e-mails to Brodie Club members 10 Sept./12 and 16 Sept./13 from Rosemary Addison; Anonymous. 2012. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 21 Sept/12:1 & C. Schultz. *ON Nature* 52(4):5, 2012-13.

Maggie Little

Participation in Christmas Bird Counts and the Qualicum Bay Beached Bird Survey were the most bird-related of numerous more general conservation and nature study activities that earned Maggie Little of the Arrowsmith Naturalists a B.C. Nature Club Service Award at the 2012 Fall General Meeting in Parksville. –based on Anonymous. 2012. *B.C. Nature* 50(4):9.

Rhys Griffiths and Toots Tucker Receive Jubilee Medals

Rhys Griffiths, former President of the Langley Field Naturalists, and Toots Tucker, another leading member of that society were very worthy recipients of Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medals in November 2012. Both contributed numerous efforts to a wide variety of organizations, with bird and conservation projects among the benefactors of their contributions. –based on Anonymous. 2012. *Langley Field Nat. Newsletter* Dec. 2012:3.

John Toochn's CBC Half Century Applauded

A highlight of the 2012 Vancouver Christmas Bird Count dinner was the presentation by Nature Vancouver Birding Section Chair Jude Grass of a special plaque to John Toochn for "over 50 years" of service to the count as one of its area leaders and as a former count compiler. John is also a former chair of the society's birding section. –based on Anonymous. 2013. *Wandering Tattler* 36(5):5.

More of Burns Bog Protected

Decades of efforts by the Burns Bog Conservation Society, Nature B.C. and several other organizations to protect Burns Bog, an important breeding area for Sandhill Cranes and other birds, seem to be meeting with growing success with its recent designation as a Ramsar Site in 2012 (see *B.C. Birding* 22(4):8, 2012), and more recently, the addition of another 400 ha to the Burns Bog Ecological Conservation Area at Delta Council's first 2013 meeting. This brings,

the total protected area to almost 2500 ha. –based on Nicholas Ellan. 2013. *Wandering Tattler* 36(6):5.

Bluetail in New Westminster

Mainland North America's second and Canada's first Red-flanked Bluetail was discovered by Colin McKenzie in New Westminster on 13 January 2013 and confirmed by numerous others the next day. I look forward to reading about confirming details (see p 12), but photos by Peter Candido and Mike Tabak in *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* and *Wandering Tattler* suggests that it will be approved by the Vancouver and B.C. Rare Birds Records Committees when they are finally resurrected. –based on verbal report by Wayne C. Weber during Nature Vancouver's Birding Section Committee meeting of 15 January 2013, "As it Happens" CBC interview of B.C.F.O. President George Clulow about 16 January 2013, Anonymous. 2013. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 25 Jan./13:3 and Anonymous. 2013. *Wandering Tattler* 36(6):7.

Reifel Refuge Celebrates 50 Years

A 30-year lease by the Reifel family with the new B.C. Waterfowl Society starting on 13 March 1963 marked the beginning of what became the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Alaksen National Wildlife Area in 1967 –of birding, conservation and research importance ever since. –based on George C. Reifel and Barney W. Reifel. 2013. *Marshnotes* winter 2013:3.

Planned Barred Owl "Cull"

The B.C. government has recently approved the killing of Barred Owls in areas where captive-bred Spotted Owls may be released in an effort to restore their rapidly declining populations. The elimination of most old growth habitat and evidence that Barred Owls at least occasionally kill Spotted Owls suggests that releasing Spotted Owls may fail to restore populations if Barred Owls are present. Many conservationists believe, however, that populations of Spotted Owls will not be restored without restoration of old growth habitat. –based partly on Dene Moore. 2013. *Wandering Tattler* 36(6):13-14.

Birdlife International 90 Years Old

The World's oldest planet-wide conservation organization, The International Council for Bird Preservation, founded in 1922, has reached its 90th year. Two former Canadian Section Chairs, M. Timothy Myres and Martin K. McNicholl have lived in B.C. during their tenures. The council reorganized into Birdlife International in 1994. –based primarily on Anonymous. 2012. *Bird Studies Latest News* 21 Dec. 2012:1



FRIDAY, May 10

5:00 pm - 9:00 pm **Registration and Social Hour at the Mary Winspear Centre (MWC) with guest speaker TBA**

SATURDAY, May 11

5:15 am - 5:45 am **Breakfast at the MWC**
 6:00 am - 12:30 pm **Field trips**
 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm **Catered Lunch at the MWC**
 1:45 pm - 3:45 pm **Technical Sessions at the MWC, Speakers TBA**
 3:00 pm - 3:15 pm **Break with Coffee and Tea**
 3:45 pm - 4:45 pm **Annual General Meeting at the MWC**
 4:45 pm - 5:15 pm **Director's Board Meeting at TBA**
 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm **Social Hour at the MWC, (Cash Bar)**
 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm **Banquet at the MWC**
 8:30 pm - 10:00 pm **Guest Speaker – TBA**



SUNDAY, May 12

5:15 am - 5:45 am **Breakfast at the MWC**
 6:00 am - 12:30 pm **Field trips**
 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm **Catered Lunch at the MW and Wrap Up**



POST CONFERENCE: Extension Trip..... Starts



Lower: Black Turnstone (L) and Black Oystercatcher images by Marie O'Shaughnessy. Above: Osprey: MH. Other images: Google.

BCFO Two Day Field Trips 2013

Join with Fellow Members – Great Birding in Great Locations

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Okanagan Valley Kelowna

April 22 – 23, 2013

As spring arrives in the Central Okanagan, snow levels fall, temperatures increase and migration gets underway in earnest. Birding in the Central Okanagan can be very exciting in late April. Visiting a range of habitats and elevations target species include Mountain and Western Bluebirds, Say's Phoebe, Red-naped Sapsucker and perhaps Northern Pygmy Owl. Upper elevation species are possible such as Boreal Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak and American Three-toed Woodpecker.

Leader:
Chris Charlesworth
info@avocettours.ca
250 491 7738

Upper Fraser Valley

June 1 – 2, 2013

Between Abbotsford and Hope lies a bird-rich, but very under-birded area. Birding locations are varied and spectacular, with "good" birds turning up here regularly. Locations we'll visit are Sumas Prairie east, the Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve, Cheam Lake Wetlands RP, and the Hope Airport and Sewage Treatment Plant.

Leader: John Vooyo
mvars@shaw.ca
604 850 3757



Chilcotin Expedition

June 21-23, 2013

In 2010, a remarkable suite of birds was discovered breeding in the Anahim Lake, Heckman Pass area. These included Grgy-cheeked Thrush, Yellow Rail, Least sandpiper, and Lesser Yellowlegs. From our cabins on Anahim Lake (optional lakeside camping) we will explore the diverse birdlife of the western Chilcotin.

NOTE: For this special, remote trip, please confirm your participation with the leader (who will arrange accommodation) not later than May 28, 2013

Leader: George Clulow
gclulow@shaw.ca
604 438 7639

Sunshine Coast

Nov. 23-24, 2013

As a place to see rocky coastline shore birds on the southern Mainland Coast, the Sunshine Coast is the destination of choice.

Combining Black Oystercatchers, Black Turnstones, Surfbirds and Rock Sandpipers on the shores with possibly 5 species of alclids, including Ancient, and Marbled Murrelets offshore, this trip promises a feast of wintering water-birds that can be tough to find elsewhere.

Leader: Tony Greenfield
tony@whiskeyjacknaturetours.com
604 885-5539



How the Trips Work

BCFO two-day field trips are member-led, but participants make their own arrangements for accommodation, food and travel EXCEPT for the Chilcotin Expedition where leader will arrange accommodation.

Schedule

Day 1: am birding; pm birding, evening get-together (see below).

Day 2: am birding, pm optional birding.



Carpooling is encouraged. For the birding trips, carpooling will be arranged on the morning of Day 1.

Register in Advance

Important: Register at least two weeks in advance EXCEPT for the Chilcotin Expedition (see Note above). E-mail or phone the trip leader with names and numbers of participants. The leader will give you specific details of when and where to meet. If needed, additional leaders may be recruited to keep group sizes small.

Cost per Two-day Event

Members: \$10. per person
Non-members: \$40. per person*

*Includes BCFO membership

Note: BCFO general memberships are family memberships.

The Social Side

At the end of Day 1, where possible, leaders will make arrangements for participants to meet for dinner at a nearby restaurant to recap the day, tally species seen, and confirm arrangements for the following day.



The Reflective Birder #3

Clive Keen

When is a Tick not a Tick?

He: "Take a look through the 'scope now!"

Me: "Ah, hmm. Which one is it?"

He: "It's the one right in the middle. See the round head and small bill? Wingtips same shade as the body?"

Me: "Er, um, ah, I guess."

He: "There: you've got a lifer!"

Have I? No. I might indeed have been staring at a juvenile Iceland Gull, but there's no way I can tick it. Why not? Because the rules of bird ticking are that you make your own rules about bird ticking. And my rules say that I've got to *know* that I've seen the bird; it's no good just being told that I've seen it.

So, are my bird-tick ethics as pure as triple-distilled vodka? Er, well, probably not. I suspect that if I hadn't earlier seen my first definite Thayer's Gull, and thus got a lifer for the day, I would have weakened and accepted the Iceland Gull. And come to think of it, it's not even clear that I should have accepted the Thayer's. I'd seen something I thought was probably a Thayer's, and asked the expert. He said it was. So I ticked it. But, since I hadn't originally been sure what I'd seen, should I have accepted the tick on his authority? Rules, schmools. I'd driven 600 miles to learn some new gulls under the direction of an expert, so I suspect I'd have found reason to tick something come what may.

The great thing about making up your own rules is that you can make and bend them to your own needs. Back in my earliest birding days I developed rules that were perfect for the time. After seeing a new bird, I'd go through the field guide, find the bird that looked least unlike my fading memory, and give it a large celebratory tick. In red. Underlined. It's quite possible that on rare occasions I'd put the tick in the right place. It didn't matter. I made the rules, and what kept me going in those days was the sense of making progress. And having a life list of 27 birds was kind of embarrassing.

The rules, you'll be glad to hear, got rather stricter as time passed. I paused for a commendable length of time before ticking off Hoary Redpolls. Having seen flocks of Common Redpolls at least half a dozen times, amongst which were some suspiciously light-coloured ones, I figured that I must have seen at least one Hoary, so administered the tick. Looking back on it, I'm not too enamoured with that decision, but will I

untick it? Like heck I will. That would be far too depressing. Where would it end?

These days, with a few decades of active ticking behind me, I can afford to be more scrupulous. Actually, I suspect it's not my conscience that has become more finely tuned, but the realization that I get more fun this way. Adding a tick is far more satisfying when you really get to see the defining characteristics of a new bird, rather than just a superficial and questionable glimpse. Since new ticks are hard to come by once you're well beyond the 400 mark, it makes sense to savour them fully by spreading them around.

I had a bit of a fight with my conscience, all the same, when birding in Brazil. My technique was to wander around all day pointing my camera at any nearby bird, and then at night go through the photographs and figure out what I'd seen. I'd be amazed and delighted to find that I'd seen all kinds of exotic species, and as a result had a glorious time applying ticks left right and centre. Was this legitimate? It's not obvious that it is. If I allow it, what about the birds that are occasionally caught on my trail camera*? I won't have seen them in the flesh at all. Would they merit a tick?

My decision, based partly on the fact that my trail-cam has yet to find a new species, while my hand-held camera has found many, is to say Yes to the latter, and No to the former. You want to disagree, and deny me both? Well frankly my dear, I don't give a damn. There's no way I'm going to untick scores of exotic birds. And the great thing about the rules of bird ticking, remember, is that you make your own rules of bird ticking.

**Trail camera: a remote camera installed beside a trail and triggered by the movement of an animal*

NOTE This and another 39 essays by Clive are now available from Amazon in the eBook: *Birding: A Flock of Irreverent Essays*. See traybonbooks.com for details.



Snow on big shed (Prince George)

Clive Keen

FINDING THE RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL

It's not often in a birder's life that one gets to be in on the discovery of a first record for Canada. But when it does happen, it's about as exciting as birding gets.

George Clulow

On January 13, after a day's birding that included completing a monthly Coastal Waterbird Survey, I started to read a message from Colin McKenzie, a birding friend from New Westminster, subject line: *Strange bird in Queen's Park.*

The first two paragraphs were absolutely riveting:

I found a strange bird in Queen's Park (New West) this morning (Jan 13). I'd like to run it past you, because I don't know what to make of it. In 27 years of birding this is one of the strangest birds I've ever seen while birding in familiar territory.... I can't place it to anything North American. Although if I had to classify, it is most like a thrush (small round-bodied European robin kind).

I have attached a scan of the sketch I made in the park right after I lost the bird, and also some drawings with colour I made at home, to suggest colour and pattern (excuse my art skills). My first sketch suggests the body shape and posture better than my colour drawings.

