

B_C BIRDING

NewsMagazine of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

ISSN 1206-1611

Volume 25 Number 1 / March 2015



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BC Birding: ISSN 1206-1611, is published four times a year
by the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

PO Box 45111, Dunbar
Vancouver B.C., V6S 2M 8

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 requests, or requests for further information, to:
Membership, PO Box 45111 Dunbar,
Vancouver, B.C., V6S 2M8

Annual Membership Dues

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

New memberships and Renewals may be completed online
via the BCFO Website

BCFO Website: <<http://bcfo.ca/>>

NewsMagazine Submissions

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

The deadline for receipt of material 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

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COVER STORY

Great Grey Owl

From *Adrian Leather*: The winter of 2014-15 saw an unprecedented number of reports relating to Great Grey Owls in the Quesnel area and surrounds. It began with Jerry & Lynne McFetridge spotting a Great Grey Owl on Pinnacles Rd, Bouchie Lake, on the Quesnel CBC of Jan 04. The following day, Adrian Leather watched 2 Great Grey Owls at the same location. Rod Sargent tallied an astonishing 9 Great Grey Owls on Chimney Lake Rd near Williams Lake, then numerous reports came in to Quesnel Birding Club of Great Grey Owls all over the North Cariboo.

The cover image, by *Mark Habdas*, shows an owl from Quesnel that was injured and brought to the Wildlife Rehab. Centre ("Owl") in Delta. This bird is now healthy and about to be returned to Quesnel where it will be released.

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, and avian ecology and behavior. 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

It's not only fine feathers that make fine birds.
Aesop

Although Aesop used plumage as a metaphor to warn how qualities other than appearance are important in people, as birders we can relate more literally to his aphorism when thinking about birds. Is not a Sage Thrasher a fine bird? How about a Canyon Wren, or for that matter, how about a Vesper Sparrow? You can see where I'm heading here, I'm sure. At our South Okanagan, Oliver-based AGM, May 29, 30 and 31 this year, we'll have many fine birds to enjoy.

From fine-voiced sagebrush songsters to cliff-dwelling whistling wrens, we'll confirm that there's much more to birds than plumage alone. Rarity is one category of fine, voice is another, and landscape too can render birds fine. Not that we won't see some visually stunning birds too, we will: Mountain Bluebirds shining in the Okanagan sunshine, Williamson's Sapsuckers drumming in larch forests, and perhaps a glimpse of Yellow-breasted Chats in their riparian thickets, and many more. The message then, is that this year's AGM is not to be missed.

Registration forms, the outline of the weekend's events, including pre-conference field trips and post-conference extension, plus details of field trips are all here in this issue of our newsmagazine. You'll find them duplicated on our website too.

Final reasons for joining us in Oliver are to meet up with old friends, make some new ones, and generally enjoy the company of a flock of fine birders..... Oh, did I forget the wineries with their fine wines?

~ ~ ~

Outside of AGM preparations, which are essentially complete, we continue to work to make improvements in our services to members. Your directors meet regularly via Skype. Our new on-line payment system has been well received and has been used by most members renewing this year. Look for further improvements and simplifications coming up.

The Bird Records Committee continues to be very active, with the latest set of accepted records about to be published on our website. The BRC is just one component of our activities that is drawing in new members and giving us credibility as an organization within and outside the province.

Our publications continue to be timely, and of a very high standard. This month alone will see the publication of both our journal, *British Columbia Birds*, and *BC Birding* – this newsmagazine. These are your publications, so please enjoy both. If you feel inclined, please let us know how we're doing, or what else we can do. No need to write a letter, just leave a comment on the website. It comes directly me.

See you in Oliver.

George Clulow, President



IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE OLIVER AGM, 2015

April 15: Registration deadline for the Extension Trip
May 14: Sign-up deadline for the Kelowna/Okanagan Mountain pre-conference
2-Day Field Trip taking place May 28, 29
May 21: Registration deadline for Oliver AGM
May 29-31: AGM at Oliver
May 31 – June 3: Extension Trip, Eastern Washington

EDITOR'S NOTES

Finally, after days at the computer, here is the next issue of the Newsmagazine -- full of items that I hope you will find interesting. Note in particular the details for our annual conference and the related pre- and post-conference trips. For members who receive *BC Birding* by mail, you will find conference registration and waiver forms included as inserts. (The forms can also be downloaded from the website <http://bcfo.ca/>). Toward the end of this issue, you will see the annual numbers for Listers' Corner, which I find are always good browsing even if one has not submitted personal records. (You can always resolve to send them in next year – as I do!)

You will notice that owls are fairly common amongst these pages. Part of the reason is that I had the opportunity a few days ago to observe a raptor-banding session at "O.W.L." – the raptor rehabilitation centre in Delta. All the recovered (healthy) birds, ranging from huge (when lying on the table next to you) female Bald Eagles to tiny Pygmy Owls, are banded before they are returned to the locality from whence they came to be released back into the wild.. The birds on our covers are two of these – the Great Gray Owl will go back to Quesnel, and the Great Horned Owl (back cover photograph by Mark) to Williams Lake. Birds from all over the province are nursed back to health at OWL transported there and back courtesy of the local airlines. The banding there is done regularly at OWL by volunteers: Master Bander Derek Matthews (of the Vancouver Avian Research Centre) and Mark.

The other reason for the several owls is that in some parts of the province, they were particularly numerous (or atypically visible) this winter – see Adrain Leather's notes in the front "cover story" box. We even had a Great Gray in Metro-Vancouver at the Reifel Sanctuary.

I know that Spring may not be evident yet in many parts of the province, but from the coast (dare I mention it) where we have had pink blossoms lining the streets for a couple of weeks and snowdrops are but a distant memory, I can assure you that it's on its way. So as the weather warms and the days lengthen, I hope you are able to get out and enjoy the spring birding and the flowers and the leaves bursting from their buds.

Hoping to see you in Oliver....

June Ryder, Editor

Notes from Treasurer Mike Fung:

Donations 2014

Your Board is very pleased to acknowledge, with thanks, the donations made by the following 19 members during 2014, totalling \$915.00 and listed here in order of receipt during the year. Particularly remarkable is that most of you are repeat, annual donors. Bravo!

Ana Simeon	Gerald McKeating	Gertrude Paul	David Aldcroft
Brian Self	Leona Breckenridge	Nancy Krueger	David Schutz
Michael Hoebel	Reto Riesen	Gerald McKeating	Neil Bourne
Gordon Hart	Marian Coope	Ken Morgan	Larry Cowan
Neil Bourne	Paul Tennant	Fred & Sue Bushell	

OnLine-Payment

106 (and counting) old and new members have used the online payment option of PayPal to pay for their membership.

We introduced PayPal as an option last November and this level of immediate adoption represents roughly half of the membership and obviously a popular choice, saving members a stamp, an envelope, and hassle. You also receive instant, automatic confirmation from PayPal, while your volunteer directors save on visits to the post office and the bank and on paperwork.

Being a charity, BCFO pays PayPal a concessionary fee of \$0.87 on a \$30 membership due, or 2.9%.

Change of Address

Please note BCFO's new postal address: BCFO, PO Box 45111, Dunbar, Vancouver, B.C., V6S 2M8



CANADA'S NATIONAL BIRD

Canadian Geographic has released a list of 40 bird species thought to be suitable for a Canadian national bird. Readers are invited to select one of 40 species considered suitable or nominate others, but neither a deadline nor a submission address was included in the announcement. -based on Anonymous. 2015. Bird Studies Canada Latest News, 6 February 2015:2. However, the official bird species is to be selected by February 2017, according to Anonymous. 2015. Nature Saskatchewan February 2015:2.
(News brief from Martin McNicholl)

PRE-CONFERENCE TWO-DAY FIELD TRIP FOR MEMBERS, MAY 28-29

With our AGM focussing on the South Okanagan, the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club members are offering two days of birding in the Kelowna and Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park areas as a warm-up for the conference.

Les Gyug will be coordinating, but multiple members of CONC will be leading the various trips to keep group sizes small.

Day 1 Thursday May 28: Birding hotspots around Kelowna. Will include, among other notable hotspots, Beaver Lake Road from grasslands to Gray Jays, Robert Lake shorebirds, and the Glenmore landfill American Avocets, and perhaps this year Black-necked Stilt again. After a dinner break, an optional evening with target species Flammulated Owl and Common Poorwill, and maybe Western Screech-Owl.

Day 2 Friday May 29: Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park
Various options will be offered among the various routes taken in the park on the annual Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park bird and critter count. Options include: Golden Mile Road and Murdoch Property (road and short walk), Rimrock Trail, and Boulder Trail (both 4-6 km trail walks), and possibly others. The day will end early (1-2 pm) for a tally-up, leaving lots of time to get to the AGM in Oliver.

Deadline for registration: May 14

Phone or email trip leader Les Gyug to confirm names and numbers of participants.

les_gyug@shaw.ca

250-769-5907

The leader will provide specific details of when and where to meet in Kelowna on the morning of May 28.

Cost Members: \$10.00 per person
 Non-members: \$40* (includes BCFO membership)

*Note: BCFO general memberships are family memberships.

The Social Side

At the end of Day 1 arrangements will be made for participants to meet for dinner at a nearby restaurant to recap the day, tally species seen, confirm arrangements for Day 2, and depart for the optional evening owling trip.

Note

BCFO two-day field trips are member-led, but participants make their own arrangements for accommodation, food and travel.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
25th ANNUAL CONFERENCE MAY 29TH – 31ST, 2015 OLIVER, BC**

BIRDING THE SOUTH OKANAGAN

Location – All activities and field trip departures take place here.

Oliver Community Centre
6359 Park Drive
Oliver, BCB.
V0H 1T0

Registration, Meet and Greet Social – Friday evening 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm. Pick up your conference package, socialize with fellow birders from around the province, and choose your morning field trip – Appetizers and cash bar.

Conference Field Trips – Saturday and Sunday mornings – four 6:00 am departures, and one 7:00 am departure each morning. One breakfast sitting each day 5:15 to 5:45

6:00 am Departures

1. Sparrow and Sage Brush Slopes NCC properties south of Kilpoola Lake – Leader Barbara Pryce (NCC).
2. Anarchist Mtn – Lehman Springs property and Sidley Mountain Road
3. Road 22 and McKinney Road
4. Osoyoos West Bench and Chopaka/Nighthawk

7:00 am Departures

1. Saturday: Road 22 and McKinney Road
2. Sunday: Osoyoos West Bench or Chopaka/Nighthawk

Lunch 12:00 to 1:00 both days

Technical Sessions

Saturday 1:00 to 2:30

1. Christine Bishop, CWS: *Results from geo-tagging Yellow-breasted Chats and other songbirds*
2. Les Gyug *Williamson's Sapsucker and Lewis's Woodpecker: Populations – Trends and Recent Research*

Coffee Break

2:30 to 2:45

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 2:45 to 4:00



Social Hour

Saturday 5:00 to 6:30 – cash bar

Banquet

Saturday 6:30 to 7:30

Banquet Keynote Speaker
Richard Cannings–

Saturday 7:30 to 9:00

15 years of banding at Vaseaux Lake Bird Observatory

The optional, pre-and-post conference trips are described on pages 7 and 10 in this issue of the newsmagazine

Transportation & Accommodation:

Transportation to the conference and accommodation are up to the individual(s) to arrange. Information about accommodation may be found via the link below. Through the Oliver Tourism Association we have requested special conference rates at all local accommodation. Mention the BCFO AGM when enquiring to see what is on offer at the locations that interest you.

