

# BC BIRDING

Newsmagazine of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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*Siberian Accentor, photographed by John Gordon in Surrey on January 20, 2016. See page 27.*

**Publisher**

*BC Birding* is published four times a year by the British Columbia Field Ornithologists, PO Box 45111, Dunbar, Vancouver BC, V6S 2M8.

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*.

**About the BCFO**

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.

**Membership**

See the website (<http://bcfo.ca>) for details, or write to BCFO, PO Box 45507, Westside RPO, Vancouver, BC, V6S 2N5

**Annual Membership Dues**

General Membership (Canada): \$30

Junior Membership (Canada): \$20

U.S. and International Membership: \$35

**Newsmagazine Submissions**

To submit material to this publication, contact the Editor by email ([clive\\_keen@hotmail.com](mailto:clive_keen@hotmail.com)) or by mail at 10790 Grassland Road, Prince George, BC V2K 5E8.

Submissions may include articles about birding experiences, casual observations about bird behaviour, site guides, photographs, and other topics of broad interest to birders, preferably, but not necessarily, in British Columbia. Deadlines are:

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- September edition: August 15
- December edition: November 15

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*Right: a Black Tern, one of the targets of the pre-and-post conference trips—see page 12.*

*Photo by Daniel Arndt.*

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*Membership Committee:* Larry Cowan

*Website:* George Clulow, Neil Dawe





## IMPORTANT DATES

### CRANBROOK CONFERENCE & AGM 2016

#### REGISTRATION

##### April 02

*Registration Opens for Conference and AGM*

#### EVENT DATES

##### May 24 – 27

Pre-conference Southern Alberta Extension (see page 10)

##### May 26 – 27

Creston pre-conference 2-Day Field Trip. (See page 13)

##### May 27 – 29

Cranbrook Conference and AGM

##### May 29 – June 1

Post-conference Southern Alberta Extension (see page 11)

#### CLOSING DEADLINES

##### May 12

Creston pre-conference 2-Day Field sign-up

##### May 19

Registration for Cranbrook Conference and AGM

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*Back page photo: Northern Pygmy-Owl by William Murdoch.*



## President's Message

*One must ask children and birds how cherries and strawberries taste.*

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

It's always satisfying to see a program we instituted just two years back now attracting more and more interest and involvement. Even better, when the group we're attracting is the up-and-coming young birders in our midst. It's through our youth that we perpetuate our passion.

The Young Birders Program is now an official program of BCFO. On your behalf, your directors formalized this arrangement at our most recent Board meeting. Fittingly, this year sees a record crop of young birders receiving an award from BCFO. It seems these talented, young ornithologists in the making are emerging from all over. Our program is attracting young people we

may not otherwise have known about, nor they would have known about each other. You'll see their names and some of the activities of the group reported in this issue of *BC Birding*. You'll see more on the website, and as the year's activities unfold.

BCFO members Melissa Hafting and Carlo Giovanella deserve much credit for getting the program running and moving up to the next level. BCFO Young Birders not only receive an award, but now have the opportunity to participate in a series of field trips specifically organized for them, and led by Melissa. Present and past Young Birders get together for these trips. Knowledge is exchanged, skills are built, enthusiasm is shared, and lifers are ticked and photographed.

~ ~ ~

March is traditionally the month we present in *BC Birding* the full details of our annual Conference/AGM, and Extension trip. This issue is no exception, and this year we're expanding the program and offering more choices and opportunities for everyone.

Not only can you choose to take part in the pre-conference Two-Day Field

Trip for members to the Creston Valley, but there are two chances to participate in the Extension. In response to last year's huge demand and rapid sign-up for the Extension, we are offering both pre-conference and post-conference versions this year. Watch those sign-up dates, and avoid disappointment by registering right away.

We are also making a little more time in the Saturday program by having a single technical session instead of the traditional two or three. The usual program of Saturday and Sunday early morning field trips is ready to go, and I would like to thank, on your behalf, the Rocky Mountain Naturalists who are leading field trips for us, and have been so helpful in the organization of the Conference.

This will be our first AGM held in Cranbrook, and I look forward to seeing you all at the Conference, and having the chance to catch up at the traditional Friday evening Meet and Greet.