I knew Colin to be an absolutely reliable and careful observer. If Colin didn't know what he'd seen, it had to be something really rare.....Colin continued with a detailed description of the bird. No apologies for his artwork were needed at all. The clear and straightforward drawings, along with the written description were already ringing bells for me. "I've seen this bird before," I thought, "and I was in Meiji Jingu Park in Tokyo!" And I too recalled at the time thinking exactly what Colin described – the bird reminded me of a European Robin.

I grabbed Mark Brazil's *Birds of East Asia*, and flipped to the relevant page. Bingo! Red-flanked Bluetail. "Whoa, what now? A probable mega rarity and it's dark out. Damn." The adrenaline was flowing and my relaxing Sunday evening was seriously at risk. And so was I, if I didn't calm down a little.

I immediately e-mailed the information to Mike Toochin who has a lot of experience with Asiatic birds. Within minutes Mike was on the phone. "I only got halfway through reading this description and it's right on – Red-flanked Bluetail, or possibly one of the Lusciniids, but the description's better for bluetail."

We quickly made arrangements to meet at Queen's Park at daybreak, and Sharon Toochin would be bringing her camera gear to get some pictures. I posted a quick message to birdrepbc (the Yahoo chat group for birding in the Vancouver area) to let birders know about the sighting and the probable identity of the bird. I gave Carlo Giovanella a call to suggest he might want to make the drive from South Surrey for this one, and to bring his camera too.

Getting up early to be at the park for first light, I looked out to see it was starting to snow and the driveway was noticeably icy. Black ice and snow, and the roads were a mess. The birding gods were not smiling on us that morning.

To pick up the story, here's what I wrote on my blog later in the day on the 14th:

I arrived at the children's playground, just north of the petting zoo at daybreak – except day wasn't really breaking, although my heart nearly was. Just the dimmest of dawns was struggling to emerge under dark skies and through steady snow. However, a movement caught out of the corner of my eye had me searching through the gloom. Nope – Song Sparrow. Then another movement, and HERE WE GO – an unmistakable profile, but no plumage or other details visible, and just a struggle to track the bird as it flitted from tree base to tree base.

I couldn't get a photo – too dark, the bird was too active, and where are the rest of people who should be here by now? A few better looks with some colour and detail were followed by guess what? Not only had my birding buddies not appeared, the bluetail had disappeared, and I still hadn't had a really a good look to absolutely confirm the identity. It's times like this that a birder's stress levels really rise.

After half an hour of careful but frantic searching, my birding buddies appeared, but still no bird. And then, as though materializing from the snow itself, there was the bluetail. The light was better,



the bird was close, and we could confirm the identity after finally getting a good look at the diagnostic white throat. Better still, Sharon's a photographer too, and we got our confirming pictures for the record.

High-fives and big face-wide grins soon followed. There was even a hug or two. A first for Canada. Wow!

Of course, since that first morning, the bird has been sensation across the continent with birders driving and flying in from all over North America. It made it on to TV news both locally and nationally, the front page of the Vancouver Sun and a number of local newspapers, and was featured on the national radio show *As It Happens*. As of time of writing (February 19) the bird is still present in the forested north-west corner of Queen's Park, and has been seen by hundreds, and possibly thousands of birders and the simply curious.



Note: We propose to publish Colin's field notes and sketches in an upcoming article in *our journal, British Columbia Birds*, to establish a permanent, and properly referenced record of the observation.

Photos by Hank Tseng

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS FROM CENTRAL BC: QUESNEL AND NARCOSLI

Adrian Leather, Quesnel Birding Club

QUESNEL CBC took place on December 23, 2012, with temperatures between -14C and -16C, and a very overcast sky throughout the day (poor light conditions). Depending on where you were birding, it was either relatively still, or you were facing an icy biting wind. The count was definitely not a run-of-the mill affair!

Firstly, the East Fraser Team had the heart-stopping shock of witnessing the Cariboo Pulp & Paper Ponds totally frozen over! Brian had studied the differences between female Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, but here was this wasteland without even a single Mallard! I have no idea what Cariboo Pulp & Paper are up to, denying our ducks their winter spa, but perhaps Sheila can make representations for them, and us? Otherwise folks, we may well have to get used to a new reality of no waterfowl on our CBCs, and that means three to six species less per count!

Secondly, the powers-that-be in our local government continue their efforts to have a nice clean politically correct municipal dump - hopeless for birds, and hence the reason for low numbers of European Starlings, Rock Pigeons, Brewer's Blackbirds, and the complete absence of Red-winged Blackbirds!

Still, the count must go on, and what a count it was!

We tallied 6653 individual birds of 50 species. Initially I was thinking this was a lower than average count, but when you take into account the two above factors, this was an excellent count! We maintained our five year average of 47 species with NO waterfowl other than a solo Mallard spotted downtown by Jack and Brien.

I suppose the story of the day was the 10 Snowy Owls! Let me read that again, TEN Snowy Owls! Q hadn't recorded a Snowy Owl on a CBC since 1988!



Snowy Owl

Steve Smith

Incidentally, PG (Prince George) hadn't recorded one since 1973! I understand there are still two Snowy Owls at Gravelle Ferry, so it looks as if we have at least 12 Snowy Owls around! I think I'll always remember the joy in Steve Smith's voice as he said "We've had four snowies"! I had the audacity to add another on Zschiedrich Road, so the Dragon Team alone recorded five Snowy Owls!



Common Redpoll – also seen

Steve Smith

There were other great stories of the day! Dan Churchill watched two wolves blast by 27 elk without a glance. What were the wolves running from he wonders? Well it wasn't the NW Team. They didn't chance trying to blast through the drifting snow, so they missed Dan's six Black-billed Magpies. Dan goes to a lot of trouble to feed his birds!

In West Quesnel, Sandy and Carolyne were chatting with a local feeder-watcher and on casually asking if they'd seen anything interesting, the mystery feeder-watcher by Baker Creek replied they'd had an American Robin about an hour earlier! It appears there were only two robins for this count.

Another memorable story comes from the NE Team who were relishing views of a Northern Goshawk and an immature Golden Eagle sharing the same tree, when over their heads flew a flock of 50 Snow Buntings, the first recorded on a Q-CBC since 2002! Winter birding in the Cariboo doesn't get much better than that!

Another great item in my opinion is the awesome camaraderie between the Q birders and the PG birders who continue to show fantastic dedication to our count! Sandy Kinsey sent me a note saying "We had lots of fun", and for me, that is the main thing, for folks to really enjoy a day out with nature and the

challenge and pleasure of finding winter birds. Great company and food as always at tally-up.

Aside from the field teams in action, there were other fascinating reports which contributed towards a great CBC. Emma Jarrett watched a Great Horned Owl on Estate Road. Bud (Edward) and Marion Heirman had a Three-toed Woodpecker move through their yard, and three Pine Siskins were the stars at their feeders near Blackwater and Sanford. Elena Borsato and Hugh Blanc forwarded their list, which included 27 Pine Siskins on Skyline Rd. (No Pine Siskins were located by the field teams!) Joan and Kas Jochim spotted an American Robin in their yard on Marble, Lakeview, their first in winter! Joan also spotted a Belted Kingfisher perched by the Quesnel River on Dec. 24 for a count week species! Manfred and Mary Roschitz continue to host two Grey Jays unable to resist their homemade suet recipe. Michelle Syvertsen seems to be a firm favourite with Eurasian Collared-Doves which have adopted her yard on Grimm Rd. Donna Koning had 12 American Goldfinches on Leflar. Dave and Sue Koster were graced by the visit of a White-breasted Nuthatch and a pair of House Sparrows, opposite the old West Fraser School. Enid and Dudley Leather watched at my place for the White-breasted Nuthatch and tallied two! It seems we have a pair of them. Debbie and myself saw them together on Dec. 24 (present since Sept. 24). Wolfgang Hofmeier photographed a Brown Creeper in his Richbar yard. Bruce Paterson photographed two Blue Jays in his Lust Rd yard! Jerry McFetridge spotted something on the wires along Bouchie Lake Rd. "The wind and the snow made it look like a ghost, but there it was with it's beautiful white bowtie, a Great Grey Owl! I was ecstatic"! Liz Hewison, visiting from PG, photographed a Varied Thrush on Murphy St for species # 50!

Record high counts were achieved for Northern Goshawk, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Snowy Owl, Black-billed Magpie, House Finch, and American Goldfinch. The tally for Ruffed Grouse was the lowest since 2005. The Rock Pigeon total was the lowest since 1999. Northern Shrike slumped to a ten-year low. Song Sparrow hit a five-year low, and this was the first time that no Red-winged Blackbirds were recorded since 2003! Mallard crashed from last year's record high of 106, to one individual, the second lowest count since 1995 when none were recorded!

On every count you see some species you don't expect, and miss others you would expect, and this count was no exception. Obviously we really missed-out on waterfowl, but other misses included Killdeer, Common Merganser, and Red-winged Blackbird! Still, let's revel in the awesome species we did find!

Another classic Q-CBC! Sincere thanks to all who took part, especially our seven birding friends from PG, and our debutants from Q!

NARCOSLI CBC: On December 30, Tracy Bond of Quesnel Birding Club enjoyed a day of tumbling records for her 10th Anniversary CBC at Narcosli, a rural area south of Quesnel. A record ten birders made-up the field teams. They smashed the 2009 record of 1654 individual birds by tallying 2260 birds, and beat the 2010 record of 35 species, establishing an impressive new record of 39 species!

A beautiful blue sky greeted birders. Temperatures varied between -9c and -15c, with occasional very light winds. West of the Fraser, the High Country Team of Tracy Bond and Kathy Wrath tallied 10 Grey Jays, photographed a Merlin, and relished three Short-eared Owls! Kathy pushed through deep snow to record a Three-toed Woodpecker!

The Low Country Team of Brian Murland, and Nancy Krueger from Prince George, spotted a Grey-crowned Rosy-Finch! Other goodies included Northern Shrike, Rough-legged Hawk, and Northern Pygmy Owl!



Rough-legged Hawk

Steve Smith

East of the Fraser, in the Kersley/North Zone, Adrian Leather and Rod Sargent spotted a pair of Rusty Blackbirds at Yorston Ranch. Jerry & Lynne McFetridge saw a Snowy Owl at Kersley, and found two Rusty Blackbirds at Fox Dairy Farm! Nine American Tree Sparrows were at Fridlington Ranch.

Three Mourning Doves graced Ruby Johnston's yard, and 14 Eurasian Collared-Doves were in Michelle Syvertsen's yard. The Alexandria/South Zone was covered by Sandy Proulx and Phil Ranson of Williams Lake. Excellent finds were a Gyrfalcon, and a Golden Eagle.

HAPPY BIRDING for 2013!

NOTE: Species lists for these CBCs can be found in the appendix to this issue of BC Birding on the BCFO website

ODE TO CHICKADEES

Lee Harding

My local Black-capped Chickadees are so common and rather drab—just grey, white and black—that one might suppose them to be boring. Not so. On my deck in Coquitlam, espresso in hand, I can never keep my attention on whatever I'm trying to read when the chickadees are about, which is virtually always.

These chickadees are common all across North America south of the taiga and north of the arid regions from California to Florida. But I'm thrilled when the shyer Pacific coast Chestnut-backed Chickadees show up. Birding takes me more or less annually to the far corners of the planet. I've seen 19 of the world's 60 species in the family Paridae, that is, the titmice, chickadees and tits (as they are called in Europe). In South Korea I was blown away by Varied Tits, psychedelic versions of our Chestnut-backed Chickadees with deep red bellies, blue-grey backs, and cream cheeks. In China, while looking for Siberian Cranes in a vast wetland, I chanced to walk into a wooded islet and was surrounded by Yellow-bellied Tits -- like redecorated Coal Tits. In Vietnam, my guide pointed straight up in the canopy to Sultan Tits, raucously greeting the sunrise, aptly-named for their black robes, garish yellow undergarments, and haughty crests. In Malaysia, I struggled over the identity of a tit that was close to the Great Tit of Eurasia, but with a greenish back and lacking the latter's yellow belly; later, taxonomists split them three ways and this one became the Southern Great Tit. In a Barcelona park, while my wife admired the gaudy forms of Antoni Gaudí's sculptures, I ticked an equally gaudy Crested Tit. I've tried in vain to see the subtle differences between African Blue Tits and Eurasian Blue Tits. And I've often wondered how we would know if an errant Willow Tit were to wander east into Alaska and down the coast to British Columbia. Seeing them in Japan, they seemed exactly like Black-capped Chickadees, if a little paler, and were devilishly difficult to distinguish from Marsh Tits. And so on. So why, when the world is so full of exotic tit forms and colours, do I enjoy the common, grey ones in my home garden so much?