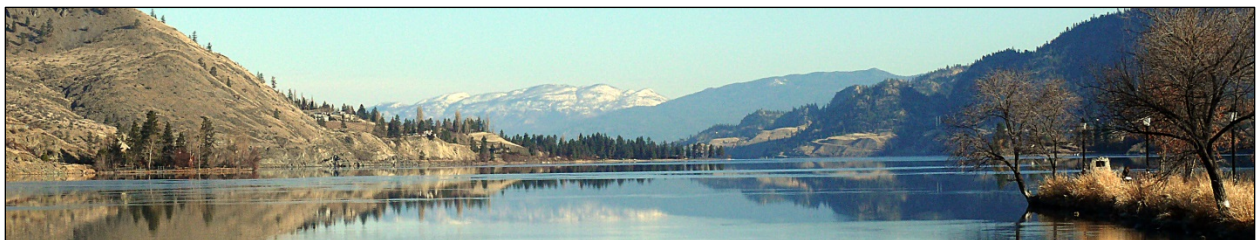
[<http://www.winecapitalofcanada.com/stay/>](http://www.winecapitalofcanada.com/stay/)

Registration: Full 2015 Conference fee: **\$170.00 per person.**

Social Only fee: **\$75.00** – includes Meet and Greet and Banquet.

Attendance is limited to BCFO members and spouses/family members.
You may join BCFO at the same time as you register for the Conference.

NOTE Registration and waiver forms for both the main AGM and the Extension Trip can be downloaded from the website at [< http://bcfo.ca/>](http://bcfo.ca/) under the Events tab.
For members who receive BC Birding by mail, forms are included as inserts in this issue.



BCFO EXTENSION TRIP 2015 – WASHINGTON OKANOGAN TO COLUMBIA BASIN

Leader: Charlie Wright

Day 1: 31 May 2015

After crossing the border at Osoyoos/Oroville, we will drive south to Tonasket before setting out into the rolling, hilly fields and coniferous forests of the Okanogan Highlands. Short-eared and Great Gray owls, Swainson's Hawk, Williamson's Sapsucker, and Bobolink are possibilities before we drive to Omak for the night.

Day 2: 1 Jun 2015

We will rise early to explore the Colville Indian Reservation and its expansive wild terrain. The drier environs of Moses Meadows and Lyman Lake play host to good populations of White-headed Woodpeckers and Gray Flycatchers. Black Bear and Moose sightings are not uncommon here. Other species to be seen in the open Ponderosa Pine

forests include Black-chinned Hummingbird, Dusky Flycatcher, all three nuthatch species, Nashville Warbler, Brewer's and Vesper sparrows, Cassin's Finch, and Red Crossbill. Driving south, we will climb to Disautel Pass with slightly wetter forest (Townsend's Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets) before a gradual descent through a mosaic of pine, Douglas-fir and riparian zones (Red-naped Sapsucker, Veery). A stop at some productive roadside beaver ponds may result in us watching Ruddy Ducks doing their charming "bubble

blowing" breeding display. State Route 155 will finally lead us to the Grand Coulee and its eponymous gigantic dam, where Canyon Wrens may be singing from the rock walls. Continuing south into drier and drier lands, we will stop at Dry Falls to overlook a corner of the Channeled Scablands, take in some of its rich geologic history, and have a chance of a Chukar encounter. After a longer drive, we will be looking at Clark's Grebes on the Potholes Reservoir. Burrowing Owls will be our final target species for the day before spending the night in Othello.

Day 3: 2 Jun 2015

We will start out birding near Othello at the Para Ponds, where there is a small colony of Tricolored Blackbirds. Alkaline ponds nearby should produce for us American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Wilson's Phalarope, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Venturing further into the Columbia Basin, we will visit Palouse Falls, a 60-metre waterfall with White-



throated Swifts and Peregrine Falcons nesting in the surrounding basalt outcroppings. Native bunchgrass habitat nearby is great for Grasshopper Sparrows. While driving this open country we will keep our eyes out for always-possible but scarce Ferruginous Hawks and Prairie Falcons. If we have the time and interest, we may visit some small oases; these "migrant traps" have produced rare birds of eastern origin. We will return to Othello for our final night of the trip.

Day 4: 3 Jun 2015

After a breakfast and meet up in the morning, it's time to head north. We'll take stock of any missing species we'd like to target along the way. The Beezley Hills Preserve near Ephrata will be our last birding destination. This beautiful area is home to a thriving shrub-steppe bird and plant community. Sage Thrashers, Loggerhead Shrikes, Sagebrush Sparrows, and Brewer's Sparrow should keep us entertained until mid-morning when we have to depart. From here it is a 3-hour drive back to Oliver, BC, or some carloads may plan for an alternate route back to the western side of the Cascades.

Photos: left - Grasshopper Sparrow; above - Loggerhead Shrikes; below - the Palouse.



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Compiled by Wayne C. Weber

The following meetings and other events are those that take place in BC and immediately adjacent areas or that potentially include information on birds that occur in BC. Information on additional meetings is listed in the bimonthly *Ornithological Newsletter* at www.birdmeetings.org and on the BIRDNET website at <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/ornith/birdmeet.html>.

For most meetings, festivals and other events, the website is the main source of information, and registration can often be accomplished online as well. Wherever information can be obtained through a phone number or e-mail address, we have included these as well; if no contact information is listed, it can be assumed that none was provided by the organization, at least not on the date when this listing was compiled. It is usually not necessary to contact a particular individual, except for scientific meetings when one is interested in making a presentation. Names and contact information for individuals are listed whenever they are available.

Mar. 6- April 15-- BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL, Qualicum, BC. For information, phone Robin Rivers at 1-866-288-7878 (in Greater Vancouver, 604-924-9771), e-mail rivers@naturetrust.bc.ca, or check the festival website at <http://brantfestival.bc.ca>.

Mar. 13-15-- 13TH ANNUAL WINGS OVER WATER BIRDING FESTIVAL, Blaine, WA. For information, phone the Blaine Visitor Information Center at 1-800-624-3555, send an e-mail to dharger@cityofblaine.com, or check the website at <http://www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com>

Mar. 27-29-- 18TH ANNUAL OTHELLO SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL, Othello, WA. For information, check the festival website at <http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org>, or contact the Grant County Conservation District at 1107 South Juniper Way, Moses Lake, WA 98837 (phone 509-765-9618).

Apr. 8 -14-- OLYMPIC BIRDFEST, Sequim, WA. For information, check the festival website at <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>, send an e-mail to info@olympicbirdfest.org, or contact the Dungeness River Audubon Center (phone, 360-681-4076; snail mail to 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA 98382).

Apr. 9-12-- HARNEY COUNTY MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL, Burns, OR, focusing on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. For information, check the festival website at <http://www.migratorybirdfestival.com>, send an email to info@migratorybirdfestival.com, or phone (541) 573-2636.

Apr. 15-17-- THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY (WASHINGTON CHAPTER) annual meeting, jointly with the Washington State Society of American Foresters, Centralia, WA. For information and to register, visit the TWS (Washington) website at <http://drupal.wildlife.org/washington/sites/wildlife.org.washington/files/Meeting%20announcement%2001272015.pdf>.

Apr. 25-- First WESTPORT SEABIRDS pelagic birding trip of the spring from Westport, WA. This is the first of 18 trips scheduled from April through October 2015. For information and to sign up for a trip, please visit the Westport Seabirds webpage at <http://www.westportseabirds.com>.

May 1-3-- GRAYS HARBOR SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL, Aberdeen, WA. For information, contact the festival office at PO Box 470, Montesano, WA 98563 (phone 360-289-5048) or check the website at <http://www.shorebirdfestival.com>.

May 4-10-- WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES FESTIVAL (19th annual), Invermere, BC. For information, contact the Pynelogs Cultural Centre, PO Box 2633, Invermere, BC, V0A 1K0, phone 1-855-342-2473, e-mail info@wingsovertherockies.org, or check the website at <http://www.wingsovertherockies.org>.

May 7-10-- BC NATURE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Salt Spring Island, BC, hosted by the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club. For information and to register, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/agm-2015-salt-spring-island>, or phone Betty Davison at the BC Nature office - 604-985-3057; e-mail manager@bcnature.ca.

May 14-18-- MEADOWLARK NATURE FESTIVAL, Penticton, BC. For information, contact the Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Alliance, 113-437 Martin Street, Penticton, BC, V2A 5L1 (phone 250-492-4422), or check the website at <http://www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca> .

May 14-17-- LEAVENWORTH SPRING BIRD FEST, Leavenworth, WA. For information, email info@leavenworthspringbirdfest.com or check the festival website <http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com>

May 22-24-- SKAGIT VALLEY BIRD BLITZ, Skagit Valley Provincial Park, BC. For information and to register, check the event website at <http://hopemountain.org/programs/skagit-valley-bird-blitz-may-22-24-2015>. Inquiries may be made by email at info@hopemountain.org or by phone at 604-869-1274. See also p.19.

May 29-31-- BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Oliver, BC. General information is currently on the BCFO website at <http://bcfo.ca/annual-conference> ; see pps 7 - 10 in this issue; registration forms will be available on the website soon.

June 5-7-- 27TH ANNUAL MOUNT ROBSON PROVINCIAL PARK BIRD BLITZ. For information, email Gail Ross at gailross1@telus.net, or phone Nancy Krueger at 250-563-7896.

June 10-14-- WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING, Billings, Montana. For details, check the WFO webpage at <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php> .

June 10-14-- ANIMAL BEHAVIOR SOCIETY, 52ND ANNUAL MEETING, Anchorage, Alaska. For further information and to register, visit the conference website at <http://abs2015.org> .

June 17-21-- AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION BIRDING RALLY, Spearfish, South Dakota (in the Black Hills). For further information and to register for the event, visit the ABA website at <http://events.aba.org/aba-birding-rally-spearfish-south-dakota/#more-1576> .

July 15-18-- Joint meeting of the WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, and SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS at Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. For further information, check the conference website at <http://personalpress.acadiau.ca/ornithmeet2015> .

June 19-21-- MANNING PARK BIRD BLITZ, Manning Provincial Park, BC (based at Loneduck Campground on Lightning Lake). For information and to register, check the website at <http://hopemountain.org/programs/manning-park-bird-blitz-june-19-21-2015>. Inquiries may be made by e-mail at info@hopemountain.org or by phone at 604-869-1274. See also p. 23 in this issue.

July 28-31-- 133RD STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, and 85TH ANNUAL MEETING, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK. For information and to register, visit the AOU/COS conference website at <http://aoucos2015.ou.edu> .

Aug. 11-15-- 39TH ANNUAL MEETING, THE WATERBIRD SOCIETY, Bar Harbor, Maine. For information and to register, visit the conference website at http://www.waterbirds.org/annual_meeting-2015 .