See you in Cranbrook

**George Clulow, President**

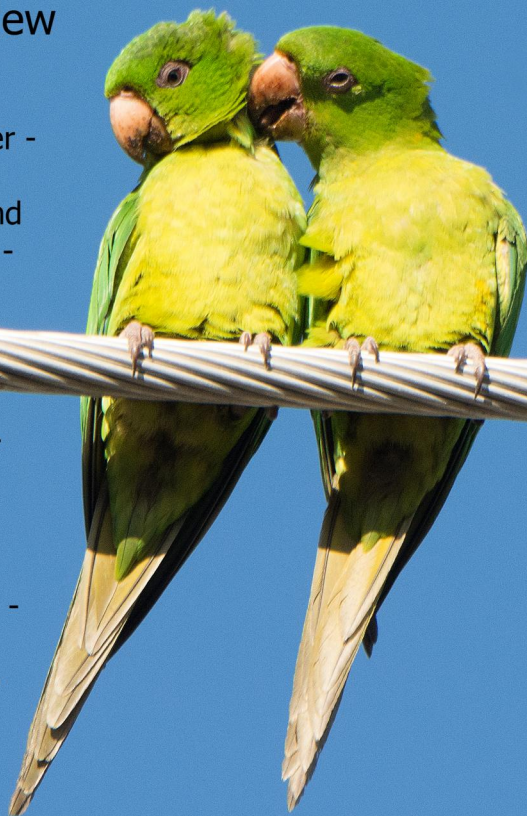
### Welcome New Members

Hendrika Bakker -  
Burnaby  
Pascale Charland  
& Alberto Vilco -  
Richmond

Lorna Duncan -  
Coquitlam  
Garry Oak  
Ecosystems  
Recovery Team -  
Victoria  
Lindsay Janes -  
Mill Bay

Patricia Kimpton - Quesnel  
Michelle Lamberson - Vancouver  
Tom Leys - Vancouver  
Janice Melendez - Whitby, Ontario  
Guy Monty - NanOOSE Bay  
Linda Mueller - Vancouver

Kathy Nuszdorfer - Kelowna  
Bob Richards & Yvonne Wentzel -  
Prince George  
John Roper - Burnaby  
James Rourke & Kerry Kenwood -  
Vancouver  
Frank Schroeder - Hedley  
Graham Sunderland - Vancouver  
Eric Tull - Sidney  
Kirsten Walsh - Vancouver





## Notices

# Thank You

### Donations 2015

Your Board of Directors is very proud to acknowledge with sincere thanks the donations made by fifteen Members during the year 2015. These amounted to \$678.00 and represented some of the extraordinary support and contributions that make BCFO the strong organisation that it is.

Most of these fifteen Donor/Members are repeat, annual givers. In order of dates of receipt, they are

- Ana Simeon
- Carol Ann Botel
- Daryl Johnson
- Gwynneth Wilson
- Ian Robinson
- Brian Self
- George Clulow
- Leona Breckenridge
- Dorothy Copp
- Bill Stewart
- Nancy Krueger
- David Schutz
- Michael Hoebel
- Paul Chytk
- Neil Bourne

### Stop Press

An especially big donation was received at press time, the biggest in recent years, from Paul Tennant, whom the Board would like to acknowledge and thank especially.

Prospective donors may choose to mail a cheque (see page 2 for addresses) or visit our website – [bcfo.ca](http://bcfo.ca) – and click on *About*, then *Donate to BCFO* and

the *Donate Now* button. In either case, an official receipt for tax purposes will be issued.

### Steve Cannings Award

*Report by Wayne C. Weber*

The Steve Cannings Award is an award presented annually by BC Field Ornithologists since 2007. It honours the memory of Steve Cannings, an outstanding amateur ornithologist, naturalist, photographer, and conservationist who was a lifelong resident of Penticton. The Cannings Award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions over a long period of time to ornithology in BC in any one or more of the following three areas: (1) research on bird biology or ecology, or detailed documentation of the avifauna of a portion of BC; (2) conservation of

birds or of bird habitats in BC; and (3) public education about birds in BC. The award recipient is selected by a three-person Award Committee chaired by myself, and approved by the BCFO Board.