I like chickadees because of what their diversity says about evolution. Watching them calls to mind the ancestors of all birds, the dinosaurs. Birds evolved in the Upper Jurassic period (middle Mesozoic era, 190 to 135 million years ago, (mya)), from theropod dinosaurs,¹ likely the family Dromaeosauridae.² A stopover in London a few years ago gave me the chance to see an exhibit of fossils of all of the earliest birds and feathered dinosaurs, from the first found, *Archaeopteryx*, to the plethora of recent, amazing finds from northeast China. The scores of species in multiple lineages now identified reveal fine feather and bone structure and even molecular clues to colour.³ Looking at them, it was sometimes easy to see how they could have given rise to our backyard friends—and sometimes not, as for one with all four legs sporting long flight feathers.

It is easy to forget, when thinking about these deep evolutionary events, that the species then alive were not merely stepping stones somehow driving, or being driven, toward the ultimate perfection of our modern ones. Rather, each had already evolved over millions of years and was well adapted to fully-formed, diverse, stable ecosystems. But continents drift around, colliding and then splitting; mountains are thrust up and eroded down, altering weather patterns; the Earth gets alternately warmer and cooler, raising and lowering sea levels and giving species the incentive to colonize warming habitats near the poles or driving them towards temperate and tropic zones. These changes provided plenty of opportunity for differentiation by isolation and adaptation to new environments.

The passerines, of which chickadees are a member, are an ancient lineage of the superorder Neoaves, that is, all living birds except Paleognaths (Ratites, e.g., ostrich, emu; and tinamous – flightless grouse-like birds in S.America). and Galloanserae (ducks, chicken and relatives).⁴ As the supercontinent Pangaea was splitting apart, there was a warm period 56 mya, which lasted about 100,000 years, when the Arctic had near-tropical weather and what we think of as southern species moved far north.



Black-capped Chickadee



Varied Tit



Oviraptoraurus



Yellow-bellied Tit

Although South America had split from Africa and was an isolated “island continent,” North America was still connected to Siberia in the west and Europe in the east. There was little differentiation among birds and mammals across the Palaearctic region until the Atlantic Ocean opened in the early Eocene (54-38 mya), depriving our birds of gene flow from European ones, including chickadee ancestors. For long millennia our only songbird source was Siberia, but no Paridae came. Then drifting continents in the Pliocene (7 to 2.5 mya) opened the Bering Strait. Probably by island-hopping along the Aleutians, the ancestor of modern *Baeolophus* (the 4 species of titmice) reached North America around 4 mya, and the ancestor of all North American chickadees around 3.5 mya.⁵

During the repeated ice ages and inter-glacial periods of the Pleistocene, the various chickadee ancestor populations became isolated and diverged, whether through genetic drift or adaptations to local environments. The land connection across Beringia formed again during the Pleistocene, promoting comingling, and its closing by rising sea levels about 12,000 years ago split Nearctic *Poecile* ancestors (chickadees) from the Palaearctic ancestors of the five Siberian *Poecile* species including Marsh Tit and Willow Tit.⁶ Thus, along the Beaufort Sea coast, I’ve seen the Siberian Tit, or Grey-headed Chickadee. The Chestnut-backed Chickadee evolved its splendid colour isolated in a coastal refugium⁷—taking on the russet hues of its Western Redcedar habitat, I imagine. At my cabin in the Kootenays there is double the Parid diversity with four kinds of tits. That warm-moist interior mountain zone has a disjunct population of Chestnut-backed Chickadee, along with the ubiquitous Black-capped. The Boreal Chickadee, more common all across the boreal forest, ranges southward along the Rocky and Columbia mountains. And the Mountain Chickadee, which typically inhabits drier mountains of the intermountain west and northern grasslands, shows up from time to time.

Watching chickadees in the vine maple by the deck, I examine the shape of their legs, feet, wings, and bills and try to imagine the analogous parts of their dinosaur ancestors. I wonder about their avian antecedents and other avian phylogenetic mysteries: When did the loons and grebes diverge? How did a grebe ancestor give rise to flamingos?^{4, 8} How did rheas of South America, which look and behave so much like their African ratite relatives that Charles Darwin called them ostriches, manage to disperse from a continent isolated for 135 million years, even though their ancestors only diverged about 65 mya?⁹ How did New World and Old World vultures manage to look and behave so much alike even though they are unrelated (the former more closely allied to storks)? How did Crow Tits of East Asia—which are neither crows nor tits (they are parrotbills)—evolve to be dead ringers in looks and behaviour for our Bushtits (which also are not tits)? How did Wrentits—which are neither wrens nor tits (they are babbler)—manage to reach North America, the only member of their otherwise exclusively Southeast Asian-African family to do so? With such momentous geologic and evolutionary events captured in the difference in time and form from dinosaurs through all the ages to chickadees, boredom is impossible, no matter how common the birds.

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Sultan Tit



Southern Great Tit



Crested Tit



Chestnut-backed Chickadee

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Photo Credits(top to bottom) Black-capped Chickadee: JMR. Varied Tit: Alder, The Internet Bird Collection. Oviraptorarus (Royal Ontario Museum): Lee Harding. Yellow-bellied Tit: Sam Woods. Sultan Tit: Niels Poul Dreyer, The Internet Bird Collection. Southern Great Tit: Lee Harding. Crested Tit: Luc Viatour, Wikipedia. Chestnut-backed Chickadee: Lee Harding.



Blue Tit

AVIAN DIVERSITY THROUGH SPACE AND TIME...

... a lot of space (the world) and a lot of time (50 million years). Researchers have reconstructed what they think is the phylogeny (pattern of evolutionary descent) of all 10 000 extant species of birds (well, 9993 known species, to be precise about it). And they have superimposed the pattern of diversification on the geographic ranges of the birds. The results invoke the geophysical history of Earth by way of explanation. It is found that the rate of diversification of species has approximately tripled over the last 50 million years and has been highest most recently (the temporal resolution of this analysis being too coarse to detect the recent havoc that humans have wrought on the natural world). The increase has been most strongly driven by rapid speciation amongst passerines in general and the warblers in particular, and amongst gulls, waterfowl and woodpeckers. These families are concentrated in temperate to boreal regions, so it is no accident that there is a distinctive geographic pattern to rapid diversification. North America, northeast Asia and extreme southwestern South America (the southern Andes) stand out as diversification 'hotspots' amongst birds. In contrast, Australia, Africa, Madagascar and southeast Asia stand out as areas of low diversification. What is going on?

Fifty million years ago Earth witnessed the warmest climates of 'recent' geological history: Even the Arctic enjoyed a temperate climate. It is likely that global climate contrasts were less severe than at any time since. Ever since that time (known as the Palaeocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum -- scientists remain uncertain why it occurred), Earth's climates have been becoming cooler and more varied. About 35 million years ago, ice appeared in Antarctica and within the most recent 2 million years (the Pleistocene Period) ice has been common on the northern hemisphere continents. Within this period, as well, the world's contemporary high mountains have developed, notably the cordilleras of North and South America, the

Himalaya and its outlying ranges and the Alps. All of this has created steadily more varied climates and terrain, and presumably multiplied the range of ecological niches for plants and animals, including birds.

Interestingly, environmental changes have been least in the geologically ancient and climatically tropical to warm temperate terrains of Australia and Africa, and greatest on the northern hemisphere continents, where diversification has also been greatest. Of particular interest is the repeated occurrence of glaciations on these continents. We know that in North America and in central to northeast Asia repeated glaciations isolated terrestrial habitats on either side of the ice and these are regions of high diversification with many species that are presumed Pleistocene isolates. In northwest Europe, in contrast, one prominent ice margin was marine -- there was not the same division of habitable terrain. Most curious, however, is the apparently relatively low rate of diversification in southeast Asia -- tropical but tectonically active. The passerines originated here; perhaps they exploited much of the range of niches relatively early.

All of which amounts only to speculation. The exercise can be criticized on other grounds, in particular that the phylogenetic reconstruction upon which the entire analysis is erected is in significant degree speculative, based as it is on morphological affinities rather than genetic analyses. But the broad outline seems consistent with Earth history, even to the appearance of a pause in the acceleration of diversity during the period, 20-30 million years ago, when climate paused in its trend toward greater variability. Genetics is apt to change the details, but probably not the broad outline.

Based on W.Jetz, G.H.Thomas, K.Hartmann and A.O.Mooers, 2012. *The global diversity of birds in space and time. Nature* 491: 444-448, with commentaries by R.E.Ricklefs and M.Pagel (pp.336-7), but with liberal interpretation by the writer.
Summary by M.Church

REFLECTIONS ON BIRDING IN HOLLAND

John Vooy's

This article was originally written in response to a question from Dutch birders about the difference between birding in BC and in Holland. It was originally published (in Dutch) in de Duinstag, Journal of the Vogelclub Katwijk, nr. 2, 2012.

Amazing! An active birding club in my birthplace, Katwyk aan Zee, Holland!

Before visiting the Netherlands in the summer of 2008, I had checked the web for help on general birding in that country and, in particular, around Katwyk, my home town. To my surprise I came across this wonderful internet site, www.birdclubkatwijk.nl. It led me to information on Dutch birding, Katwyk area birding hotspots, and a link to that summer's Vogelfestival (birdfair) in Oostvaarderplassen. I ended up doing some birding around Katwyk, especially in the dunes and I also went to the festival and had a great time with the bonus of seeing my first White-tailed Eagle. (I even ran into Jo Ann MacKenzie there!).



John birding in the dunes

I find the whole province of Zuid Holland beautiful and, in fact, when my wife (a Canadian) first visited Katwyk she could not believe why we would want to leave such an attractive area.

Birding in Holland is sure different from my experience in British Columbia, Canada, where I live. Holland is about the size of Vancouver Island off the BC coast. We often have to travel great distances to birding sites and it is certainly not a flat landscape like most of Holland since we are surrounded with high mountains. However, this allows for a great variety in resident birds, from passerines, pelagic and alpine species, to the addition of migrants. I live close to the Vancouver checklist area and it boasts records of some 400

species. Just over 500 have been recorded in all of BC. In fact, in the last few months we have added Cave Swallow, Citrine Wagtail and Red-flanked Bluetail to the lists.

In the summer of 2012 my wife Marilyn and I visited Katwyk again for a few weeks, where I hoped to get in some more Dutch birding. I prepared for this by studying the especially excellent guidebook, *Birds of Europe* by Svensson, Mullarney and Zetterstrom. While exploring around town, I was again struck by how Katwyk's surroundings have changed since I lived there (and in nearby Leiden) as a young boy in the 1940's and 1950's. I loved being in the dunes and in those days often flushed the, now rare, Gray Partridges when hiking. Jan Parlebos forest seemed larger then and there were very few ponds and small lakes in the dunes. Its valleys (akkertjes) were still in use to grow vegetables. In fact, my father, Jan and his father, my opa Jan Vooy's, had farmed some of these.

So this past July we were in Katwyk, living in the house of relatives who were holidaying in Sweden. I again checked the Birdclub Katwyk site for someone who could advise me on good birding locally, even though late July was not the best time for that. The first name on the list of club members was that of Gijs van der Bent so I emailed him. I also noticed he lived just around the corner from where my wife and I were staying! Not only did he give me good advice but he also offered to take me birding. This was cool, since I have done that sort of thing for visitors to my area. I have hosted a Dutch and an Australian birder as well as some birders from the USA and eastern Canada. These were arranged through an internet group called "BirdingPal".



Black Stork

John Vooy's

A couple of days later Gijs took me birding to Lentevreugt, former bulb fields converted to a grass and wetland area that did not exist when I still lived in Katwyk. We went looking for the rare Aquatic Warbler which had been reported in one of the marshy areas (we found it). There were many birders there and over the next two weeks I became aware of how many birders there are in Katwyk and for that matter in the Netherlands

In the city where I live, Abbotsford, the 5th largest city in BC, there are perhaps five or six active birders and I'm the only serious lister in town. I was also impressed with Birdclub Katwyk's journal, *De Duinstag*, as well as the journal of the Dutch Birding Association, *Dutch Birding*, copies of which I was given to read.

On another day Gijs took me to an area near Lelystad where we found my first Purple Heron and a nice family of five Montagu's Harriers. I was also pleased to see the White-tailed Eagle again at the Oostvaardersplassen. The real highlight of birding with Gijs was when we spent a day on Texel Island in Noord Holland, a place I had never visited before, but God willing, sure hope to in the future. We were tracking down a Black Stork, which we found. I also got to see a bunch of shorebirds on Texel, four of which were new for me. However, we could not find a Kluut (Pied Avocet) except as a print on a T-shirt I bought in the bird store on the island. I'm going to have to go back for that Kluut!