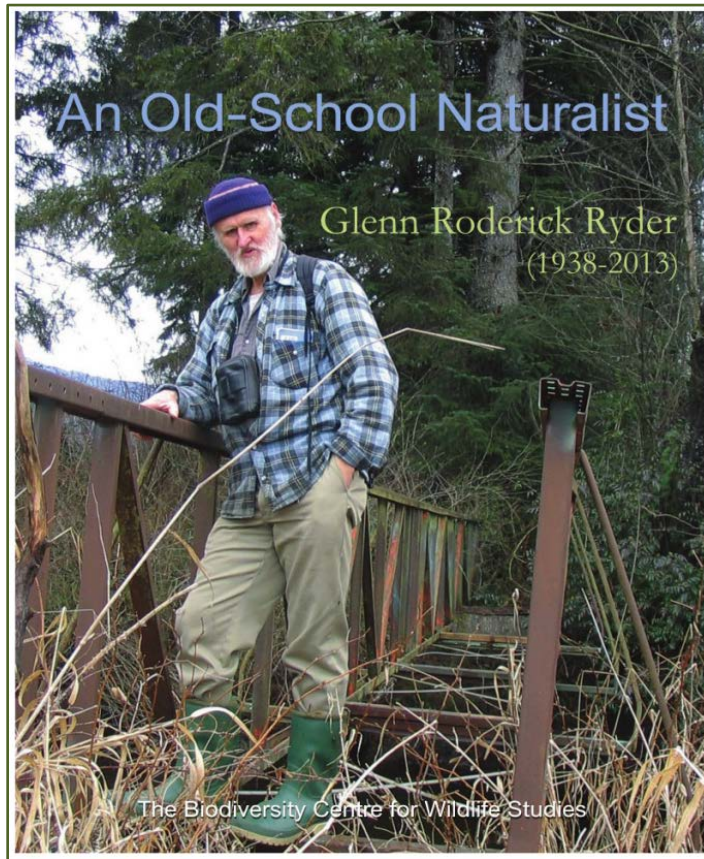
Aug. 21-24-- WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Ocean Shores, WA. No details on the Society website yet, but check the website at <http://www.wos.org> closer to the conference date.

Sept. 4-7-- WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION annual meeting, Burnaby, BC. Full details not available yet; for further information, check the WBBA webpage at <http://www.westernbirdbanding.org/next-meetings.html> .

Sept. 4-6-- 29TH ANNUAL OREGON SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL, Charleston, OR (near Coos Bay). Includes a pelagic birding trip as well as shorebird field trips. For information or to register, visit the festival website at <http://www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/shorebirdfestival.htm> , phone Dawn Harris at (541) 867-4550 (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service office in Newport, OR), or email Dawn at dawn_harris@fws.gov .

Sept. 11-13-- PUGET SOUND BIRD FESTIVAL, Edmonds, WA. For information and to register (starting Aug. 1). check the festival website at <http://www.pugetsoundbirdfest.com> , or contact Sally Lider at the City of Edmonds Parks Dept. (phone 425-771-0227, or email her at sallylider@edmondswa.gov).

Oct. 17-21-- 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, Winnipeg, Manitoba. For further information and to register, visit the conference website at <http://wildlife.org/22nd-annual-conference-of-the-wildlife-society> .



The Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies is pleased to announce the publication of *An Old-School Naturalist*, a biography of Glenn Ryder by R. Wayne Campbell and Phillip S. Henderson. Glenn was an exceptional naturalist whose life-long studies took him throughout British Columbia and into Yukon. This is a special edition of *Wildlife Afield*, the biannual publication of the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies, and is available to non-mrmbts through its website at <http://www.wildlifebc.org/wildlife-afield-journal>. Copies will also be available, at the Tribute to Glenn Ryder, see below.

GLENN RYDER TRIBUTE. A NATURALIST EXTRAORDINAIRE.

When: 2:00 – 4:00, April 19, 2015

Where: Rowlatt Farm, Campbell Valley Regional Park, Langley, British Columbia

This will involve brief talks and remembrances followed by an informal gathering of Glenn's friends and colleagues and those who appreciated his contributions to our understanding of natural history.

Copies of a special addition of the journal of the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies dedicated to Glenn's life (*An Old-School Naturalist*) will be available (\$20).

The Agenda is not yet set in stone but we may include planting native trees and shrubs in Glenn's honour. Throw a pair of rubber boots or other appropriate footwear, gloves, etc., in your vehicle if you would like to participate.

ANNOUNCING THE BCFO YOUNG BIRDERS FOR 2015

BCFO proudly presents this year's recipients of the recently established BCFO Young Birder Award. This program, started in 2014, welcomes talented young birders into the BC birding community and recognizes their accomplishments, contributions to, and engagement with birds and birding in the province.

To be selected for a BC Young Birder Award, recipients must be 16 or under and have:

- exceptional observational and birding skills well beyond the 'novice' level;
- shown substantive engagement in the activities of the birding community through their accomplishments, participation, and contributions;
- been nominated and sponsored by a BCFO member and approved by the Executive Committee.

This year we are pleased to have four outstandingly worthy recipients, including our first young women, the first siblings, and the first from Vancouver Island. Interestingly, three of the recipients participated in last year's Baillie Birdathon at Penticton's Meadowlark Festival as members of the 'Western Teenagers' team, organized by Russ Cannings. All of them submit sighting records to eBird.

Here are our 2015 recipients, presented in alphabetical order:

Joshua Brown, North Vancouver, age 14,
nominated by Russell Cannings.

Josh has been birding with his family for quite a few years, and has recently upped his game to an impressive level. He takes excellent bird photos, posts to birding lists, and submits copious records to eBird. Last May he was part of the 'Western Teenagers' team at the Penticton Meadowlark Festival. In August he joined up with two of last year's Young Birder recipients - Liron Gertsman and Logan Lalonde - for a Vancouver Big Day when they found a real rarity, a Reeve at Reifel Refuge.



Isaac Nelson, Kamloops, age 14,
nominated by Rick Howie.

Isaac is a very skilled and active birder in the Kamloops area and has also birded around the Lower Fraser Valley. He participates in virtually every kind of local bird survey - Christmas Bird Counts, Swan and Eagle Counts, Feederwatch: you name it - he does it. He participated as a member of the 'Western Teenagers' at the Penticton Meadowlark Festival. He contributes frequently to on-line birding forums, with over 400 postings to one particular list, often offering help with ID's and hints for bird-finding. He has submitted well over 300 entries to eBird.

Emma Reader-Lee, Victoria, age 15, nominated by Ann Nightingale. Emma has been attracted to birds ever since she could walk and talk. She is particularly fascinated by bird behaviour, and is considering a career in ornithology. She participates in numerous bird-related activities, including volunteering at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory, Christmas Bird Counts, Baillie Birdathon, and contributing to eBird. As evident in the photo, photography is yet another part of her credentials.



Rebecca Reader-Lee, Victoria, age 12, nominated by Ann Nightingale. Despite her relative youth, Rebecca has already established herself as an exceptionally skilled and keen-eyed observer. She is very actively involved with the Rocky Point Bird Observatory, Christmas Bird Counts, bird photography and sketching, and eBird submissions. She was a member of the 'Western Teenagers' team of youthful birders at Penticton's Meadowlark Festival last May.

We think you will agree that this is a most impressive lineup! Each recipient receives complimentary membership in BCFO until age 16, and a formal plaque in recognition of their achievement.

Congratulations and a hearty "*Welcome to the flock!*" to Josh, Isaac, Emma and Rebecca. We hope and expect to be hearing more of and from you in the future.

The Reflective Birder #11

Flames from a Spark Bird

Clive Keen

One of the questions asked of birders in the documentary *Birding: The Central Park Effect* is whether they had a spark bird – a bird that first sparked their interest and launched them into a lifetime of birding. It's an important question, but for an unexpected reason.

The subject came up for me while I was writing an account of the Common Yellowthroat for the BC Breeding Bird Atlas. What a wonderful candidate this is for a spark bird. How could anyone see it, we might think, and not develop an interest in birdlife?

Let's consider an ideal case. We take someone out birding for the first time, and hear *the witchety witchety witchety* sound. "Hear that?" we ask, and the answer is not a "Duh?" but a "Yes!" because the song is clear and distinctive. We then search for the bird, and it is all a bit like a treasure hunt, with some genuine (but quiet) beating about a bush. And like all great treasure hunts, the prize is eventually, after a longish but not too long hunt, found. Though Common Yellowthroats can be secretive, every once in a while the male will head right to the top of the reeds and belt out its song in plain sight. What a reward this is for our newcomer. The bird is no dull LBJ, but a lively little bandit, with black mask, lovely yellow breast and belly and green back. Surely the newcomer will be hooked.

In reality, I'd say there's a very good chance that years later, our once-newcomer would give a definite answer to the question "Do you have a spark bird?" There'd be little hesitation: that Yellowthroat would come immediately to mind.

But, rather than taking things at face value, it's worth asking whether the particular bird really was key to the creation of a new birder. It's not as dumb a question as it might seem. Let's consider the case of what should have been my own spark bird, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. It is quite as enticing a bird as the Yellowthroat, with attractive plumage, intriguing lifestyle and an easily heard call. It could well be a spark bird for many. But why did it not soon lead me on to the joys of birding? There are at least three reasons.

First, when the bird appeared beside me in a tree, I didn't know what the heck it was, and didn't know of a way to find out. Confusion is not particularly enjoyable. Remember those beginning birders who stare at

shorebirds, fail to tell them apart, and then depart with an unhappy look.

Secondly, I had not the slightest idea that the experience could ever be repeated. This strange bird had suddenly materialized, and it seemed a bizarre, never-to-be repeated experience. You can't base plans for future actions on that.

Thirdly, though I'd experienced a certain pleasure in the sight of the strange bird, I didn't know how I felt about it. An eleven-year-old boy is not, it seemed at the time, supposed to find pleasure in birdlife; wouldn't it be a sissy thing to admit to, not just to others, but to oneself?

Under these circumstances, I suspect that however terrific a bird might seem as a spark bird – Great Bustard? Black-throated Magpie Jay? Elegant Trogon? – it would fail completely to launch a career of birding. The fact is that a bird might send up a spark, but unless the conditions are right, the spark will flicker out. This is where the real key to the experience comes in: someone to catch the spark, blow on it, and start a fire. A guide, or mentor, in other words.

First, the mentor will make sense of the experience. Learning that the bird is a *Common Yellowthroat*, a summer visitor to wetlands, and a member of the warbler family, allows the newcomer to get his arms around the experience. Then, learning that such sightings can quite easily be repeated – indeed that these and many different sightings can be achieved readily by those who care to look – makes a future of birding not just an attractive, but viable, option.

But above all, the presence and words of the mentor *validate* the whole activity. It becomes clear, almost certainly for the first time, that paying attention to, and taking delight in avian life, is natural, fun, and can be continually rewarding.

And this, dear reader, is rather a long-winded way of explaining why you must take people, who have never been before, out birding. Even if you are a relative beginner yourself, you can grow the spark that changes people's lives. You really can. And the positive karma is great indeed.

This is one the articles destined for the next edition of *Birding: A Flock of Irreverent Essays*, available as an eBook from Amazon. See www.traybonbooks.com for details.

LARGEST NUMBER OF ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRDS IN CANADA?

Agnes Lynn

I am often asked how I get so many hummers to come to my yard. Well, my numbers are nothing compared to the accompanying picture. This photo was taken in late November in Cordova Bay, which is in the northeast corner of Victoria along the waterfront. We rarely get temperatures below zero so no winter routine is normally necessary with the hummer feeders. But we had a couple of days when the temperatures dipped to a few degrees below zero. There were two feeders side by side (see photo) and they were getting so busy that the home-owners added a third feeder at a table nearby. Best guess is that there were about 50 hummers present between the three feeders! Cam Finlay thinks this is the largest number of Anna's Hummingbirds that have ever gathered together in all of Canada. The number of birds is not that uncommon with Rufous Hummingbirds during migration, but very unusual for Anna's.