'Kluut' (Pied Avocet)

ArtMagenta.com

I am not really a world birder, although wherever I travel I try to get in some birding. For the last 13 years my birding focus has been the ABA area, which is North America, north of Mexico. I had birded as a young man in my late teens and twenties, but gave it up for dating girls and doing university studies. In 2000, when I was 58, I decided to do a millennial project and built some bird feeders to see what would come to my yard. This led to going further afield to see birds in British Columbia and eventually in the whole ABA checklist area. I set a goal for myself, since this was a late (re)start in birding, to reach 700 ABA species by the age of 70. I'm now that age and have 8 months left to reach the last 7 birds to make 700. Those are likely the Henslow's and Saltmarsh

Sparrows, Kirtland's Warbler, Bicknell's Thrush, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Eurasian Tree Sparrow and Great Cormorant (although I have seen these last two in Katwyk!). The challenge is that these are mostly in eastern Canada and the USA, and I live in the west, but my wife and I are in the process of planning a cross continent trip!

I hope to return to the Netherlands (and Katwyk, especially), perhaps in 2014, and a stay on Texel would also be a high priority. I've got to see that Kluut! Other birds I would hope for are more of the Eurasian warblers and larks, and especially the woodpeckers. I had a "taste" of the Green Woodpecker when I heard one in Panbos woods and I want to see that bird. As a Christian I put great stock in Jesus' words and he at one point gave the command, "Look at the birds!" I want to be obedient.

John Vooy's --mvarts@shaw.ca

PIGEON NAVIGATION: PART 3

It is well-known that birds use several senses for navigation. Experiments in planetariums show that they can use the Sun and stars for orientation, much like humans. But the absence of celestial cues (as in cloudy weather) does not seem to phase them. Some birds – notably the Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) – also sense Earth's magnetic field (see *Lost: Bird Compass*, in BC Birding, June 2012; and *Bird Compass: Part 2*, in Sept.2012). But while these senses provide orientation, neither supply the long distance map needed for flights that may be as much as 1000 km. For this purpose, it seems the birds use infrasound.

So what on Earth is infrasound? It is ultra-low frequency sound. Technically, it's sound emitted at frequencies below 20 Hz (cycles/second), which is the lower limit of human hearing – so it's noise at the low end of the spectrum which we can't hear. Infrasound occurs with frequencies as low as 0.001 Hz. It turns out that birds can hear a range of infrasound frequencies very well. Other important aspects of infrasound are how it is generated naturally at and near Earth's surface by a range of phenomena. These include ocean waves interfering with each other and beating onshore, microseisms (minor movements of Earth's crust, which occur continuously), and wind in the atmosphere. Infrasound also propagates over long distances (1000's of km) with little attenuation and is consistently reflected off topography. There's a global infrasound map out there -- for any creature that can hear it.

Researchers clued into this by observing occasions when trained homing pigeons have failed to return to their home lofts. In a 1997 race to celebrate the centenary of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association (!! I swear that this is true), 60 000 pigeons were released

in Nantes, France, with the intent that they should fly about 400 km to their lofts in England. Few made it. Similar calamities befell Dutch pigeons in France and American pigeons near New York in the late 1990s. The one common element in all these cases is that the birds encountered the acoustic shock waves generated by Concorde, the (former) supersonic passenger aircraft that flew Paris-New York. It is reckoned that the sudden fluctuation in pressure would have damaged their hearing sufficiently to compromise their ability to detect infrasound.

More definitively, pigeons released at a particular site in upstate New York with the intent that they fly some 130 km east to their home at Cornell University regularly fail to reappear. But on one day in 1969 all the birds arrived home. Meteorological analysis shows that the characteristic westerly winds over the release site would impede infrasound waves travelling from the east, reducing their acoustic intensity below the threshold for the birds to hear. But on 13 August, 1969, the winds were uniquely calm, allowing the birds to orient themselves in the infrasound field.

The suggestion, then, is that infrasound provides the long range map by which birds navigate. Certainly, the consistent way in which infrasound is reflected off topography would enable long distance fliers to follow major lines of topography, as birds are observed to do even when atmospheric conditions preclude visual navigation.

Reference: Hagstrum, J.T., 2000. Infrasound and the avian navigation map. Journal of Experimental Biology 203: 1103-1111. (Picked up from a somewhat inaccurate article in The Economist for 2 February, 2013.)

Comment: Wind turbines generate infrasound, peaking near 1 Hz, but continuing to lower frequencies. The increasing pervasiveness of wind farms, then, introduces a new and unfamiliar source of infrasound. Put another way, humans are changing the global infrasound map. Might this interfere with migrating birds' navigation?

Summary and Comment by M.Church



Release of racing pigeons

Wikipedia

(VERY) ANCIENT BIRDS

Birds are the last of the dinosaurs. Twenty-five years ago the idea seemed preposterous, even though we have long known about *Archaeopteryx*, but the idea is now widely accepted amongst scientists. The key evidence lies in some thirty species of dinosaurs, smallish light-bodied species, that were feathered. Most of them have been found in Liaoning, northern China, but some are from the fossil localities of Alberta. They are assigned to a group called dromaeosaurids, the most famous example of which is *Velociraptor*, who recently turned up in 'Jurassic Park'. However, its relative, *Microaptor*, is perhaps the most interesting 'avian dinosaur'. About two dozen specimens have been unearthed. It has asymmetric feathers that seem suitable for flight on both its fore and hind limbs. Palaeontologists have long wondered what the role of the extravagantly feathered hind limbs might be. Having tested models of the creature in a wind tunnel, scientists have decided that, while the forelimbs would have supported flight (or, at least, extended gliding), the hind limbs were held close together and were used, along with a long tail, for steering. The hind limb/tail combination would have allowed highly agile flight in a forest.

All of which raises the question of whether these beasts could really fly. This is central to the deeper question of the origin of animal flight. Two schools contend: one thinks that flight originated in gliding out of trees, where these small dinosaurs might take refuge from predators. But this begs the question how they got into the trees. Many experts now consider that flight developed from wing flapping as an aid to running up inclines and climbing trees.

One possibly gains some insight from observing modern chickens. Young Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*), for example, use their wings before they can fly as an aid to running uphill – an important ability in their preferred steepland habitat. These young birds have distinctive, symmetrical feathering different than their later flight feathers. Scientists wonder whether their development replicates evolution – an old idea generally discredited but possibly a reasonable suggestion for some aspects of the development of some animals. No doubt further fossil finds and continuing study of modern bird flight will add to the story.

(Meanwhile, you can use the big words in this piece to impress your six-year old local dinosaur expert.)

From a meeting summary reported in Science, vol. 338, pp.591-2. Summary by M.Church

TECHNICAL NOTE - ADVANCED OPTICAL DEVICE FOR BIRDERS

Carlo Giovanella

Author's Note -- Several years ago there was some discussion among a few Lower Mainland birders regarding certain reported sightings of birds in the Salish Sea that were rather far from shore - admittedly up to 5 miles off. There were implied claims of accurate identifications, and not surprisingly, other birders were somewhat skeptical. Someone facetiously expressed a wish for a "Magic scope - one that could see around the curve of the Earth". This seemed like a bit much to ask, but Ilya Povalyaev and I decided what-the-heck, why not have a try at addressing the challenge. The results of our collaboration were presented in the following note, which was originally posted to the Yahoo birding listserve, BCVanbirds, now defunct and its content long lost. We resurrect it here as a service to birders far and wide.

NEWS FLASH: LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN BIRDING OPTICS UNVEILED

Field trials were recently carried out on the all new

GioPov Sooper Snooper MagiScope.

This is a revolutionary optical-enhancement device. Locally designed and fabricated by *GioPov Optik*, the *GioPov MagiScope* represents the latest advancement in birding equipment. It heralds a major breakthrough in green technology, as one will be able to bird the entire breadth of Boundary Bay from a single set-up, obviating the need for endless kilometers of vehicle transport. And with this instrument, much of the Strait of Georgia will be birdable without ever having to step on a ferry.



Here is Ilya at Blackie Spit conducting preliminary field trials, and checking for late shorebirds along the entire shoreline of Boundary Bay.



Resounding success!



Here, an unidentified BCFO member is checking out the principle component of the device, and like Ilya, gave an enthusiastic and unreserved 'thumbs up'.

There have been several queries as to how this device works. It's not too difficult to deduce what it does; it's another matter to figure out how.

The connecting component has two functions. Firstly it allows the rear scope to focus on the image produced by the front scope, which mean it provides for close-focus of several centimetres. Secondly, it gently bends the incoming light rays to compensate for the slight curve of the earth's surface.

As to how, we obviously cannot divulge this until we are protected by patents.

Note that both attached scopes have zoom eyepieces, so the MagiScope as configured here provides for a range of 400x to 3,600x magnification (20x20 - 60x60). However, at full power the image tends to be a bit fuzzy.

In camera terms, this would be the 35 mm equivalent of 2,000 to 180,000 mm (50mm=1x).



Here is one of the first images taken through the MagiScope with Ilya's point and shoot camera.

Please note: this is a prototype unit; patents are pending, and we regret that orders cannot yet be accepted.

(At present, we are experiencing some unanticipated and unavoidable production delays.)

Also note: The MagiScope may not be suitable for all users. To operate it effectively requires considerable skill, experience, imagination, and blind faith.

Meanwhile, until the GioPov Magiscope unit is fully operational, I will continue to use my trusty older instrument:



Carlo Giovanella, Surrey BC
5 November, 2009

Epilogue: Just as the developers were completing the fine-tuning of this remarkable instrument and were about to go to full production, the economy hit the skids and sources of capital funds quickly dried up. An attempt to get on Dragons' Den to finance the venture was turned down. Perhaps it was just a wee bit too far ahead of its time.

PRECOCIOUS PUPILS

Bird language can be very specific. The young of many species use distinctive begging calls to coax food from their parents. The parents, in turn, may use the calls as a means to identify their own young. How is a call established between parents and young? In the Superb Fairy-Wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*) of southeastern Australia, it has been found that the young in each nest have a begging call that differs from the begging calls in other nests. The distinctive call is useful not just to precipitate food, but also so that the mother may distinguish her chicks from young cuckoos, which turn up as brood parasites in fairy-wren nests. There seems to be a chance here to learn how the begging call protocol is established.

The begging call is a prominent element of the calls the mother makes while brooding her eggs. It appears, then, that the young may learn their call prenatally – whilst still in the egg! Researchers have arrived at a reasonably convincing confirmation of this appearance. They surreptitiously swapped eggs between various fairy-wren nests. The young, once hatched, uttered the call of their foster-mother, not their biological mother, suggesting that calls were indeed learned in the egg.



Reference: D.Colombelli-Négrel, M.E. Hauber, J.Robertson, F.J. Sulloway, H.Hoi, M.Griggio and S.Kleindorfer, 2012. Embryonic learning of vocal passwords in Superb Fairy-Wrens reveals intruder cuckoo nestlings. *Current Biology* 22: 2155-2160.

Summary by M.Church

Fairy Wren photos by David Taylor (male above, female below)





This unusually dark-coloured Gyrfalcon has been terrorizing the pigeons of the rail yards at Prince George over the winter. Being so large - about the size of a red-tailed hawk - and preferring to perch at the top of lighting poles, it has been quite easy to spot. Photo by Clive Keen using handheld Nikon 7000 with 150-500 mm Sigma lens at full extension, 1/1500 second, f8, 800 ISO.



Evening Grosbeak eating seeds of Japanese maple tree. Photo by Lee Harding. He comments: "I didn't know they did that. We have several native Douglas maple and one Japanese maple in our yard and I've never noticed Evening Grosbeaks eating the seeds before. There was a flock of 20 or so, and they spent a couple of hours in the Japanese maple. They were back the next day and finished the seeds, but they didn't touch the native maples in the yard."

3rd Annual

SKAGIT VALLEY BIRD BLITZ

May 10/11/12, 2013

Expert and novice birders are invited to explore the lush forests and waterways of Skagit Valley Provincial Park!

\$50 PER BIRDER (KIDS ARE FREE)

- **Two nights camping at Ross Lake Campground in the Skagit Valley — noon Friday, to Sunday.**
- **Guest speaker and barbecue, with salads, buns, and drinks provided (bring your own protein!).**
- **The Skagit offers stunning mountain scenery and a low-elevation valley with breeding Harlequin Ducks!**

To register:
Ph: (604) 869-1274 **E-mail:** info@hopemountain.org
Web: www.hopemountain.org

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June 14, 15 & 16, 2013

31st Anniversary

A spectacular weekend of birding in a beautiful park!
Open to novices and experts alike.

\$50

Children Are FREE
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► Birding Fee Includes....

- **Two nights camping at Lone Duck Campground on Lightning Lake — noon Friday, to Sunday.**
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Manning Park Lodge — Ph: 250-840-8822
 Rooms, cabins, and chalets are available, but book early!

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THE COST OF CONSERVING BIRDS (AND EVERYTHING ELSE)

At the Rio summit of 1992, nations signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, a commitment to make significant progress in reducing species extinctions and conserving wild places. Being a political agreement, it should be scarcely surprising that there has been little progress. In 2010, the signatories agreed to a new strategic plan that includes specific targets to prevent the extinction of all threatened species and to protect 17% of terrestrial ecosystems by 2020. As with all things, the devil lurks in the costs which, of course, nobody knows.

McCarthy *et al.* have attempted to throw some light on the devilish darkness. The status of birds being generally better known than that of most other animals, they based their work on 211 globally threatened birds. They compiled estimates of the cost to improve their status on the IUCN Red List by one category (i.e., from 'critically endangered' to 'endangered') by asking experts in bird conservation to make cost estimates for species with which they were familiar. They then extrapolated the results to cover all 1115 threatened bird species (about 11% of all bird species). The estimated cost to down-list them all came to \$US1.23 billion annually for the next decade. However, costs for 95% of them are less than \$US3 million per annum, and less than \$US1 million per annum for 50%. If it is supposed that some actions will benefit more than one species, a revised total cost for the decade is \$US0.88 billion per annum. But a difficulty that attends the prospective program is that nearly half the money is needed in countries with lower income.

Using data from New Zealand that suggest that birds are, on average, 4.2x per species more expensive to conserve than other animals, the researchers extended their estimates to cover all threatened species. The upshot is an estimate of between \$US3.4 and 4.8 billion per annum to lower the threat of all species extinctions.

The cost to preserve land is on a somewhat firmer footing as the most important areas are generally known and reasonably good estimates of contemporary land value are available. Basing their analysis on IBAs -- 11 731 sites worldwide that provide some protection to 4445 species-at-risk (all animals), they arrived at a figure of \$US76 billion annually (of which about 30% is in lower income countries).

Bottom line: one is looking for about \$US80 billion annually. This sounds formidable until one also considers that the world economy is worth about \$US70 trillion: we are talking about 0.1% of the annual global economy. Furthermore, the figure amounts to between 1 and 4% of the estimated cost of lost ecosystem services per year. At present, however, only about 10% of the funds estimated to be needed are actually being expended on species conservation.

These estimates are easily recognised as being very approximate. Fluctuating economic fortunes and land values, future threats to various species, and climate change may affect what is actually needed. On the other hand, actions taken to protect species often bring other advantages to society, including cleaner air and higher quality water. So there may be substantial additional returns. Most startling fact: \$80 billion is less than 20% of the annual world expenditure on soft drinks. Which suggest one possible solution: how would you regard a 20% tax on the cost of your Coke?

McCarthy, D.P. and 16 others. 2012. Financial costs of meeting global biodiversity conservation targets: current spending and unmet needs. *Science* **338**: 946-9. And Comment by Polasky, S. 2012. Conservation in the red. *Nature* **492**: 193-4. Summary by M.Church

Editor's Notes:

In BC, species are assigned to red, blue and yellow lists according to their conservation status. Red-listed species are extirpated (present elsewhere but no longer in BC), or endangered (may well become extinct or extirpated), or threatened (vulnerable to changing environmental conditions). Blue-listed species are "of special concern". Red- and blue-listed species are termed "species at risk". Species on the yellow list are not at risk. At present there are 38 bird species on the red list, including Spotted Owl, White-headed Woodpecker, Western Grebe, Swainson's Hawk, Lewis's Woodpecker, Sage Thrasher, and American White Pelican. There are 57 species on the blue list, including Purple Martin, Great Blue Heron *fannini* (coastal) subspecies, Long-tailed Duck, Ancient Murrelet, Rough-legged Hawk, Barn Owl, Long-billed Curlew, and Short-eared Owl. Read more at:

<http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/search.do?method=reset>



Great Blue Heron in deep water. Factors leading to the inclusion of the coastal subspecies on the blue list include: a small population concentrated in relatively few breeding colonies, evidence of declining productivity (i.e., low nesting success), Bald Eagle predation, habitat loss, and human disturbance.

"Psssst! Do you need Aleutian Tern for your list?
Check out this amazing fundraising trip for Rocky Point Bird Observatory

Birding the Tatshenshini-Alsek River by Raft

June 21-July 4, 2013

Ptarmigan, Aleutian Terns, Icebergs, Glaciers and more. Rocky Point Bird Observatory and Canadian River Expeditions have teamed up to develop this exciting birding and rafting trip. We will travel through some of the most spectacular and rugged scenery in North America and will have a chance to find some of the iconic birds of the St. Elias Mountains. The naturalist/birder on the trip is biologist Dave Fraser who has birded the Tatshenshini and Alsek Rivers for the past 18 years. Dave's bird list and more information are available here

http://www.rpbo.org/cre_tatenshini_trip_2013.php

WE NEED YOUR BIRDING SKILLS!

Recent studies suggest that many once abundant shorebirds are in decline. As part of a hemispheric effort to determine the causes, Bird Studies Canada and Simon Fraser University are studying migration of the Western Sandpiper. Many sites around the Salish Sea are used by a large proportion of the Western Sandpiper population. We aim to simultaneously census about 20 sites around the Salish Sea and Vancouver Island, so we are seeking help from volunteer birders. If you are a birder with good shorebird identification skills and able to accurately estimate flock sizes, or willing to learn estimation skills, please consider volunteering your time and expertise.

Time commitment: 3-4 hours during one day (on a weekend) in late April-May (northward migration) and July-August (southward migration). Training will be available in early April and possibly at other times.

Skills and equipment required:

- 1) Able to estimate flock size (we will provide some training for this)
- 2) Shorebird Identification (don't need to be an expert)
- 3) Binoculars and/or Scope
- 4) Digital Camera (preferably)

You will be surveying a site at high tide to estimate the number of Western Sandpipers present.

Some simple indicators of behaviour will be recorded for 1-2 hrs after high tide.

If you are interested in participating or need more info, please email dhope@sfu.ca with "WESA Survey" in the subject line, and state which area you would be willing to survey.

Survey sites will be in Metro Vancouver, Victoria/Sidney, Tofino, Comox, Parksville, Duncan, Nanaimo, Campbell River/Quadra Island, Hornby Island and Salmon Arm.

If you know of another location where Western Sandpipers stop regularly on southward migration, let us know and we'll try to include it.

David Hope, MSc, PhD Student, Center for Wildlife Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences,
Simon Fraser University dhope@sfu.ca , www.davidhope.ca (+1) 778-882-4673



MH



BIRDING IN TAIWAN

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For BCFO Members

Prime habitats. Good chance for 23 endemic species; migrants and rarities from Japan and Siberia. Leaders: Simon Liao and Jo Ann MacKenzie Cost: \$3700 (dbl.occup); \$4400 (single); from Taipei

For details contact:
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www.birdingintaiwan.org



The first bluebird of spring
always arrives in a snowstorm (JH)



MH

Request for Nominations

THE STEVE CANNINGS AWARD FOR B.C. ORNITHOLOGY

In 2007, B.C.F.O. presented its first award for contributions to B.C. ornithology, now named the Steve Cannings Award for B.C. Ornithology, to Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan. Subsequent awards have been presented to David Stirling (2008), Madelon Schouten (2010), Dr. Jeremy Tatum (2010), .Ralph Ritcey (2011), and Glenn Ryder 2012.

The award recognizes contributions over a long period of time to ornithology in British Columbia in one or more of the following three categories:

- (1) research on bird biology and/or ecology, or detailed documentation of the avifauna of a portion of B.C.;
- (2) conservation of birds and/or bird habitats in B.C.;
- (3) public education about birds in B.C.

The award is to be announced and, if possible, presented to the recipient annually during the banquet at the B.C.F.O. annual meeting.

We request nominations from any B.C.F.O. member for candidates for future Steve Cannings Awards. Nominations should include at least a brief statement as to why the nominator(s) believe that the nominee is deserving of the award. Nominations should be sent in writing to Dr. Wayne C. Weber, Chair of the Steve Cannings Award Committee, either by mail to 51-6712 Baker Rd., Delta, B.C. V4E 2V3, or by e-mail to contopus@telus.net.

The recipient of a given year's award is recommended by a three-person Awards Committee (Richard J. Cannings, Martin K. McNicholl and Wayne C. Weber) and approved by the B.C.F.O. board. All nominees not chosen in a given year will be considered automatically in future years without requiring another nomination, but updates or expansions to previous nominations are welcome.

All nominations for the award will be gratefully received.

Rare Bird Report:
March – May 2012
from North American Birds

British Columbia

by Chris Charlesworth



March was cold and wet for all but the northern third of the Region, where things were instead on the mild and dry side. The southeastern corner in the Kootenay country had a very cold and snowy March, one of the worst on record. Mountain winter season snows were copious over the whole Region by the end of March, with many areas reporting snow packs well above average. April remained on the cool side in most areas, but precipitation tapered off somewhat. May was glorious in the Northeast east of the Rockies and in some parts of the southern interior, but other areas had to suffice with brief glimpses of the summer to come.

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

A stormy day on the w. coast of Vancouver I. 30 Apr brought in an estimated flock of 2300 Greater White-fronted Geese with a single Ross's Goose to the Tofino Airport (AD). With them was. In the s. Interior, where the species is rare but

annual, single Greater White-fronted Geese were in Kelowna at Munson Pond 27 Mar (MD) and at Nakusp in the West Kootenay 29 Apr (GD). For the 3rd spring in a row, a Ross's Goose returned to Duck L. in Creston 14 Apr (GB). Eurasian Teal were found at several locations across the province. All locations were coastal, except for a male found at Munson Pond in Kelowna 25-27 Mar (Ian Walker et al.). On the Lower Mainland, one was at Boundary Bay R.P., Tsawwassen 3 Mar (RC). Another was at Burnaby L. 6 Mar (Peter Lawrence). On Vancouver I., a male 'was along Corfield Rd. near Duncan 5 Apr (Derrick Marven); another was near Victoria at Tod Flats 15 Apr (MR). Rare spring migrants in the interior of the province, a Long-tailed Duck was at Castlegar 12 May (Gwen Nicol).

An **Arctic Loon** was photographed at the s. end of Vancouver I. off Jordan River 15 Apr (Louis Haviland). A Yellow-billed Loon lingered at the Tofino Harbour 11-28 Mar (AD et al.). In Howe Sound, a Yellow-billed was at the mouth of Furry Cr. 4 Mar (Ken Wright). A Clark's Grebe, still rare throughout most of British Columbia, was noted at Glencoe Cove near Victoria 18 Mar (Agnes Lynn), and another was on Okanagan L. at the mouth of Mission Cr. near Kelowna 25 Apr (CC). A seabird observer on a research vessel covering waters off the Vancouver I. had a Mottled Petrel near Carmanah Pt. 3 Mar (Ryan Merrill). Sightings of Manx Shearwaters continue to accrue, with one seen on a pelagic trip out of Ucluelet 29 Apr (Paul Levesque, m.ob.). Rare but annual on lakes of the s. Interior, a Double-crested Cormorant was noted at the n. end of Osoyoos L. 25 Apr (CC). On the North Coast, a Brown Pelican was found in poor condition on a dock at

Port Edward near Prince Rupert 30 Mar (*fide* RC). An American White Pelican over Osoyoos 24 Mar (DB) provided an early arrival date for that species. On the Lower Mainland, where American White Pelicans are rare, 8 at Pitt Meadows 9 May (LC, DS) made a high count.

The annual smattering of reports of Great Egrets came in from the s. portion of the province, with a single at the Little Qualicum R. estuary near Nanaimo 26-28 Apr (Ryan Cathers, m.ob.), one along the Fraser R. at Terra Nova Park in Richmond 30 Apr (Daryl Livingston), and one at Jerry Sulina Park in Maple Ridge 2 May (Chris Diersch), this last one apparently present for several days previous. Casual on Vancouver I., a **Snowy Egret** was at Panama Flats near Victoria 25-29 May (Warren Drinnan, m.ob.). The Okanagan Valley's 3rd **White-faced Ibis** was sighted at the mouth of Mission Cr. in Kelowna 20 May (GW et al.). Another turned up in a flooded field near Creston 13-15 May (GB et al.).



Furnishing the Okanagan region's third record, this White-faced Ibis was at the mouth of Mission Creek in Kelowna, British Columbia 20 May 2012. Photograph by Dean O'Dea.

Rare migrants in s. British Columbia in spring, single Broad-winged Hawks were noted at several locations, with an ad. at White L. near Okanagan Falls 25 Apr (CC). Yet another was in the Okanagan at Skaha L. near Penticton 1 May (DCa). In the West Kootenay, a Broad-winged was at Nelson 13 (Janice Arndt) & 25 May (Derek Kite). On Vancouver I., Swainson's Hawks are rare spring migrants. Two

different birds, an ad. light morph and an ad. dark morph, were at the Victoria Airport 12-19 May (JG, m.ob.). At Boundary Bay near Vancouver, an imm. Gyrfalcon took a Green-winged Teal 20 Mar (MT).