So if you think you can top this we want to hear from you! If you don't have many visitors and want to have your own crowd at your house, follow the leader and consistently keep your feeders filled, thawed and clean, and pamper the hummers in winter with a mix of one cup sugar (no more) to three cups of boiled water. Make sure that you have thawed feeders readily available from very early in the morning (bring them in at night, alternate and put a fresh feeder out in the morning or provide a heat source to keep the feeders thawed). Also, we suspect that other people nearby had feeders out regularly but did not keep them thawed on those cold mornings. The hummers do not usually have a very large territory where they feed.

We were amazed that the usual winter routine of one male hummer guarding each feeder has broken down in this case and the birds feed even 3 or more to a port. I am going to test a possible answer to this territorial breakdown by providing a 2-cup feeder with 6 ports rather than the traditional 1-cup feeder with just 4 ports and see if we get more multiple visits at that feeder. Perhaps a lone male can only control the smaller feeder, but that's just a guess at this time. These same people have 2 other 1-cup feeders not that far away and a lone male seems to be able to keep the crowds away from them.

I always believed that it was also the number of winter-blooming flowers that kept the hummers here in winter but these feeders do not have many flowering plants nearby, although the neighbourhood probably has a good selection of winter bloomers. It appears that in this area, the feeders are the primary food source. Of course, there are also lots of insects around as well but not the many winter-blooming plants they enjoy at our house.

Please don't try to attract hummingbirds in winter in areas where the temperature dips below zero by more than a few degrees on more than a few days per year. The populations of Anna's Hummingbirds according to the Christmas Bird Count numbers and other casual surveys (Swan Lake has done some), shows these tough little jewels are gradually increasing in number each year in BC. They are staying around further north on the island and are also fanning out from Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast. Amazing! I'd like to hear from you if you have large numbers of Anna's Hummingbirds at any time of year. You can contact me at thelynnns@shaw.ca.



ON SOME PECULIARITIES OF GREAT TIT GASTRONOMY

European Great Tits (*Parus major*) are well-known for their innovative ways of feeding – they were the originators of the famous milk-bottle raids in Great Britain (see *BC Birding*, June, 2014; p.14). They are also cache-raiders, feeding on the foresight of other birds. Amongst the European parids (tits), Marsh Tits (*Poecile palustris*) and Coal Tits (*Periparus ater*) are habitual cachers of food. Great Tits do not store food: instead they follow their smaller relatives around and pilfer their caches. This behaviour has been used by Swedish researchers to gain insight into differences in learning ability between male and female Great Tits.

The researchers captured eight male and eight female Great Tits and set them up in an experimental room so that they could observe Marsh Tits (also captured) caching sunflower seeds in holes in 'trees' (wood brought in); the holes were partly obscured by hanging cloth. After an hour (during which they could not feed) the Great Tits were released to search for the cached food. Remarkably, the females were far better than the males at finding the caches: females averaged 4 successful finds in their first 10 attempts, males managed 1.5. After 30 attempts females had a 60% success rate, males were pegging about 40%. Further, females generally managed to find food after only one unsuccessful attempt; the males averaged five strikeouts before they found a seed. The researchers controlled for seasonal differences in male behaviour that might be related to preoccupation with defending territory at mating time. Perhaps most

amazing of all is that the Great Tits were as proficient at finding Marsh Tit caches as the Marsh Tits themselves, with both species averaging a 40% success rate.

The results confirm the intelligence of Great Tits. More interesting is that differential spatial

learning ability of the sort demonstrated between Great Tit sexes is unusual in birds, although most mammals (including us) demonstrate it (advantage usually to males). The researchers speculate that the females' food-finding ability in Great Tits arises because they are 'subordinate feeders' – habitually displaced by the males from identified food sources. So they have compensated by becoming superior observers of potential food sources. (Female Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) also exhibit superior spatial learning, presumably because, as



nest parasites, they have to remember the locations of candidate nests in which to lay an egg.)

Another aspect of Great Tits' adaptive feeding behaviour has been demonstrated in Wytham Wood, a famous ecological research site used by Oxford University scientists. Here, most of the Great Tits are fitted with transponders so that their behaviour can be continuously monitored. The wood has a number of flocks of the tits, each with its own territory.

The researchers scattered boxes containing mealworms throughout the wood. To get to the morsel, the tit had to move a sliding door, the left half of which was painted blue (slide right) and the right half of which was painted red (slide left). Captured birds from two flocks were taught to slide the door left, and from three flocks to slide the door right.* Three flocks were left with no trained bird. The 'educated' birds were then released to teach their brethren how to get at the mealworms – and thereby test the efficiency of social learning. After three weeks, three-quarters of the birds had learned the trick, almost always choosing to slide the door in the direction that the educated birds had first learned. In one control flock (no educated bird), half the birds learned the trick from an enterprising problem solver; in the other two flocks 9% and 31% succeeded.

After nine months, a period in which about half a flock, on average, would have died and been replaced by young birds, the experiment was repeated. It turned out that there was still enough herd memory that the tits could raid the boxes successfully. More astonishing is that some birds, who had switched flocks in the meantime, rapidly took up the sliding convention of their new flock, even if they had originally belonged to a flock with the opposite convention. One concludes that Great Tits, like voting humans, are mostly conformists*.

*For those not in the know, blue is the colour of the right-leaning British Conservative Party, while red is the colour of left-leaning Labour. Scientists do have a subtle sense of humour.

Brodin, A. and Urhan, A.U. 2015. Sex differences in learning ability in a common songbird, the great tit—females are better observational learners than males. Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology 69: 237-241.

Aplin, L. + 5 others. 2015. Experimentally induced innovations lead to persistent culture via conformity in wild birds. Nature, in press. Summary in The Economist, 6 December, 2014:p.94.

Summary by M.Church
Great Tit photo by Andy Emmerson, Cheshire, England
(from The Internet Bird Collection)

NEVER MIND CHRISTMAS SHOPPING – TRY BUYING BINOCULARS

Adrian Leather

Have you ever looked through a pair of bins, and gone WOOOOWWW! No?. Me neither. Don't get me wrong, I've often exclaimed a big wow for a bird species I'm looking at, but not simply because of the binoculars. It seems to me that the differences between bins are often very marginal for the costs and claims involved.

I have two pairs of Bushnell bins. One has a faulty diopter, and the other has a permanently locked diopter. I've tried everything short of a NASA mechanic to free it, but no. Might be some good news here, as a birding pal in Quesnel says he sent some bins back to Bushnell, and received a free pair back!

So what to do? I'm about to go on a birding adventure in Mexico, and I could really use a new pair of bins.

I went to Aroma Foods and chatted with Omar. I don't know when folks started eating bins and scopes, but Omar really knows his stuff. Told me all about chromatic aberration. There I was, almost giddy with the thought of purchasing a pair of Zeiss bins. "They are on sale next week", he said, only \$419! Now that is cheap for a pair of Zeiss. I tried the 10x42 but I couldn't stabilize the bins in order to get a decent view - just way too shaky - although for the second you could hold them steady now and again, there was an admirable sharpness to the image. I found I was having to fold my hands in an uncomfortable way, so as to grip the bins. The inconvenient truth struck me that I was not going to have a pair of Zeiss, for the simple reason that they were not comfortable to hold.

Oh well, only one place left to try in Q, Frank's Supermarket. I tried all the bins they had, except for those weird range-finding things which hunters use. Two pairs of bins really stood out - one was a pair of Vortex costing \$1539.99, and the other, a pair of Vortex Diamondback, for \$291.99, including taxes. The more expensive bins were a 10x42 and had impressive stability and clarity of image. The 8x42 Diamondback was almost as good, but admittedly not quite in the same league. Now do I choose \$1540 or \$291 all in, duh? There are lots of rave reviews about the diamondbacks on-line. They also have the Vortex guarantee of a replacement pair, no questions, even if it seems the dog ate them along with your homework.

Someone told me as a kid that 8x40s are for birdwatching, and 10x50s are for aircraft-spotting, and I think that generally still holds true. For the vast majority of birding, 8x makes a lot of sense. So off I go to Mexico, somewhat concerned over this purchase - have I just cheaped-out so much that I'm

gonna pay now, never mind any chance of Montezuma's Revenge, you won't even be able to see the birds! I needn't have worried. Coincidentally, one of the guys on the trip, Ed Jordan, has the same bins. They are great!

Buying bins is an absolute lottery. How many of you have dropped an extra 500 or 600 dollars just because they are ED or HD, or whatever? According to on-line sources, there are no industry-agreed standards for these things. Generally, HD and ED use a better quality of glass, but not always. Sometimes the lens cut would not be sufficient to "qualify" for HD or ED status, and sometimes bins are labelled ED or HD for other reasons.

Bins have to be comfy in your hands, and you have to feel happy with what you are seeing. Most times I look through someone else's bins, I retreat shyly, saying very little, and wonder, gee, how do they see through these? Either there is a tiny image, a yellow haze, or the bins are so filthy, you just can't see much at all. I think that is another critical feature - the bins have to suit your eyes. Some bins let in a lot more light, but I prefer a darker image myself. Perhaps I'm somewhat light-sensitive? I asked a birding pal in PG, "What are folks in PG using (for bins) these days"? He replied, "It's all over the map, which kind of backs up your point".

So, whether they are \$ 1500 or \$ 300, it seems to me that the differences in bins are marginal.

5th Annual

SKAGIT VALLEY BIRD BLITZ

May 22/23/24, 2015

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!

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PYGMY OWL ATTACK

John Hodges writes:

I have attached two photographs of a Northern Pygmy Owl taken through my scope on 2 December 2014 at Gospel Rock, Gibsons, BC.

I was walking along a trail when the bird landed at about head height in an arbutus tree about 10 metres away

The bird was obviously concentrating on something on the ground as it ignored me completely, despite my proximity. I was able to focus my scope and take several photos, including these two.



The second photo was taken a moment before the owl launched its attack. There was a lot of squealing and squawking in the bushes and then the towhees and sparrows started making a lot of noise.

I walked further down the trail and found the owl with a Spotted Towhee in its claws. The prey was as big as the owl! I was only 3 metres away, but I was unable to get a good photo.

John Hodges
Roberts Creek



RAVENS ARE JUST LIKE US

It is well known that ravens, like all their corvid brethren, are highly intelligent animals. They are the most widespread corvid and possibly the largest passerine bird. High adaptability is a hallmark of their intelligence and a reason for their wide success. It turns out that ravens turn their intelligence to constructing, observing and manipulating the raven social order, just like humans are wont to do.

Maturing ravens form pair bonds and mate for life (which may last as long as 20 years in the wild), and a mated pair defends a considerable territory. The breeding success of a bonded pair determines their overall rank in raven society. So pair-bonded ravens acquire an interest in sabotaging incipient pair bonds amongst (presumably) younger ravens. This indicates that the ravens recognize social hierarchies and act purposefully to manipulate them.

Austrian investigators studied a population of the Common (or Northern) Raven (*Corvus corax*) in the Alps. About 200 individuals were marked for identification so their activities could be systematically observed. They were divided into four groups: single individuals; loosely bonded individuals; strongly bonded individuals; and pair-bonded couples (read unattached; going steady; shacked up; and married). It was found that the strongly bonded and pair-bonded birds initiated 68% of interventions into the associative activities of other birds and that 79% of the disruptive actions were directed at loosely and strongly bonded individuals – that is, at those birds showing definite signs of pairing. Neither sex nor age class had any influence on the observed distribution of events.?



Who?....Me?

What the birds presumably are up to is attempting to forestall the formation of pairs that will compete for territory and resources, hence possibly affect breeding success amongst the already dominant pair-

bonded birds. They effect their interventions either passively (land between the newly bonding birds in the attempt to keep them apart) or actively (attack one or other of the lower ranked pair). The activity is not without risk: it might devolve into a case of two (bonding) birds responding by attacking the single disruptive bird: by no means are all attempted interventions successful.