Boundary Bay held an ad. Pacific Golden- Plover in alternate plumage 22 May (MT). A freak snowstorm in cen. British Columbia brought down a flock of 80 American Golden-Plovers into fields around Giscome near Prince George 18 May (CA et al.). A Willet that has wintered at the base of the Tsawwassen Jetty near Vancouver for nearly a decade was last noted 24 Mar (WW). On the Sunshine Coast, a Willet was a nice find at Oyster Bay near Campbell River 9 Apr (Wesley Greentree). Four Black-necked Stilts were in the Kootenays along the Kootenay R. near Cranbrook 14 Apr (GS). In the Okanagan, 2 were at Otter L. near Vernon 22 Apr (CS), another was at the mouth of Mission Cr. in Kelowna 24 Apr (CC et al.), and one was at Alki L. in Kelowna 14 May (DC). Two appeared at Panama Flats in Victoria 24 Apr, providing the 4th local checklist record of the species (MR). At nearby Maber Flats in Victoria, 4 were noted 25 Apr. Two of these birds remained and nested, Vancouver I.'s first nesting record. Rare anywhere in the interior, a Whimbrel was at Giscome near Prince George 18 May (Christopher Coxson). In the interior, where the species is a casual spring migrant, one Marbled Godwit was at Separation L. near Kamloops 20-21 May (Ellie Hill et al.). Another Marbled Godwit was noted in the West Kootenay at Nakusp 10 May (GD). A Hudsonian Godwit in alternate plumage was found in fields near Boundary Bay 6 May (RF). On Vancouver I., a Hudsonian was at Dyke Slough in Comox 19 May (Art Martell et al.), and one tarried at Tofino 19-25 May (AD et

al.). A **Bar-tailed Godwit** in prealternate molt was photographed at Brunswick Pt., Ladner 17 May (RS). A female Ruff was a nice find at the Reifel Refuge in Ladner 26 May (BS).

Larger-than-usual numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were tallied on Arrow L. in the W. Kootenay, with 420 seen 28 Apr (GD). At the mouth of Vernon Cr. at Okanagan Landing, an ad. Iceland Gull of the nominate subspecies was seen 4 Mar (DC). A third-cycle Iceland Gull, also apparently of the nominate subspecies, was at Qualicum Beach on Vancouver I. 11 May (GM). At Clover Pt., Victoria, an imm. Iceland Gull was described 27 Mar (RSc et al.). The Okanagan Valley solidified its reputation as the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** capital of the province one again, with a second-cycle bird noted at the mouth of Vernon Cr. in Okanagan Landing 1-2 Mar (DC); the bird was seen again about 100 km to the s. at Penticton 6-7 Mar (DCa et al.). In British Columbia, Forster's Terns are rare spring migrants away from their tiny breeding colony in the Creston area. Thus, 3 at the mouth of Mission Cr. in Kelowna 21 May were unexpected (TS, MH et al.). A Caspian Tern at Eaglet L. near Prince George 19 May was the only one reported from the cen. Interior during the period (NK, EH, CSw).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

A male Costa's Hummingbird present in Vancouver since Jun 2010 remained through at least 3 Mar (Graham Chambers). A male Calliope Hummingbird was banded at Iona Island B.O. 14 May (MB). A handful of records exist for Broad-tailed Hummingbird in British Columbia, so a report of a female at a feeder in Blaeberry in the Rocky Mts. 30 May was exceptional (DL). Rare in spring on Vancouver I., a

Lewis's Woodpecker was a welcome find in North Saanich 24 Apr (DA). British Columbia's 5th and 6th records of **Acorn Woodpecker** were established with single female birds



This Acorn Woodpecker, British Columbia's fifth, visited a feeder in Merritt 17-27 (here 20) May 2012. Photograph by Brian Carson.

at Merritt 17-27 May (B. Scafe, AB et al.) and near Hope in the Sunshine Valley 16-18 May (Brian Carson).

A locally rare Dusky Flycatcher was banded at the Iona B.O. 22 May (MB). The usual dose of Say's Phoebes appeared at scattered coastal locations this spring: one at Maplewood Flats Conservation Area in North Vancouver 10-11 Mar (RL), one at Deer L. in Burnaby 16-20 Mar (Jean Johnson, m.ob.), and one near Coquitlam at Colony Farm 20 May (Derek Matthews). In central British Columbia, where Western Kingbirds are rare, one seen at Giscome near Prince George 19 May was very noteworthy (KN, EH, CSw). The only Loggerhead Shrike reported this period was at Duck L. near Creston 6 May (RC, GB). A few Blue Jays appeared in the s. Interior, including one along Silver Star Rd. in Vernon 25 Apr; this bird also appeared 27 Apr at Cool's Pond, a short distance away (CS). Another was seen several times at a Nakusp feeder, including 17 Mar (GD), and one appeared at Castlegar in the West Kootenay 8 Apr (MM). A Black-billed Magpie seen at Johnson's Landing in the West Kootenay 10 Apr provided just the

3rd local record in 20 years (GS). Three Barn Swallows noted at Thomson C.A. in Kelowna 22 Mar provided a very early record for the s. Interior (CC).

A House Wren was singing on territory at the Iona Sewage Ponds, Richmond 28-29 Apr (MTo, ST et al.). The Okanagan's first and British Columbia's 2nd **Sedge Wren** appeared along the Esplanade Trails in Penticton 14 May (RC, JF et al.). A Northern Mockingbird was seen eating holly berries in Squamish 24 Mar (Chris Dale); apparently, this bird had been present for at least two weeks (Patrick MacNamara). West of Williams Lake at the Gang Ranch in the Chilcotin, a singing mockingbird was found 13 May (NK, Robb Paterson). A breeding male **Chestnut-collared Longspur** was a superb find along the Iona South Jetty, Richmond 7 May (Tak Shabata, m.ob.). A singing male Magnolia Warbler was at Waldie I. in Castlegar 6 May (RC). Stormy weather produced a fallout of Yellow-rumped Warblers at Iona I., Richmond, with 2000 estimated there, Audubon's and Myrtle in roughly equal proportions (MB et al.). Another first for the Okanagan Valley, a female Black-throated Gray Warbler was found along the Okanagan R. channel in Penticton 15 May (RC et al.). Another appeared at Princeton 24 May (Amanda Lahaie). The province's 2nd **Yellow-throated Warbler** was photo-



British Columbia's second Yellow-throated Warbler was found at Revelstoke 26 May 2012. Photograph by Harry van Oort.

graphed at Revelstoke 26 May (Harry Van Oort).

A Brewer's Sparrow, most likely of the Timberline subspecies (*taverneri*) was at Iona I., Richmond 21 May (KL). On Vancouver I., a Brewer's Sparrow sang daily at Swan L. in Victoria 21-24 May (IC, m.ob.), and another was at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt near Victoria 23 May (Bill Katz). On the Lower Mainland, one was at Cecil Green Park, Vancouver 21 May (BD). In recent years, Black-throated Sparrow sightings have become almost annual. This year continued the trend, with a singing bird noted at Osoyoos 10 May (DB) and another at a bird bath in Yale in the Fraser Canyon 27 May (Aaron Gaffney). A **Sage Sparrow** was an exciting find at Munson Pond,



In recent years, Black-throated Sparrow has become nearly annual in British Columbia. This one visited a yard in Yale, in the Fraser Canyon, 27 May 2012. Photograph by Aaron Gaffney.

Kelowna 12 Apr (Avery Bartels). Vesper Sparrows on the Lower Mainland appeared at the Iona Sewage Ponds, Richmond 26-28 Apr (WD, BD et al.) and at Ambleside Park in West Vancouver 6 May (Mike Fung).

In the Kootenays, 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found at Lardeau 24 May (Marlene Johnston). A dead male Indigo Bunting was picked up

on Saturna I. in the Gulf Island chain 30 May (*fide* JK). Two female Rusty Blackbirds fed on Russian Olive berries at Haynes Point P.P., Osoyoos 13 Mar (CC, MD). A Lesser Goldfinch at a feeder in Princeton 18-19 May (Sue Elwell) provided the 2nd local record for the checklist area. At the McCulloch Nordic Cross-Country Ski Trails near Kelowna, 2 Hoary Redpolls graced feeders from 1 Mar (CC,m.ob.). Other singles were on Anarchist Mt. near Osoyoos 22 Mar (DCa et al.) and at a feeder at Salmon Arm 22 Mar (Geoff Styles).

OBSERVERS: David Allinson, Mike Boyd, Gary Breault, Doug Brown, Alan Burger, Dick Cannings (DCa), Russell Cannings, Don Cecile, Chris Charlesworth, Larry Cowan, Ian Cruickshank, Gary Davidson, Brent Diakow, Wayne Diakow, Matthias Deter, Adrian Dorst, Jess Findlay, Roger Foxall, Jeremy Gatten, Michelle Hamilton, Elizabeth Hewison, Jeremy Kimm, Nancy Krueger, Douglas Leighton, Rob Lyske, Kevin Louth, Michael McMann, Guy Monty, Mary Robichaud, Dave Schutz, Tanya Seebacher, Brian Self, Chris Siddle, Cathie Sweet (CSw), Gail Spitler, Rick Schortinghuis (RSc), Richard Swanston, Mike Tabak, Sharon Toochn, Mike Toochn (MTo), Wayne Weber, Gwynneth Wilson.

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Bird Listers' Corner

2012 Lists

Welcome to the 2012 Listers' Corner. To familiarize everyone with the tables, the number under the “%” represents the percentage of an individual's total compared to the total species in that particular area/list. The “**incr**” column indicates an increase, if any, from their 2011 figure. An “**asterisk**” preceding a total indicates a number wasn't submitted for 2012. As in the past if a member does not supply a submission for two consecutive years the listing will be dropped. An individual in **red bold print** indicates a person who had the largest increase from the previous year. A name in **red** indicates the reaching of a significant plateau.

It should be noted only BCFO members for 2012/13 are included in this report. Submissions were received from 55 members. This total was three less than in 2011. There were three members new to Listers' Corner from 2011, Chris Charlesworth, Carlo Giovanella, and Brian Self. All email and mailed submissions, provided an email address was known, were acknowledged. If you didn't get an acknowledgement, I didn't get your totals. A friendly reminder email was sent out mid January to previous submitters.

BC: Alberta based birder **Mike Mulligan** had an increase of 28 for his BC list moving him to the 300 mark. **Jo Ann MacKenzie's** increase of 10 is notable since she is closing in on the 90% mark of species listed for the province. **MikeToochin** continues as pack leader. Thor Manson & Bryan Gates passed the 400 mark and Peter McIver the 300 plateau.

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 505					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	465	Mike Toochin	92.1	3	462
2	449	Jo Ann MacKenzie	88.9	10	439
3	439	Dale Jensen	86.9	2	437
4	432	Sharon Toochin	85.5	3	429
5	428	Wayne Weber	84.8	2	426

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 505					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
6	425	Roger Foxall	84.2	3	422
7	422	David Stirling	83.6		422
8	421	Tony Greenfield	83.4	1	420
9	420	Brian Self	83.2		
10	419	Carlo Giovanella	83.0		
11	417	Lloyd Esralson	82.6		418
12	414	Murray Brown	82.0	4	410
13	412	Brian Stech	81.6	5	407
14	409	Dick Cannings	81.0	3	406
14	409	Val George	81.0	5	404
16	405	Mike McGrenere	80.2	4	401
17	401	Thor Manson	79.4	2	399
18	400	Bryan Gates	79.2	1	399
19	399	Keith Riding	79.0	1	398
20	398	Russ Tkachuk	78.8	2	396
21	396	Brian Scott	78.4	5	391
22	395	Hank Vanderpol	78.2	1	394
22	395	Russell Cannings	78.2	3	392
24	393	John Vooy	77.8	7	386
25	390	Barbara Begg	77.2		390
26	389	Larry Cowan	77.0	3	386
27	387	Kevin Neill	76.6	7	380
28	382	Chris Charlesworth	75.6		
29	379	Len Jellicoe	75.0	2	377
30	378	Gary Davidson	74.9		378
31	370	Rand Rudland	73.3	17	353
32	368	Ken Morgan	72.9	1	367
32	368	Don Wilson	72.9	1	367
34	364	Bruce Whittington	72.1		364
35	357	Laird Law	70.7	1	356
36	356	Art Martell	70.5	5	351
36	356	Martin McNicholl	70.5		356
38	352	Gwynneth Wilson	69.7		352
39	350	Peter Blokker	69.3		350
40	349	Andy Buhler	69.1		349
40	349	Marilyn Buhler	69.1		349
42	327	John Sprague	64.8	1	326
43	323	Ken Taylor	64.0	1	322
44	318	Dorothy Copp	63.0	1	317
45	315	Ted Goshulak	62.4	2	313
46	306	Bob McKay	60.6	2	304
47	301	Peter McIver	59.6	3	298
48	300	Mike Mulligan (AB)	59.4	28	272
49	295	Janice Arndt	58.4	1	294
50	287	Lee Harding	56.8	11	276

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 505					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
51	278	Laure Neish	55.0		278
52	223	Sandra Eadie (ON)	44.2		

ABA: With an increase of three **Roger Foxall** reached the 80% mark of species on the ABA list. **Ted Goshulak** had the biggest increase with the addition of 41 species which pushed him over the 500 plateau. Mike McGrenere inched over the 550 mark with an increase of 28.