All in all, it sounds a lot like human social or office politics.

Massen, J.J.M, Szpl, G., Spreafico, M. and Bugnyar, T. 2014. Ravens intervene in Others' bonding attempts. *Current Biology* 24: 2733-3736.

Summary by M. Church; Photo: Common Raven, JMR

BURROWING OWL

Ana Simeon – text and photo

My husband and I saw this little fellow in Lac du Bois Grasslands Park North of Kamloops, back in June.



We got up at 4:30 am to bird the grasslands and were not disappointed. Meadowlarks were singing their hearts out, and about half an hour into the hike we spotted this guy – our first Burrowing Owl. He was very patient with us taking pictures from every angle! Lac du Bois Grasslands is a gorgeous park with lots of trails to explore including the Grasslands Community Trail that meanders for 13 kilometres through three different grasslands ecosystems (lower, middle and upper). It passes McQueen Lake where we saw a loon pair with two chicks. It was very heart-warming to see a healthy and thriving loon family!

Back in town, I learned that Lac du Bois is one of the parks that would be affected by the boundary changes the BC government is poised to approve in order to facilitate the Transmountain (Kinder Morgan) pipeline. The park is already under threat from ATV's which are supposed to keep to their designated area just north of the Lac du Bois Road subdivision.....you can see ATV scars all around Lac du Bois itself.

BC BIRD OF THE YEAR – 2014

It was Boxing Day, and all of my Christmas commitments were now behind me. No work today either, so what to do? Go birding, of course, but where to go, and what to seek out in these dwindling days of 2014. I knew that very soon I would need to tally all of the birds that I had seen this past year for the various lists that I keep. After all, the BCFO annual listing edition would be coming out soon, and I really enjoy being a part of that. I then realized that I had seen an unusual amount of what I considered to be “good” birds in BC this past year, much more than normal in fact. It then occurred to me that perhaps others were also looking back at 2014, and the various birds they encountered or sought out, and wondering which one, for them, was their BC bird of the year. I had a very tough time deciding on mine, and really had to think about it because there were so many outstanding sightings this past year in our province. What was considered to be the most interesting bird for me was not likely the same for another BC birder, especially if one lives in a very different part of the province. The reasoning or rationale behind one’s choice, too, was likely very different than mine. Curiosity got the better of me.

So I sent out a posting to various BC birding chat groups, at least to the ones that I was a member of, and asked BC birders to take part in a very non-scientific survey. (For 2015 I will try to extend my mist net a bit further afield to capture more votes from our northern BC birders). The question was simple: What was for you **the** BC bird of the year?, and I listed what I thought was a pretty comprehensive list of all of the rare or unexpected sightings recorded within our province in 2014. As the votes started to trickle in and, more importantly, the reasoning behind those votes, it quickly became apparent that the reasons why we love to bird, or perhaps choose certain species of birds compared to others, are quite unique to each individual birder. Some of my favourite reasons for the various choices were:

Upland Sandpiper: “After years of doing field work up in the Peace, where this species is found somewhat regularly, I had always missed it there for whatever reason, but then to have it show up in Victoria was an awesome feeling to finally get this BC nemesis bird”.

Western Scrub-jay: “This is my choice because this is the first time that we have evidence that this species has nested in BC”

White-tailed Kite: “It was my #1 target bird for Canada”.

Blackburnian Warbler: “I was part of the group with Ian when he found this highly unexpected bird, and only because we had just missed the ferry we had time to kill, so we went for an unscheduled walk through Beacon Hill park”.

Black-billed Cuckoo: “I’ve waited 54 years to see this bird in the Okanagan”.

White Wagtail: “I found the bird, am I still allowed to vote?”.

Little Stint, from a visiting birder from Montreal: “It has to be the Stint because this species was not seen anywhere else in the whole ABA area, except for BC, in all of 2014”.

White-eyed Vireo: “First BC record.....’nough said”.

And finally the **Violetear:** “Strictly out of spite because I got to see it and (*insert big lister name here*) didn’t”.

Some other reasons given were simply that they got to see their choice, and none of the others on the list, or that they really wish that they had.

Here’s how the voting turned out:

White-eyed Vireo	32%
Violetear	18%
White Wagtail	14%
Brown Booby	7%
Little Stint	7%
Blackburnian Warbler	3%
Dickcissel	3%
Western Scrub-Jay	3%
White-tailed Kite	3%
Black-billed Cuckoo	3%
Yellow Wagtail	3%
Acorn Woodpecker	3%

Personally I had a very tough time deciding between Laysan Albatross and Brown Booby, both of which I got to see on the same pelagic, and the Yellow Wagtail seen in Haida Gwaii, which I did not get to see. I missed my first Yellow Wagtail, which was seen in Victoria back in 1993. I was living there at the time, and I had just started birding as a part-time obsession. I had no idea how rare it was at all, therefore I didn’t “bother” to chase it. The Laysan had been a serious want for my BC list for about the past 20 years or so now, and so when I finally got it last year it was a bit surreal. I remember thinking to myself in a quiet moment on that tiny boat somewhere of Tofino, holy cow, I finally got it. But then, about 10 minutes later when the Brown Booby appeared, perched so to speak on a piece of driftwood, the mind was blown. It also could have been that the Booby was my BC bird #400.

May 2015 bring you lots of interesting BC birds, and don’t forget to send me your vote for BC Bird of the Year – 2015

Kevin Neill, goshawk67@shaw.ca

ON GEESE AND HELICOPTERS

Years ago your reporter worked for the Canadian government as a geologist in the eastern Arctic. This entailed frequent flying by helicopter. Sometimes the pilot would choose to fly disturbingly close to hillsides. Upon asking why, one learned that by skirting windward slopes one obtains free lift from the air currents rising over the hill. It turns out that birds are at least as intelligent as helicopter pilots: they do it all the time. On long migration flights this tactic can be a critical conserver of energy.

A significant case is the Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*), which crosses the Himalaya (!) on its way from its summer in Mongolia to its winter in India. Their median altitude across the Tibetan Plateau is 4700 m and, in the mountains, they must exceed 6000 m.....yet these are amongst the heaviest (uppermost 2%) of flight-capable birds. The altitude record for the species is 7290 m, maintained only for a short period.



You might think that a steady, shallow climb to crest the highest pass would be the most energy-conserving flight strategy since a bird would thereby avoid the need for extreme exertion on steep ascents. You would be wrong. It turns out that the ease of flying at the lowest possible altitude, therefore in the densest possible atmosphere, is the best strategy, since this results in the most lift per wing flap. Mostly, they fly within 50-100 metres of the ground and often at night (when the air is cooler and more dense). The penalty is that they must undergo multiple climbs (compensated by as many descents). On these climbs, the windward hillside provides important free lift.

A group of scientists has recently quantified the flying effort expended by Bar-headed geese by attaching miniature sensors and data storage modules to seven birds to record air pressure (hence altitude of the bird), heart rate (hence rate of energy expenditure) and triaxial acceleration (hence flap rate, the scientese for which is 'wingbeat frequency'). They

learned that heart rate and energy expenditure correlate – as one would expect – with flap rate, and that wingbeat frequency increases with altitude (since the birds are then seeking to keep themselves aloft in thinner air). But heart rate and flap rate do not necessarily correlate with rate of ascent: that is where riding the hillside air currents comes to their aid.

The migratory flight behaviour of the geese is especially advantageous because the energetic cost of flight increases sharply at high altitude – particularly above about 5000 m – so the birds stay as low as the terrain over which they are flying permits. More than 90% of the time they stay below 5600 m. That is why, during their 18-20 hour direct crossing of the mountains, they execute multiple climbs and descents rather than maintaining constant high-altitude flight. Flying near the ground also increases the chance of encountering helpful updrafts, reduces the velocity of head-and crosswinds, improves ground visibility and flight safety, and gives opportunity to identify landing places if necessary. Come to think of it, all that applies equally well to helicopter flight.

Reference

Bishop, C.M. and 11 others*. 2015 The roller coaster flight strategy of bar-headed geese conserves energy during Himalayan migrations. *Science* 347: 250-254.

* a sizeable flock! Includes UBC zoologists B. Chua and W.K. Milsom.

Summary by M. Church

Bar-headed Geese photo by Sid Adlnkari, Agra District, India. (from The Internet Bird Collection)

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RARE BIRD REPORT WINTER 2013/14 1 Dec to 28 Feb

British Columbia

The season started with a rush of Arctic Air all the way out past the Outer Coast during the first week. The cold air then retreated slowly resulting in some impressive snowfalls mainly through central sections. Some CBCs had to be cancelled and rescheduled. The coast was spared snowy weather for the most part and indeed ended up being a bit cool but on the dry side for December. The Southern Interior had light snowfalls and temperatures near long term averages. Areas east of the Rocky Mountains never got out of the Arctic Freeze and snowfalls were near record levels by the end of the month. The Big Thaw finally took hold of the entire Region mid-January, lasting for a couple of weeks. Of course, all that mild air on the coast also brought copious rain and wind the first two weeks. The last weaker cold snap of the season arrived with the coming of February and then the rest of the month changed to warmer and drier weather. The last significant snowfalls fell over the northern half of the Region during the transition.

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

Though often found in ones or twos in the southern Interior during the winter, a flock of 8 Snow Geese at Swan Lake in Vernon 4 Dec was of particular note (Chris Siddle). A small scattering of Yellow-billed Loon sightings was received this winter, with the only interior report coming from Okanagan Lake, south of Kelowna, where an adult basic bird was seen 6 & 7 Feb (Chris Charlesworth, et al). On northern Vancouver Island, at least one adult basic Yellow-billed Loon was seen at the Port McNeill Ferry Terminal 25 Jan (Russell Cannings, et al), and another also on Vancouver Island was at the Englishman River

Estuary near Paskville 25 Feb (Russell Cannings). Interestingly two different male Tufted Ducks were found in coastal BC on 14 Feb, with one at Bullock Lake on Salt Spring Island (Karen Ferguson) and another at the Iona



Tufted Duck: male at Iona outer sewage ponds in Richmond, 15 Feb (Michelle Lamberson).

Sewage ponds in Richmond (Sunny Zhai, m.ob). The Iona bird remained until 17 February. In central BC, a male Harlequin Duck was a nice find along the Nechako River in Prince George 18 Jan (Christopher Coxson). On Vancouver Island, an immature male King Eider was seen at Qualicum Beach 9 – 19 Feb (Russell Cannings, m.ob). A Prairie Falcon was seen several times between 22 Dec and 15 Jan in the Creston Valley where they are rare in the winter months (Linda Van Damme, et al). A smattering of Gyrfalcons graced the Vancouver area this winter, as is usual but still noteworthy. An adult gray phase Gyrfalcon was along 112th St in Delta 30 Dec (Mike & Sharon Tootchin). Along Old Dewdney Trunk Rd in Pitt Meadows, an adult gray phase Gyr was seen regularly between 17 Jan and 4 Feb (Doug Cooper, m.ob). In the Fraser Valley, a Gyrfalcon was at the Sumas Prairie near Abbotsford 3 to 7 Jan (Wes Aslin), and at Hastings Park in East Vancouver, an adult gray phase Gyrfalcon was seen 21 Jan though into the spring period (Doug Cooper, m.ob). Rare anywhere in Canada in the winter, a Sora was at Colony Farm in Coquitlam 1 Feb (David Schutz). A Willet carried over from the fall period at the White Rock Pier and was seen ~~last~~ 2 Jan (Jo Ann MacKenzie). A third basic

'Kumlein's' Iceland Gull was at Moorecroft Park in Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island 13 Dec to 9 Dec (Guy Monty, et al). A first basic 'Kumlein's' Iceland Gull was noted, this time at Qualicum Beach 16 Feb (Guy Monty, et al).

DOVES TO BUNTINGS

It was not a banner winter for owls, but there were a few about nonetheless. Two Great Gray Owls along Winters Creek Road were a highlight 18 Dec on the Apex-Hedley Christmas Bird Count (Doug Brown). Another Great Gray Owl was reported at Kaslo in the Kootenay area 11 to 17 Feb (Lorraine Symmes, et al). In the Shuswap area, a Great Gray Owl was at the Larch Hills near Salmon Arm, 22 Dec to 13 Feb (Geoff Styles, et al). After two impressive Snowy Owl invasion years in a row, this winter produced few sightings, with a single Snowy Owl reported at Boundary Bay in Delta 4 Dec (Norman Ng). A Northern Hawk-Owl was noted in the Creston area 21 to 28 Jan (Linda Van Damme, Gary Breault). In the Rocky Mountain Trench, a Northern Hawk-Owl was at Blaeberry north of Golden 21 Feb (Doug Leighton). A rather lost Burrowing Owl was



Burrowing Owl photographed at Comox Air force Base on Vancouver Island 19 Dec. (Susan Moreau).

seen living in hole in skateboard ramp in Tofino on Vancouver Island, 8 Dec (Adrian Dorst, et al). Also on Vancouver Island, a Burrowing Owl appeared on a beach at the Comox Air Force Base and was seen 19 to 23 Dec (Susan Moreau, m.ob). In the interior

where Anna's Hummingbirds are rare in the winter, two were seen at a feeder in Penticton 3 Dec (Laure Neish). Another Anna's Hummingbird was at a feeder in the Glenmore area of Kelowna 6 Dec (Vicky Watson). Seen and photographed along Kitchen Road in Chilliwack was a Black Phoebe 14 & 15 Dec (Dave Beeke, m.ob). While Blue Jays are nearly annual in the Okanagan in the winter, their appearance is still worth noting, so one seen in Kelowna's Glenmore area 22 Jan is of interest (Logan Lalonde). The Lower Mainland continues to experience a push of Western Scrub-Jays moving north from Washington State. A single Western Scrub-Jay was seen in New Westminster 1 Feb (Wayne Daikow, et al), and another single continuing bird was in central Maple Ridge 3 Feb (Roger Craik). During the past decade winter sightings of Barn Swallow in southern BC have increased substantially. This winter period, a single Barn Swallow was along Connecting Road in Pitt Meadows 31 Jan (Larry Cowan). Another was photographed at Piper Spit on Burnaby Lake 31 Jan (Sheila Linn), while on Vancouver Island three were seen at the Salmon Point Marina, north of Courtenay 16 Jan (Art Martell, et al). Also on Vancouver Island, a single Barn Swallow was at Swan Lake in Victoria 28 Jan to 2 Feb (Jeff Gaskin, et al). A long staying Rock Wren found on Christmas Hill in Victoria 11 Dec remained until at least 10 Feb and was seen by many people (Courtney Cameron, m.ob). In the Okanagan, the valley's first Winter Wren was seen on the east side of Osoyoos Lake 31 Dec (Ryan Tomlinson). A male Mountain Bluebird was a nice find at Incinerator Rock on Long Beach near Tofino, on Vancouver Island 27 Dec (Christine Rock, Paul Levesque). BC's first **Redwing** was unknowingly photographed near Panama Flats in Victoria on Vancouver Island, 16 Dec (Ken Orich), but unfortunately the rarity was not noticed until the 'trail' was too cold.



BC's first Redwing was photographed in Victoria on Vancouver Island, 16 Dec (Ken Orich), but the bird was not identified until several weeks later.

A Northern Mockingbird at the Little Qualicum River Estuary in Nanoose Bay remained from 7 to at least the 27 Feb and was seen by many (Guy Monty, et al). A female type Black-and-white Warbler was a nice find in Stanley Park in Vancouver 7 to 12 Dec (Karen Barry, m.ob). A wintering Wilson's Warbler was at the Mackay Creek Estuary in North Vancouver 5 Dec (Rob Lyske). At Rath Trevor Beach on Vancouver Island, a Clay-colored Sparrow was noted and photographed 25 Feb (Russell Cannings, et al). In the Southern Interior where Lincoln's Sparrows are rare in the winter, one was seen along McLean Creek Rd in Okanagan Falls 22 Dec (Michael Bezener). A first for the Kelowna Christmas Bird Count, a Fox Sparrow was at the Summerhill Winery 14 Dec (Logan Lalonde, et al). Another wintering Fox Sparrow was photographed at a feeder in Knutsford near Kamloops 3 Feb (Glenn Dreger, Rick Howie). This winter was a good one for Harris's Sparrows in the province. Along Kitchen Road in Chilliwack an immature Harris's Sparrow remained from 15 Dec to 5 Jan (Mike Toochin, Sharon Toochin, et al). In Port McNeill at the north end of Vancouver Island, a Harris's Sparrow visited a feeder 11 Dec (Christopher Stephens), and also on Vancouver Island, a Harris's Sparrow accompanied Golden-crowned Sparrows at the Summit Hill Reservoir in Victoria, 22 Dec to 20 Jan (Bill Katz, m.ob). In Metchosisin, near Victoria, a Harris's Sparrow visited two

different locations with feeders between 11 Jan and 1 Feb (Cathy O'Connor, m.ob). In the Gulf Island Chain, an immature Harris's Sparrow was on Quadra Island 5 Feb (Rod Hall). Interior records of Harris's Sparrow this winter were much more scarce, with just one found along the waterfront in Nelson, 3 Jan (Janice Arndt). In the Okanagan Valley, Golden-crowned Sparrows are rare winter visitors so of note was an immature along the Kettle Valley Railway at Sage Mesa in Penticton 16 Dec (Ryan Tomlinson, Mike Force, Chris Charlesworth) Another immature Golden-crowned Sparrow was found on the Osoyoos Christmas Bird Count 31 Dec at Road 22 (Ryan Tomlinson, Chris Charlesworth, Yousif Attia). An immature male Dickcissel visited a feeder in Port McNeill on Vancouver Island from 28 Dec to 30 Jan (Alex Grey, m.ob). At Maplewood Flats in North Vancouver, a Black-headed Grosbeak seen from 14 to 28 Dec is exceptional (Derek Killby, m.ob). Of particular interest was a female **Painted Bunting** photographed at a feeder in Bowser on Vancouver Island 3 Dec (Penny Marshall). This appears to be the 7th BC record of Painted Bunting,



Painted Bunting: Female visited feeder in Bowser on Vancouver Island and was photographed here 3 Dec (Penny Marshall.)

pending acceptance by the BC Rare Birds Committee. On Haida Gwaii, formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, a Western Meadowlark seen on the Skidegate Inlet Christmas Bird Count 15 Dec was apparently just the fifth record for the archipelago (Peter Hamel,

et al). Rare in winter in southern BC, a male Yellow-headed Blackbird was with thousands of starlings and assorted blackbirds at the Kelowna Landfill 27 Jan (Chris Charlesworth). On Vancouver Island, a female Yellow-headed Blackbird was at a feeder in Courtenay 6 Dec (Heather Flemming)

One of the best sightings of the period was an immature male **Hooded Oriole** that visited feeders from 5 Dec to 18 Feb at the northern end of Vancouver Island in Port McNeill (Jackie Hilderling, m.ob).

Chris Charlesworth,
#106 – 571 Yates Rd.,
Kelowna, BC. V1V 2V5



Hooded Oriole: Immature male visited yard in Port McNeill on Vancouver Island until mid February and was photographed here 5 Dec (Jackie Hilderling).



Western Sandpipers by Adrian Dorst

Adrian writes: I learned long ago that sandpipers can be approached very closely by keeping a low profile, and especially by lying flat on the ground and crawling forward. On the wet sand I do that while wearing rain gear. In this case, I was about 12 feet away (and almost got run over by an inattentive jogger who was listening to music and oblivious to her surroundings).

This Great Grey Owl, photographed by Clive Keen on February 11, was known locally as the jail bird since it was usually seen in the vicinity of the Prince George Correctional Centre. For a month or so it was the lone Great Grey in the area, but toward the end of February was joined by another three , and possibly four, GGOWS, making up nicely for the winter's dearth of Snowy Owls. Technical details: Nikon 7100, Nikkor 80-400 lens, handheld at 390 mm, f6.3, 1/400 second, ISO 800, late afternoon with bright overcast cloud, minor adjustments of levels in Photoshop.



While a Great grey Owl has been getting all the media attention lately at the Prince George Airport this more predictable visitor was still well worth some photographic attention. Indeed, the Prince George Airport, according to Campbell-Kennedy Birds of British Columbia, is the best place in the province to see Short-eared Owls. Photographed by Clive Keen on January 16 with a Nikon 7100 and Nikkor 80-400 lens.

Bird Listers' Corner

2014 Lists

Welcome to the 2014 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 2013 figure. An “asterisk” preceding a total indicates a number wasn't submitted for 2014. If a member does not supply a submission for two consecutive years the listing will be dropped. An individual in **red bold** print indicates the member who had the largest increase from the previous year. A name in **red italics** indicates the reaching of a significant plateau.

Submissions were received from 53 members one less than 2013. There were three new members to Listers' Corner for 2014, Quentin Brown, Jeremy Gatten and John Hodges.

BC: Four members achieved the 400 plateau in 2014: *Russ Cannings*, *Kevin Neill*, *Brian Scott*, and *Russ Tkachuk*. **Kevin** had the highest increase of the group adding 10 with *Russ Cannings* close behind with 9.

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 523					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	468	Mike Toochin	89	2	466
2	442	Dale Jensen	85	3	439
3	442	Jo Ann MacKenzie	85		442
4	437	Sharon Toochin	84	2	435
5	*430	Wayne Weber	82		430
6	427	Roger Foxall	81.6	1	426
7	424	David Stirling	81.1	1	423
8	423	Carlo Giovanella	80.9	3	420
8	423	Tony Greenfield	80.9	1	422
10	422	Brian Self	80.7	1	421
11	418	Brian Stech	79.9	1	417
11	418	Lloyd Esralson	79.9		418
13	417	Murray Brown	79.7	1	416
13	417	Val George	79.7	4	413
15	411	Dick Cannings	78.6	1	410

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 523					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
16	408	Mike McGrenere	78.0	1	407
17	406	Keith Riding	77.6	4	402
17	406	<i>Russell Cannings</i>	77.6	9	397
19	405	Thor Manson	77.4	1	404
20	403	<i>Kevin Neill</i>	77.1	10	393
21	400	<i>Brian Scott</i>	76.5	3	397
21	400	Bryan Gates	76.5		400
21	400	<i>Russ Tkachuk</i>	76.5	1	399
24	398	John Vooy	76.1	4	394
25	398	Hank Vanderpol	76.1		398
26	395	Larry Cowan	75.5	5	390
27	393	Len Jellicoe	75.1	2	391
28	392	Barbara Begg	75.0	1	391
29	*391	Nathan Hentze	74.8		391
30	383	Chris Charlesworth	73.2	1	382
31	381	Gary Davidson	72.8	3	378
31	381	Jeremy Gatten	72.8		new
33	372	Rand Rudland	71.1	1	371
34	369	Don Wilson	70.6		369
35	368	Ken Morgan	70.4		368
36	367	Laird Law	70.2	1	366
36	367	Bruce Whittington	70.2	1	366
38	*358	Art Martell	68.5		358
39	356	Martin McNicholl	68.1		356
40	355	Gwynneth Wilson	67.9	2	353
41	350	Peter Blokker	66.9		350
41	350	Andy Buhler	66.9		350
41	350	Marilyn Buhler	66.9		350
44	332	John Sprague	63.5	4	328
45	322	Ted Goshulak	61.6	3	319
46	321	Dorothy Copp	61.4	1	320
47	*305	Peter McIver	58.3		305
48	304	Janice Arndt	58.1	4	300
49	301	Mike Mulligan (AB)	57.6		301
50	298	Lee Harding	57.0		299
51	*275	Jim Ginns	52.6		275
52	266	John Hodges	50.9		new
53	246	Michael Sather	47		new

ABA: With an increase of 8 *Mike Toochin* catapulted himself from 3rd to 1st place. His wife **Sharon Toochin** had the highest increase with 19. *Barbara Begg* had the second highest increase with 12. *Brian Stech* added 1 to his total to reach the 700 plateau.