ABA - 976					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	777	Roger Foxall	79.6	3	774
2	773	Mike Toochin	79.2	1	772
3	766	Mike Mulligan	78.5	2	764
4	762	Hank Vanderpol	78.1	7	755
5	736	Thor Manson	75.4	6	730
5	736	Russ Tkachuk	75.4	2	734
7	711	Art Martell	72.8	4	707
8	709	Jo Ann MacKenzie	72.6	3	706
9	707	Dale Jensen	72.4	2	705
10	703	Dorothy Copp	72.0	2	701
11	696	John Vooy	71.3	6	690
12	694	Brian Stech	71.1	3	691
13	679	David Stirling	69.6		679
13	679	Wayne Weber	69.6	3	676
15	672	Sharon Toochin	68.9	2	670
16	657	Chris Charlesworth	67.3		
17	653	John Sprague	66.9		653
18	648	Gary Davidson	66.4	1	647
19	647	Brian Self	66.3		
20	643	Brian Scott	65.9	2	641
21	638	Dick Cannings	65.4		638
22	637	Andy Buhler	65.3		637
22	637	Marilyn Buhler	65.3		637
24	627	Gwynneth Wilson	64.2		627
25	623	Kevin Neill	63.8	4	619
26	619	Don Wilson	63.4		619
27	616	Keith Riding	63.1	2	614
28	610	Barbara Begg	62.5	5	605
28	610	Carlo Giovanella	62.5		
30	607	Tony Greenfield	62.2	1	606
31	599	Lloyd Esralson	61.4		599
32	586	Sandra Eadie	60.0		588
33	585	Peter McIver	59.9		585
33	*585	Bill Heybroek	59.9		585

ABA - 976					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
35	584	Ken Morgan	59.8		584
36	576	Russell Cannings	59.0	9	567
37	568	Bryan Gates	58.2	2	566
38	562	Larry Cowan	57.6	3	559
39	552	Mike McGrenere	56.6	28	524
40	540	Val George	55.3		
41	539	Rand Rudland	55.2	4	535
42	538	Laure Neish	55.1	4	534
43	530	Murray Brown	54.3	3	527
44	526	Martin McNicholl	53.9		526
45	518	Laird Law	53.1	18	500
46	508	Ted Goshulak	52.0	41	467
47	488	Bob McKay	50.0	4	484
48	471	Ken Taylor	48.3	1	470
49	460	Lee Harding	47.1	5	455
50	419	Janice Arndt	42.9	1	418
51	412	Peter Blokker	42.2		412

World: **Keith Riding** remains at the top of the World standings. The largest increase was **Hank Vanderpol** with 257. He also crossed the 3000 plateau. Others surpassing plateaus were Mike Toochin-4500; David Sterling-4000; Peter McIver & Mike Mulligan-3500; Dorothy Copp, Lee Harding, Ken Morgan & Brain Stech-2000; Tony Greenfield-1500.

WORLD - 10,153					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	5,843	Keith Riding	57.5	250	5,593
2	4,942	Nigel Mathews	48.7	7	4,935
3	4,870	Roger Foxall	48.0	236	4,634
4	4,629	Mike Toochin	45.6	144	4,485
5	4,578	Jo Ann MacKenzie	45.1	28	4,550
6	4,296	Art Martell	42.3	38	4,258
7	4,026	David Stirling	39.7	39	3,987
8	3,782	Sharon Toochin	37.3	136	3,646
9	3,607	Peter McIver	35.5	134	3,473
10	3,544	Mike Mulligan	34.9	244	3,300
11	3,298	Ken Taylor	32.5	1	3,297
12	3,169	Barbara Begg	31.2	100	3,069
13	3,149	Dick Cannings	31.0	3	3,146
14	3,102	Hank Vanderpol	30.6	257	2,845
15	3,050	Dale Jensen	30.0		3,058
16	2,888	Brian Self	28.4		
17	2,850	Laird Law	28.1	9	2,841

WORLD - 10,153					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
18	2,482	Don Wilson	24.4	130	2,352
19	2,164	Val George	21.3	48	2,116
20	2,094	Dorothy Copp	20.6	128	1,966
21	2,073	Rand Rudland	20.4	66	2,007
22	2,056	Brian Scott	20.3	2	2,054
23	2,037	Brian Stech	20.1	138	1,899
24	2,023	Ken Morgan	19.9	192	1,831
25	2,000	Lee Harding	19.7	16	1,984
26	1,930	Gary Davidson	19.0	190	1,740
27	1,825	Sandra Eadie	18.0	228	1,597
28	1,590	Bryan Gates	15.7	2	1,588
29	1,526	Tony Greenfield	15.0	101	1,425
30	1,420	Chris Charlesworth	14.0		
31	1,303	Larry Cowan	12.8	6	1,297
32	946	Kevin Neill	9.3		

Canada: **Roger Foxall** remains in the lead, 16 ahead of **Jo Ann MacKenzie** who added an impressive 8 species to her total. **Rand Rudland** had the largest increase at 21. Cresting the 450 mark were Murray Brown, Mike Mulligan, Kevin Neill & Keith Riding.

CANADA - 669					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	542	Roger Foxall	81.0	2	540
2	526	Jo Ann MacKenzie	78.6	8	518
3	503	Mike Toochin	75.2	2	501
4	489	Brian Self	73.1		
5	487	David Stirling	72.8		489
6	484	Dale Jensen	72.3	2	482
7	478	Sharon Toochin	71.4	3	475
8	475	Russ Tkachuk	71.0	1	474
9	471	Wayne Weber	70.4	3	468
10	468	Dick Cannings	70.0	1	467
11	462	Carlo Giovanella	69.1		
11	462	Hank Vanderpol	69.1	2	460
13	457	Mike McGrenere	68.3	4	453
14	456	Murray Brown	68.2	7	449
15	455	Thor Manson	68.0	2	453
15	455	Mike Mulligan	68.0	14	441
17	454	Kevin Neill	67.9	6	448
18	451	Keith Riding	67.4	2	449
19	450	Barbara Begg	67.3		450
20	448	Brian Scott	67.0	4	444
21	446	Art Martell	66.7	3	443

CANADA - 669					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
22	445	Brian Stech	66.5	6	439
23	444	Martin McNicholl	66.4		444
24	442	Larry Cowan	66.1	3	439
25	440	Lloyd Esralson	65.8		441
26	439	Len Jellicoe	65.6	3	436
26	439	John Vooy	65.6	5	434
28	435	Russell Cannings	65.0	13	422
29	433	Ken Morgan	64.7	1	432
30	432	Tony Greenfield	64.6	1	431
31	430	Chris Charlesworth	64.3		
32	422	Rand Rudland	63.1	21	401
33	420	Bryan Gates	62.8	2	418
34	413	Gwynneth Wilson	61.7		413
35	412	Sandra Eadie	61.6		412
36	410	Peter Blokker	61.3		410
37	409	Don Wilson	61.1	2	407
38	408	John B. Sprague	61.0	1	407
38	408	Gary Davidson	61.0		408
40	398	Marilyn Buhler	59.5		398
40	398	Andy Buhler	59.5		398
42	392	Janice Arndt	58.6	1	391
43	387	Bob McKay	57.8	1	386
44	383	Laird Law	57.2		383
45	380	Ted Goshulak	56.8	2	378
46	375	Dorothy Copp	56.1	1	374
47	373	Peter McIver	55.8	5	368
48	333	Lee Harding	49.8	5	328
48	333	Laure Neish	49.8		

Okanagan Valley: **Chris Charlesworth** returns to the list at number one. **Laure Neish** & **Dick Cannings** managed to add 3 to their totals with Dick crossing the 300 mark.

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 342					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	308	Chris Charlesworth	90.1		
2	302	Dick Cannings	88.3	3	299
3	294	Gwynneth Wilson	86.0	1	293
4	291	Russell Cannings	85.1	2	289
5	289	Don Wilson	84.5	1	288
6	280	Laure Neish	81.9	3	277
7	272	Peter Blokker	79.5		272
8	269	Mike Toochin	78.7		269
9	263	Bob McKay	76.9	1	262
10	259	Hank Vanderpol	75.7		259

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 342					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
11	258	Wayne Weber	75.4		258
12	256	Gary Davidson	74.9	1	255
13	242	David Stirling	70.8		242
14	234	Jo Ann MacKenzie	68.4		234
15	232	Tony Greenfield	67.8		232
16	*221	John Voos	64.6		221
17	218	Laird Law	63.7		218
18	215	Lloyd Esralson	62.9		215
19	193	Bryan Gates	56.4		193
20	177	Brian Stech	51.8		177
21	168	Larry Cowan	49.1		168
22	162	Dorothy Copp	47.4		162

Washington State: **Bob McKay** added 8 to his list while **Wayne Weber** increased his lead by 5 again retaining top spot.

WASHINGTON STATE - 503					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	398	Wayne Weber	79.1	5	393
2	349	Jo Ann MacKenzie	69.4		349
3	317	Mike Toochin	63.0		317
4	275	Hank Vanderpol	54.7		275
5	268	Dick Cannings	53.3		268
6	*262	John Voos	52.1		262
7	257	Roger Foxall	51.1		257
8	254	David Stirling	50.5		254
9	*251	Keith Riding	49.9		251
10	235	Lloyd Esralson	46.7		235
11	*234	Dale Jensen	46.5		234
12	226	Bob McKay	44.9	8	218
13	214	Dorothy Copp	42.5		214
14	212	Brian Stech	42.1		212

BC Winter: Includes period sightings for Dec/Jan/Feb with a total to Dec. 31, 2012. **Mike Toochin** managed to add 9 to his list and remains in top position.

B.C. Winter List - Dec / Jan / Feb					
#	2012	Name	incr	2011	
1	283	Mike Toochin	9	274	
2	225	Russell Cannings		225	
3	213	Larry Cowan	2	211	
4	118	Janice Arndt		118	
5	*82	Lee Harding		82	

Alberta: **Mike Mulligan** moved to the 350 plateau and still holds down top spot. **Len Jellicoe** had the highest increase with 6.

ALBERTA - 417					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	350	Mike Mulligan	83.9	1	349
2	312	Hank Vanderpol	74.8	2	310
3	286	David Stirling	68.6		286
4	252	Russ Cannings	60.4		
5	241	Roger Foxall	57.8		241
5	241	Martin McNicholl	57.8		241
7	240	Jo Ann MacKenzie	57.6		240
8	235	Wayne Weber	56.4		235
9	222	Laure Neish	53.2		222
9	222	Bryan Gates	53.2		222
11	216	Gary Davidson	51.8		216
12	214	Dick Cannings	51.3		214
13	195	Len Jellicoe	46.8	6	189

ATPT: The list grew from 7 to 11. **Roger Foxall** joins the group in first place. Best increases were **Dick Cannings** & **Larry Cowan** with 3.

(Ticks) All Provinces & Territories					
#	2012	Name	incr	2011	
1	2,945	Roger Foxall			
2	2,155	David Stirling	1	2,154	
3	1,857	Dick Cannings	3	1,854	
4	1,693	Wayne Weber			
5	1,262	Barabara Begg		1,262	
6	1,185	Gary Davidson		1,185	
7	1,135	John Sprague			
8	945	Sandra Eadie			
9	*858	Brian Stech		858	
10	772	Larry Cowan	3	769	
11	*752	Dorothy Copp		752	

Sunshine Coast: This list saw **Tony Greenfield** on top once again. **Rand Rudland** added 11 to his total. Wayne Weber joined the list with 136.

SUNSHINE COAST - 304					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	276	Tony Greenfield	91	2	274
2	252	Russ Tkachuk	83	2	250
3	244	Rand Rudland	80	11	233
4	136	Wayne Weber			

NMT: The list continues to attract listers, growing by 3 this year. **Dick Cannings** continued to improve his list by 17. **Mike McGrenere** still retains a commanding lead in top position.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT				
#	2012	Name & location	incr	2011
1	266	Mike McGrenere, Victoria	9	257
2	232	Dick Cannings, Penticton	17	215
3	*175	Bob McKay, Oliver		175
4	164	Ken Wright, Lillooet	7	157
5	149	Janice Arndt, Nelson	1	148
6	101	Barbara Begg, Sidney		
7	56	Lee Harding, Coquitlam		
8	50	Ted Goshulak, Langley		

North Pacific Pelagic Waters: Mike Toochin remains the leader. **Val George** added 5 to his total and Bryan Gates joins the list at 45.

NORTH PACIFIC PELAGIC WATERS				
#	2012	Name	incr	2011
1	107	Mike Toochin	1	106
2	101	Ken Morgan	1	100
3	77	Bruce Whittington		77
4	69	Russell Cannings		69
5	67	David Stirling		67
6	65	Val George	5	60
7	64	Kevin Neill	2	62
8	63	Lloyd Esralson		63
9	58	Jo Ann MacKenzie		58
10	45	Bryan Gates		

Yukon: The list grew by two with **Dick Cannings** still holding first place. **Tony Greenfield** was the only one to add to his total.