ABA - 983					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	782	Mike Toochin	79.6	8	774
2	781	Roger Foxall	79.5	1	780
3	778	Hank Vanderpol	79.1	3	775
4	773	Mike Mulligan	78.6	5	768
5	772	Thor Manson	78.5	14	758
6	738	Russ Tkachuk	75.1	1	737
7	*722	Art Martell	73.4		722
8	711	Jo Ann MacKenzie	72.3		711
9	710	Dorothy Copp	72.2	2	708
10	709	Dale Jensen	72.1		709
10	709	John Vooy	72.1	8	701
12	700	Brian Stech	71.2	1	699
13	693	Sharon Toochin	70.5	19	674
14	686	David Stirling	69.8	6	680
15	*684	Wayne Weber	69.6		684
16	668	Chris Charlesworth	68.0	6	662
17	653	Gary Davidson	66.4	5	648
18	*652	Brian Self	66.3		652
19	646	John Sprague	65.7		655
20	643	Brian Scott	65.4		644
21	640	Andy Buhler	65.1	2	638
21	640	Marilyn Buhler	65.1	2	638
23	639	Dick Cannings	65.0	1	638
24	629	Kevin Neill	64.0	2	627
25	628	Gwynneth Wilson	63.9		628
26	626	Keith Riding	63.7	3	623
27	624	Don Wilson	63.5	5	619
28	623	Barbara Begg	63.4	12	611
29	617	Carlo Giovanella	62.8	2	615
30	610	Tony Greenfield	62.1	2	608
30	*610	Nathan Hentze	62.1		610
32	600	Lloyd Esralson	61.0		600
33	597	Jeremy Gatten	60.7	new	
34	587	Sandra Eadie	59.7		587
35	586	Len Jellicoe	59.6	new	
36	*585	Peter McIver	59.5		585
37	584	Ken Morgan	59.4		584
38	579	Russell Cannings	58.9		579
39	576	Mike McGrenere	58.6	9	567
40	568	Bryan Gates	57.8		568
41	565	Larry Cowan	57.5	2	563
42	561	Rand Rudland	57.1	6	555
43	542	Val George	55.1	1	541
44	532	Murray Brown	54.1	2	530
45	527	Laird Law	53.6		527

ABA - 983					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
46	526	Martin McNicholl	53.5		526
47	513	Ted Goshulak	52.2	3	510
48	463	Lee Harding	47.1		463
49	420	Janice Arndt	42.7		420
50	412	Peter Blokker	41.9		412

Canada: Kevin Neill had the largest increase with 8 moving him from 14th to 12th. Three members, *Russ Cannings*, *Chris Charlesworth*, and *John Sprague* increased their totals by 7.

CANADA - 676					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	544	Roger Foxall	80.5	1	543
2	527	Jo Ann MacKenzie	78.0		527
3	504	Mike Toochin	74.6		504
4	491	Brian Self	72.6	1	490
5	489	David Stirling	72.3	1	488
6	486	Dale Jensen	71.9	1	485
7	484	Sharon Toochin	71.6	3	481
8	478	Russ Tkachuk	70.7	2	476
9	*473	Wayne Weber	70.0		473
10	471	Dick Cannings	69.7	2	469
11	468	Thor Manson	69.2	2	466
12	466	Kevin Neill	68.9	8	458
13	464	Carlo Giovanella	68.6	1	463
14	460	Mike McGrenere	68.0	1	459
15	459	Murray Brown	67.9	1	458
16	456	Keith Riding	67.5	3	453
16	456	Mike Mulligan	67.5		456
18	452	Russell Cannings	66.9	7	445
18	452	Barbara Begg	66.9	1	451
20	450	Brian Scott	66.6	1	449
21	449	Len Jellicoe	66.4	2	447
21	449	Brian Stech	66.4	2	447
23	*447	Art Martell	66.1		447
24	445	Larry Cowan	65.8	2	443
25	444	Hank Vanderpol	65.7	1	443
26	444	Martin McNicholl	65.7		444
27	443	Rand Rudland	65.5	5	438
28	442	John Vooy	65.4	1	441
29	441	Chris Charlesworth	65.2	7	434
29	441	Lloyd Esralson	65.2		441
31	434	Tony Greenfield	64.2	1	433
32	433	Ken Morgan	64.1		433
32	*433	Nathan Hentze	64.1		433

CANADA - 676					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
34	432	Jeremy Gatten	63.9	new	
35	421	Bryan Gates	62.3	1	420
36	417	Gwynneth Wilson	61.7	4	413
37	416	John Sprague	61.5	7	409
38	413	Sandra Eadie	61.1		413
39	411	Gary Davidson	60.8	3	408
40	410	Peter Blokker	60.7		410
41	409	Don Wilson	60.5		409
41	409	Quentin Brown	60.5	new	
43	399	Andy Buhler	59.0		399
43	399	Marilyn Buhler	59.0		399
45	394	Laird Law	58.3		394
46	393	Janice Arndt	58.1		393
47	*387	Peter McIver	57.2		387
48	385	Ted Goshulak	57.0	2	383
49	379	Dorothy Copp	56.1	1	378
50	342	Lee Harding	50.6	1	341

World: Gary Davidson moved past the 2,500 plateau with an impressive increase of 663. Other plateaus crossed were 5,000: *Nigel Mathews & Mike Toochin*; 4,000 – *Sharon Toochin*; 2,000 – *Chris Charlesworth*; 1,500 – *Marilyn & Andy Buhler*; & 1,000 – *Kevin Neill*.

WORLD - 10,307					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	6,535	Keith Riding	63	101	6,434
2	5,314	Roger Foxall	52	144	5,170
3	5,067	Nigel Mathews	49	125	4,942
4	5,003	Mike Toochin	49	274	4,729
5	4,954	Jo Ann MacKenzie	48	172	4,782
6	*4,304	Art Martell	42		4,304
7	4,121	Sharon Toochin	40	257	3,864
8	4,045	David Stirling	39	19	4,026
9	3,743	Peter McIver	36		3,743
10	3,575	Mike Mulligan	35	8	3,567
11	3,324	Dale Jensen	32	252	3,072
12	3,200	Barbara Begg	31	14	3,186
13	3,166	Brian Self	31	274	2,892
14	3,154	Dick Cannings	31	4	3,150
15	3,114	Hank Vanderpol	30	2	3,112
16	2,948	Laird Law	29	60	2,888
17	2,623	Don Wilson	25	2	2,621
18	2,596	Gary Davidson	25	663	1,933

WORLD - 10,307					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
19	2,460	Val George	24	22	2,438
20	2,447	Dorothy Copp	24	68	2,379
21	2,388	Brian Stech	23	69	2,319
22	2,345	Rand Rudland	23	45	2,300
23	2,324	Brian Scott	23	24	2,300
24	2,155	Chris Charlesworth	21	366	1,789
25	2,135	Lee Harding	21	18	2,117
26	2,091	Ken Morgan	20	55	2,036
27	*2,010	Nathan Hentze	20		2,010
28	1,869	Bryan Gates	18	279	1,590
29	1,827	Sandra Eadie	18		1,827
30	1,740	Russ Cannings	17	new	
31	1,527	Tony Greenfield	15	1	1,526
32	1,502	Andy Buhler	15	242	1,260
32	1,502	Marilyn Buhler	15	242	1,260
34	1,306	Larry Cowan	13	1	1,305
35	1,003	Kevin Neill	10	53	950

Okanagan Valley: The list, order wise, stayed static from 2013 to 2014. This should change in 2015 (Oliver AGM). **Brian Stech** had the largest increase with 9.

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 342					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	311	Chris Charlesworth	91	1	310
2	306	Dick Cannings	89	2	304
3	298	Gwynneth Wilson	87	2	296
4	298	Russell Cannings	87	3	295
5	289	Don Wilson	85		289
6	272	Peter Blokker	80		272
7	271	Mike Toochin	79	1	270
8	259	Gary Davidson	76		261
8	259	Hank Vanderpol	76		259
10	*258	Wayne Weber	75		258
11	*247	Jim Ginns	72		247
12	242	David Stirling	71		242
13	234	Jo Ann MacKenzie	68		234
14	232	Tony Greenfield	68		232
15	222	John Voos	65	1	221
16	219	Laird Law	64	1	218
17	215	Lloyd Esralson	63		215
18	*203	Nathan Hentze	59		203
19	193	Bryan Gates	56		193
20	186	Brian Stech	54	9	177
21	168	Larry Cowan	49		168
22	162	Dorothy Copp	47		162

Vancouver: Russ Cannings again had the highest increase with 9. Kevin Neill was close behind with an increase of 7.

VANCOUVER AREA - 409					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	370	Mike Toochn	90		370
2	357	Jo Ann MacKenzie	87	1	356
3	349	Brian Self	85	1	348
4	344	Carlo Giovanella	84	1	343
4	*344	Wayne Weber	84		344
6	341	Keith Riding	83	3	338
7	334	Lloyd Esralson	82		334
8	332	Roger Foxall	81		332
9	319	Larry Cowan	78	3	316
10	316	Brian Stech	77	3	313
11	309	John Voos	76	3	306
12	286	Dick Cannings	70		286
13	264	Russell Cannings	65	9	255
14	260	Kevin Neill	64	7	253
15	245	David Stirling	60		245
16	235	Bryan Gates	57		235
17	234	Don Wilson	57		234

Washington: Brian Stech had the highest increase at 15. Three members joined this list for 2014.

WASHINGTON STATE - 507					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	*400	Wayne Weber	79		400
2	349	Jo Ann MacKenzie	69		349
3	324	Mike Toochn	64	6	318
4	283	Hank Vanderpol	56	8	275
5	280	Brian Self	55	new	
6	268	Dick Cannings	53		268
7	266	John Voos	52	2	264
8	262	Chris Charlesworth	52	new	
9	258	Roger Foxall	51	1	257
10	254	David Stirling	50		254
11	*252	Keith Riding	50		252
12	236	Brian Stech	47	15	221
13	235	Lloyd Esralson	46		235
14	234	Dale Jensen	46		234
15	226	Dorothy Copp	45	2	224
16	189	Larry Cowan	37	new	

ATPT: The list grew again by one to 15. Biggest increase was again **John Sprague** with 89.

(Ticks) All Provinces & Territories					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	2,952	Roger Foxall		2	2,950
2	2,157	David Stirling		1	2,156
3	1,858	Dick Cannings			1,858
4	1,698	Mike Mulligan		new	
5	*1,695	Wayne Weber			1,695
6	1,293	Janice Arndt		5	1,288
7	1,266	Barabara Begg		1	1,265
8	1,250	John Sprague		89	1,161
9	1,210	Russ Cannings		new	
10	*1,185	Gary Davidson			1,185
11	1,058	Laird Law		1	1,057
12	969	Sandra Eadie			969
13	871	Brian Stech		5	866
14	776	Larry Cowan		3	773
15	757	Dorothy Copp		1	756

Alberta: Very little change.

ALBERTA - 419					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	357	Mike Mulligan	85	1	356
2	316	Hank Vanderpol	75	2	314
3	286	David Stirling	68		286
4	241	Roger Foxall	58		241
4	241	Martin McNicholl	58		241
6	240	Jo Ann MacKenzie	57		240
7	*235	Wayne Weber	56		235
8	222	Bryan Gates	53		222
9	216	Gary Davidson	52		216
10	214	Dick Cannings	51		214
11	195	Len Jellicoe	47		197

Northwest Territories: John Hodges joined the list at 54.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - 326					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	176	Laird Law	54		176
2	154	Tony Greenfield	47	1	153
3	148	David Stirling	45		148
4	133	Rand Rudland	41		133
5	105	Roger Foxall	32		105
6	98	Brian Self	30		98
7	97	Barbara Begg	30		97
8	86	Mike Toochn	26		86
9	84	John Sprague	26		84
10	64	Lee Harding	20		64

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - 326					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
11	54	John Hodges	17	new	
12	53	Gary Davidson	16		53
13	*52	Wayne Weber	16		52
14	40	Dick Cannings	12		40

Vancouver Island: Mike McGrenere added an impressive 6 species to his list propelling him past Barbara Begg into 2nd place.

VANCOUVER ISLAND - 388					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	351	David Stirling	90	3	348
2	344	Mike McGrenere	89	6	338
3	341	Barbara Begg	88	3	338
4	335	Bryan Gates	86	1	334
5	330	Hank Vanderpol	85		330
6	316	Bruce Whittington	81	1	315
7	302	Mike Toochin	78	1	301
8	286	Ken Morgan	74		286
9	*261	Wayne Weber	67		261
10	260	Roger Foxall	67		260
11	253	Jo Ann MacKenzie	65	3	250
12	204	John Sprague	53	new	
13	203	Larry Cowan	52	1	202

Peace River: Russ Cannings had the largest increase at 6.

PEACE RIVER AREA - 272					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	245	Laird Law	90	1	244
2	223	Russell Cannings	82	6	217
3	209	Tony Greenfield	77		209
4	203	Mike Toochin	75		203
5	193	Jo Ann MacKenzie	71		193
6	184	Bryan Gates	68		184
7	*164	Wayne Weber	60		164
8	163	David Stirling	60		163
9	153	Larry Cowan	56		153
10	144	Lloyd Esralson	53		144
11	128	Dorothy Copp	47	new	
11	128	Brian Stech	47		128

Victoria: As happened with the Vancouver Island list Mike McGrenere added 6 species to his list propelling him past Barbara Begg into 2nd place. Jeremy Gatten joined the list at 296 for 7th place.

VICTORIA AREA - 362					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	334	David Stirling	92	3	331
2	328	Mike McGrenere	91	6	322
3	326	Barbara Begg	90	3	323
4	320	Hank Vanderpol	88		320
5	317	Bryan Gates	88	1	316
6	304	Bruce Whittington	84	1	303
7	296	Jeremy Gatten	82	new	
8	260	Mike Toochin	72	1	259
9	*238	Wayne Weber	66		238
10	165	Larry Cowan	46	2	163
11	141	Lloyd Esralson	39		141
12	137	Dick Cannings	38	new	

North Pacific Pelagic Waters: Minimal change.

NORTH PACIFIC PELAGIC WATERS					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	116	Mike Toochin		1	115
2	101	Ken Morgan			101
3	80	Russell Cannings		1	79
4	77	Bruce Whittington			77
5	70	Kevin Neill			70
6	68	David Stirling			68
7	*65	Val George			65
8	63	Lloyd Esralson			63
9	*58	Jo Ann MacKenzie			58
10	45	Bryan Gates			45

Non-motorized Transport: Mike McGrenere still holds down 1st place and managed to improve his lead over 2nd place Dick Cannings by 7 to stretch his margin to 39.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT					
#	2014	Name & location		incr	2013
1	286	Mike McGrenere, - Victoria	11		275
2	247	Dick Cannings, - Penticton	4		243
3	*173	Ken Wright, - Lillooet			173
4	153	Janice Arndt, - Nelson	2		151
5	*131	Peter Blokker, - Vernon			131
6	111	Barbara Begg, - Sidney			111
7	*106	Jim Ginns, - Penticton			106
8	92	Larry Cowan, - Pitt Meadows	21		71
9	*75	Lee Harding, - Coquitlam			75
10	54	Ted Goshulak, - Langley	1		53

Yukon Territory: John Sprague had the largest increase with 4. Five members added their totals to the list.

YUKON TERRITORY - 314					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	172	Dick Cannings	55		172
2	161	Tony Greenfield	51	1	160
3	150	David Stirling	48		150
4	142	Roger Foxall	45		142
5	123	Gary Davidson	39		123
6	113	John Sprague	36	4	109
7	112	Rand Rudland	36		112
8	102	Brian Self	32		102
9	*87	Wayne Weber	28		87
10	86	John Hodges	27	new	
11	82	Mike Toochin	26	new	
12	80	Dale Jensen	25	new	
13	64	Dorothy Copp	20	new	
14	64	Brian Stech	20	new	

Manning PP: No change

MANNING PROVINCIAL PARK - 206					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	153	Mike McGrenere	74		153
2	*125	Wayne Weber	61		125
3	118	Dick Cannings	57		123
4	110	Jo Ann MacKenzie	53		110
5	101	David Stirling	49		101
6	90	Larry Cowan	44		90

Sea & Iona Islands: Minimal change

SEA & IONA ISLANDS (Vanc)					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	277	Mike Toochin		1	276
2	246	Keith Riding		2	244
3	*237	Wayne Weber			237
4	204	Lloyd Esralson			204
5	179	Larry Cowan			179
6	167	Dick Cannings			167

BC Winter: Covers life BC "Winter" period sightings (Dec/Jan/Feb) with a total to Dec. 31, 2014. **Janice Arndt** had the best increase with 4. *David Sterling* came on the list to occupy 2nd place with 254.

B.C. Winter List - Dec / Jan / Feb					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	284	Mike Toochin			285
2	254	David Sterling		new	
3	215	Larry Cowan			215
4	122	Janice Arndt		4	118
5	*112	Lee Harding			112

Westham & Reifel Islands: Brian Self came on to the list in 2nd place with a total of 209

WESTHAM & REIFEL ISLANDS (Vanc)					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	*223	Wayne Weber			223
2	209	Brian Self		new	
3	194	Lloyd Esralson			194
4	179	Keith Riding		3	176
5	157	Larry Cowan			157
6	148	Dick Cannings		1	147

World Families: This list has grown from one in 2013 to five in 2014.

World Families 241					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	211	Mike Toochin	88	new	
2	201	Sharon Toochin	83	new	
3	194	Barbara Begg	80	4	190
4	142	Bryan Gates	59	new	
5	103	Larry Cowan	43	new	

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

PRINCE GEORGE AREA - 297					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	273	Laird Law	92	1	272
2	270	Cathy Antoniazzi	91	1	269
3	*209	Nathan Hentze	70		209
4	190	Don Wilson	64		190
5	151	Peter Blokker	51		151

WEST KOOTENAY AREA - 313					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	282	Gary Davidson	90	2	280
2	*250	Peter McIver	80	0	250
3	244	Janice Arndt	78	3	241
4	185	Jo Ann MacKenzie	59	0	185
5	*182	Wayne Weber	58	0	182

SUNSHINE COAST - 304					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	276	Tony Greenfield	91		276
2	254	Russ Tkachuk	84	1	253
3	248	Rand Rudland	82	4	244
4	228	John Hodges	75	new	
5	*136	Wayne Weber	45		136

BLACKIE SPIT (Vanc)					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	192	Jo Ann MacKenzie			192
2	*183	Wayne Weber			183
3	117	Larry Cowan		3	114
4	91	Dick Cannings			91

CRESTON VALLEY AREA - 301					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	*213	Peter McIver	71		213
2	175	Gary Davidson	58	1	174
3	168	Janice Arndt	56	new	
4	*142	Wayne Weber	47		142

Mt. Robson PP					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	145	Dick Cannings			145
2	142	Laird Law		3	139
3	120	David Stirling			120

KAMLOOPS AREA - 306					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	*255	Wayne Weber	83		255
2	200	Gary Davidson	65		201
3	198	David Stirling	65		198

Over 1,500m					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	112	Mike McGrenere			112
2	*106	Wayne Weber			106

Princeton Area					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	95	Lloyd Esralson			95
2	91	Larry Cowan			91
3	90	Bryan Gates			90

Salt Spring Island					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	172	John Sprague		14	158
2	166	Karen Ferguson		4	162
3	*114	Wayne Weber			114

Haida Gwaii					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	122	Mike Toochin		new	
2	*106	Bruce Whittington			106
3	97	Laird Law			97

Semiamhoo Peninsula (Vanc)					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	240	Jo Ann MacKenzie		new	
2	222	Carlo Giovannella		2	220
3	199	Roger Foxall		2	197

City of Pitt Meadows					
#	2013	Name		incr	2012
1	*201	Wayne Weber			201
2	192	Larry Cowan		2	190

Revelstoke Area					
#	2014	Name		incr	2013
1	195	Russell Cannings		4	191
2	*150	Wayne Weber			150

North America 2011					
#	2014	Name	%	incr	2013
1	*1,589	Mike Mulligan	79		new
2	1,379	Mike Toochin	69		

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	2014	Name	+	2013
Gwaii Haanas NP	*81	Bruce Whittington		81

Cariboo/Chilcotin	2014	Name	+	2013
Cariboo Plateau	136	Michael Sather	14	122
Williams Lake Area	160	Bryan Gates		160

BC Rockies	2014	Name	+	2013
Columbia Valley	123	Bryan Gates		123
Yoho NP	*124	Wayne Weber		124

Thompson/Okanagan	2014	Name	+	2013
Nicola Watershed	*252	Wayne Weber		252
North Okanagan	253	Peter Blokker		253

Vancouver Coast & Mnt.	2014	Name	+	2013
Abbotsford	207	John Vooy	5	202
City of Richmond	288	Mike Toochin	3	285
Colony Farm RP	164	Larry Cowan	1	163
Derby Reach RP	97	Ted Goshulak		97
Garibaldi PP	*73	Mike McGrenere		73
Iona Island	265	Mike Toochin	2	263
Langley	167	Ted Goshulak		new
Maplewood CA	208	Quentin Brown		new
Nathan Creek Dyke	*68	Ted Goshulak		68
Trinity Western U Campus	*149	Ted Goshulak		149

Vancouver Island	2014	Name	+	2013
Comox Valley	*241	Nathan Hentze		241
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

Other	2014	Name	+	2013
ABA Birds Photograph'd	540	Brian Stech	23	517
Yard List (Victoria)	151	Bryan Gates		new

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 2015. See you at the BCFO AGM and Conference in Oliver this coming May.

Larry Cowan

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