YUKON TERRITORY - 310					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	172	Dick Cannings	55.5		172
2	159	Tony Greenfield	51.3	1	158
3	150	David Stirling	48.4		150
4	142	Roger Foxall	45.8		142
5	123	Gary Davidson	39.7		123
6	112	Rand Rudland	36.1		112
7	109	John Sprague	35.2		109
8	102	Brian Self			
9	97	Wayne Weber			

Northwest Territories: The NWT list grew by five submitters with **Laird Law** remaining at # 1. **Lee Harding** improved his list by 13.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - 322					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	176	Laird Law	54.7		176
2	153	Tony Greenfield	47.5	2	151
3	148	David Stirling	46.0		148
4	133	Rand Rudland	41.3		133
5	105	Roger Foxall	32.6		
6	98	Brian Self	30.4		
7	97	Barbara Begg	30.1		
8	86	Mike Toochin	26.7		86
9	84	John Sprague	26.1		
10	64	Lee Harding	19.9	13	51
11	52	Wayne Weber	16.1		
12	40	Dick Cannings			40

Vancouver Island: Mike Toochin added 1 to his list and reached the 300 plateau. **Roger Foxall** had the best increase with 6. **David Sterling** remains on top with a 10 species lead.

VANCOUVER ISLAND - 388					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	348	David Stirling	89.7		348
2	338	Barbara Begg	87.1	1	337
3	337	Mike McGrenere	86.9	2	335
4	334	Bryan Gates	86.1	2	332
5	323	Hank Vanderpol	83.2	1	322
6	315	Bruce Whittington	81.2	1	314
7	300	Mike Toochin	77.3	1	299
8	286	Ken Morgan	73.7	2	284
9	260	Roger Foxall	67.0	6	254
10	258	Wayne Weber	66.5	3	255
11	250	Jo Ann MacKenzie	64.4		250
12	198	Larry Cowan			

Victoria: The list remained stable as far as positioning with Larry Cowan joined the list in 9th. **Wayne Weber** managed an increase of 2.

VICTORIA AREA - 362					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	331	David Stirling	91.4		331
2	323	Barbara Begg	89.2	1	322
3	321	Mike McGrenere	88.7	1	320
4	316	Bryan Gates	87.3		316

VICTORIA AREA - 362					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
5	313	Hank Vanderpol	86.5		313
6	303	Bruce Whittington	83.7		303
7	259	Mike Tootchin	71.5		259
8	237	Wayne Weber	65.5	2	235
9	147	Larry Cowan	40.6		
10	141	Lloyd Esralson	39.0		141

Vancouver: **Dick Cannings** had the highest increase with 4. Carlo Giovanella joined the list in 4th position.

VANCOUVER AREA - 398					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	367	Mike Tootchin	92.2	3	364
2	353	Jo Ann MacKenzie	88.7	1	352
3	343	Wayne Weber	86.2	1	342
4	340	Carlo Giovanella	85.4		
5	333	Keith Riding	83.7	1	332
5	333	Lloyd Esralson	83.7		333
7	327	Roger Foxall	82.2	7	320
8	315	Larry Cowan	79.1	3	312
9	305	Brian Stech	76.6	4	301
10	304	John Vooy	76.4	4	300
11	286	Dick Cannings	71.9	8	278
12	262	Kevin Neill	65.8		
13	246	Russell Cannings	61.8		246
14	242	David Stirling	60.8		242
15	234	Don Wilson	58.8		234
15	234	Bryan Gates	58.8		235

West Kootenay: Gary Davidson remains in first while Peter McIver raised his total by 3.

WEST KOOTENAY AREA - 313					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	278	Gary Davidson	88.8		278
2	244	Peter McIver	78.0	3	241
3	233	Janice Arndt	74.4	1	232
4	185	Jo Ann MacKenzie	59.1		185
5	182	Wayne Weber	58.1		182

Peace River: **Laird Law**, in top position, had an increase of two species. **Russ Cannings** added one to draw even with Tony Greenfield.

PEACE RIVER AREA - 272					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	244	Laird Law	89.7	2	242
2	209	Tony Greenfield	76.8		209
2	209	Russell Cannings	76.8	1	208
4	203	Mike Tootchin	74.6		203
5	193	Jo Ann MacKenzie	71.0		193
6	184	Bryan Gates	67.6		184
7	164	Wayne Weber	60.3		164
8	163	David Stirling	59.9		163
9	153	Larry Cowan	56.3		153
10	144	Lloyd Esralson	52.9		144
11	*128	Brian Stech	47.1		128

Prince George: **Laird Law** continues at top spot. Laird & Cathy Antoniazzi both increased their totals by one.

PRINCE GEORGE AREA - 297					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	271	Laird Law	91	1	270
2	267	Cathy Antoniazzi	90	1	266
3	190	Don Wilson	64		190
4	187	Russell Cannings	63		187
5	151	Peter Blokker	51		151

I'll leave the analysis of the balance of the lists to you the readers.

Mt. Robson PP					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	145	Dick Cannings			145
2	133	Laird Law			133
3	120	David Stirling			120
4	85	Wayne Weber			85

KAMLOOPS AREA - 306					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	255	Wayne Weber	83		255
2	198	David Stirling	65		198
3	192	Gary Davidson	63		192

Salt Spring Island					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	158	Karen Ferguson		9	149
2	157	John Sprague		1	156
3	114	Wayne Weber			

MANNING PROVINCIAL PARK - 206					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	152	Mike McGrenere	74		152
2	125	Wayne Weber	61		125
3	123	Dick Cannings	60		123
4	110	Jo Ann MacKenzie	53		110
5	101	David Stirling	49		101
6	*97	Bob McKay	47		97
7	90	Larry Cowan			

SEA & IONA ISLANDS (VANC)					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	274	Mike Tootchin		2	272
2	242	Keith Riding		2	240
3	235	Wayne Weber		2	233
4	204	Lloyd Esralson			204
5	178	Larry Cowan		1	177
6	167	Dick Cannings		2	165
7	127	Ted Goshulak			

WESTHAM & REIFEL ISLANDS (VANC)					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	223	Wayne Weber		1	222
2	194	Lloyd Esralson			194
3	175	Keith Riding		36	139
4	156	Larry Cowan		1	155
5	142	Dick Cannings			142

BLACKIE SPIT (VANC)					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	192	Jo Ann MacKenzie			192
2	183	Wayne Weber			183
3	112	Larry Cowan			112
4	80	Dick Cannings			80

CRESTON VALLEY AREA - 301					
#	2012	Name	%	incr	2011
1	212	Peter McIver	170	4	208
2	169	Gary Davidson	135		169
3	142	Wayne Weber	114		142

Princeton Area					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	95	Lloyd Esralson			95
2	91	Larry Cowan			
3	90	Bryan Gates			90

Pitt Meadows					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	200	Wayne Weber			200
2	190	Larry Cowan		4	186

Semiamhoo Peninsula					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	217	Carlo Giovanella			
2	192	Roger Foxall			

Revelstoke Area					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	185	Russell Cannings		5	180
2	150	Wayne Weber			150

Over 1,500m					
#	2012	Name		incr	2011
1	112	Mike McGrenere			112
2	106	Wayne Weber			

The remaining listings are for areas with single submissions, grouped by Tourism Zones as set out by BC Tourism. This should be of assistance in determining which lists to consider tracking while travelling to destinations around the Province.

Northern BC		2012	Name	+	2011
Gwaii Haanas NP		81	Bruce Whittington	5	76
Haida Gwaii		106	Bruce Whittington	3	103
Haines Triangle Area		*88	David Stirling		88

Cariboo/Chilcotin		2012	Name	+	2011
Williams Lake Area		138	Bryan Gates		138

Thompson/Okanagan		2012	Name	+	2011
Nicola Watershed		252	Wayne Weber	1	251
North Okanagan Area		251	Peter Blokker		251

Other		2012	Name	+	2011
ABA Birds Photographed		444	Brian Stech		

BC Rockies		2012	Name	+	2011
Columbia Valley		123	Bryan Gates		123
East Kootenay		*94	Lee Harding		94
Yoho NP		124	Wayne Weber		124

Vancouver Coast & Mnt.	2012	Name	+	2011
City of Abbotsford	*195	John Vooyo		195
City of Richmond	283	Mike Toochin	1	282
Colony Farm RP	160	Larry Cowan	1	159
Derby Reach RP	96	Ted Goshulak		96
Garibaldi PP	73	Mike McGrenere		73
Iona Island	261	Mike Toochin	1	260
Nathan Creek Dyke	67	Ted Goshulak		
Trinity Westrn U Campus	149	Ted Goshulak		149

Vancouver Island	2012	Name	+	2011
Clover Point	199	David Stirling		199
Miracle Beach PP	159	David Stirling		159
Mitlenatch Island PP	110	David Stirling		110
Pacific Rim NP	175	David Stirling		175
Saturna Island	102	Tony Greenfield		102

Members are reminded there are other opportunities for listing their totals not encompassed by BCFO Listers' Corner. These include the American Birding Association and the Neily World Canadian Listers' Corner.

I would like to thank all those who submitted their life totals for this article. Wishing everyone continued good birding in 2013. Hope to see many of you at the BCFO AGM and Conference on Vancouver Island this coming May.

Larry Cowan



Gary Oak Meadows near Sidney in May

Marie Shaughnessy

LARCENOUS JAYS

The food-caching behaviour of some corvids is well-known. Western Scrub Jays (*Aphelocoma californica*), for example, have been found to have up to a thousand caches, and to remember most of them. The birds are also known to spy on each other and raid each other's caches. This leads birds stashing their nuts or seeds to be furtive – to do so out of sight of prying eyes and, apparently, ears. A new study of Eurasian Jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) raises interesting questions about the birds' intelligence.



Eurasian Jay Josep del Hoyo, The Internet Bird Collection

Researchers in the Cambridge, U.K., wondered what cues the birds use to spy on their caching brethren and whether the brethren respond appropriately. They supplied eight captive birds with 30 peanuts each and gave them two trays, one filled with sand and one filled with gravel, in which to cache them. They then ran two experiments: one in which a rival could watch the bird caching the food, and one in which it could hear but not see. The birds preferred sand, in which they could stow their peanuts more quietly, to the gravel. But four birds used the gravel when the rival was watching but promptly switched to the sand when the rival could only listen. The researchers also watched the would-be thieves. Jays are normally unusually noisy (not for nothing are European Jays given the genetic name *Garrulus*) but, when looking to observe and then pilfer a cousin's cache, they fall absolutely silent.

These observations raise questions about the jays' cognitive and strategizing abilities. It seems that an individual jay knows what rivals are thinking or doing – hence the switch in behaviour when the caching jay realises that a rival is listening, and the atypical silence of the spying bird. The researchers point out that jays are good vocal mimics, hence might be expected to be sensitive to auditory signals. These qualities, in turn, raise the profound question whether jays have something like what philosophers call a

'theory of mind', meaning the ability to conceptualise another animal's point of view.

Dogs and primates are also known to pay attention to what others see and hear, but so far only dogs and the jays appear to act responsively to auditory signals. Whether the birds in some sense understand what others are seeing and hearing, and specifically act upon that understanding, remains an open question. A positive answer would shake the foundations of what we think about animal intelligence. The experiments nevertheless remind us that animals possess some kind of intelligence that significantly exceeds what humans have conventionally supposed.

Source: Online commentary from the journal *Science* ([url: http://scim.ag/Jayscache](http://scim.ag/Jayscache)), based on Shaw, R.C., and Clayton, N.S. 2013. Careful cachers and prying pilferers: Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*) limit auditory information available to competitors. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* **280**(1752). Summary by M.Church

IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED THIS NEWSLETTER, WHY NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEXT ONE?

Items of interest can range from short notes about bird observations, with or without photos (see e.g.s p.24) to articles of up to 4 pages. Also, we need volunteers to write about the upcoming field trips i.e., annual meeting trips and BCFO two-day field trips. Or simply describe one of your own birding activities in your home area, or a holiday visit, or a matter of conservation concern, or.....
Submissions for the next (June) issue will be accepted any time from now until mid-May.



Following on from 'Ode to Chickadees p.16-18, here is a (European) Coal Tit from northern England – another chickadee look-alike except for the white streak on the back of its head. Photo: Meg Walker

COVER STORY FOR IMAGES ON PAGE 40

Landscapes of the Saanich Peninsular near Sidney and Victoria.

IMAGES BY MARIE O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Clockwise from top: Victoria waterfront (inset: cormorant rocks); Reservoir at Martindale Flats; Goldstream Park; Great Blue Heron; Esquimalt Lagoon; Sidney Waterfront.

JOIN US IN SIDNEY for the BCFO ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 2013