The 2015 recipient of the Steve Cannings award is Dr Alan E Burger of Merritt, BC. Alan is a professional biologist who has made major contributions in all three of the areas mentioned above. He was born and raised in South Africa, and earned his Bachelor's degree, and later his PhD, at the University of Cape Town. His PhD dissertation, completed at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, was on the biology of the Black-faced Sheathbill, an aberrant shorebird which survives by stealing food from nesting seabirds, studied on subantarctic Marion Island. Alan immigrated to Canada in 1980, and was employed for most of the next five years as an Assis-



*Dr Alan Burger with the Steve Cannings Award presentation plaque.  
Photo taken by Bob Scafe, October 2015.*

tant Professor of Biology at Memorial University at Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

Alan moved to BC in 1985, and for many years has been on the faculty at the University of Victoria, where he is currently an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Biology. From 1986 to 1988, he served as the Assistant Director of the Bamfield Marine Station on the west coast of Vancouver Island. He is an authority on the biology and conservation of marine birds, especially on the Marbled Murrelet, a Threatened Species in both Canada and the US. He has published numerous scientific papers on the ecology of Marbled Murrelets and other seabirds. Another strong interest of his is the effects of oil spills on seabirds, on which he has also published several papers. He initiated and supervised the first Beached Bird Survey for the BC coast from 1986 to 1997 a valuable project which was resurrected by Bird Studies Canada in 2002, and has been operated by them ever since.

In 2007, Alan and his wife, Andrea Lawrence, moved to the Merritt area, where he has been very active in mentoring and organizing amateur birders and naturalists. He was one of the key people involved in establishing the Nicola Naturalist Society in 2010, and was its first and its current president. He served as the Regional Coordinator for the Princeton-Nicola Region of the BC Breeding Bird Atlas, and was a major contributor to the Atlas project. Last but not least, he has served for several years as the organizer and compiler of the Merritt Christmas Bird Count.

We announced the award at the BCFO Annual Meeting in Oliver in May 2015, but Alan was unable to attend. Therefore, the presentation of the award was made to Alan at the October

meeting of the Nicola Naturalist Society. We regret the unfortunate delay in the publication of this testimonial, but we wish to reassure Alan that nothing has diminished our admiration for the major contributions he has made to the ornithological and birding communities in BC.

*Below: Ann Nightingale*



involved with numerous conservation efforts, public outreach programs and liaison activities on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Ann is a past President and Board Member of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO), which has contributed extensive knowledge about birdlife in southwest British Columbia, and she is a past winner of the Governor General's Caring Canadian

Award for her work there. She is the face of the Vancouver Island birding community, appearing on local radio and TV, making countless presentations to local communities on birds and birding and representing a vital liaison between the birding community and the general public."

## Featured Photographer

To see the latest in the BCFO Featured Photographer series, head to :

[bcfo.ca/ian-routley-february-2016](http://bcfo.ca/ian-routley-february-2016)

A dozen of Ian Routley's remarkable photographs are shown, all taken around his Lillooet home.

## Betty Petersen Award

BCFO member Ann Nightingale has received the Betty Petersen Award, from the American Birding Association, one of the three ABA awards announced for 2016.

The ABA Announcement reads:

"The 2016 Betty Petersen Award for Conservation and Community goes to Ann Nightingale of Victoria, British Columbia.

"Ann Nightingale is an active British Columbia birder and a tireless promoter of birding. She has been deeply

## REMINDER

Our postal address has been changed for nearly a year now but many letters are still addressed to our old postal box, though subsequently re-directed to the new one after an inevitable delay. This free re-direction service will however end by the time you read this. Make sure you use the following address:

B.C. Field Ornithologists  
PO Box 45111, Dunbar  
Vancouver, BC V6S 2M8



# BCFO 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE May 27th – 29th, 2016 Cranbrook, BC

## Schedule of Events

**Location:** *Prestige Rocky Mountain Resort, 209 Van Horne St S, Cranbrook. All conference activities, and field trip departures take place here.*

**Registration, Meet & 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 confirm your field trip selection – Appetizers and cash bar.

**Breakfast:** 5:15 to 5:45 am, prior to field trip departures

**Conference Field Trips :** 6:00 am departures both days from the PRMR.

Trip 1 – Ha Ha Creek Valley

Leader: Alan Barnard

Trip 2 – Skookumchuck Prairie IBA

Leader: Dianne Cooper

Trip 3 – Wycliffe Rambler

Leader: Ruth Goodwin

Trip 4 – Spray Irrigation, Three Ponds

Leader: Dean Nicholson

Trip 5 – If registration numbers require

Leader: Daryl Calder

**Lunch:** 12:00 to 1:00 both days

**Technical Session:** 1:00 to 1:45 – Saturday, Dr David Bradley – The Completed British Columbia Breeding Bird Atlas

**Annual General Meeting:** 1:45 to 3:00, Saturday

**Social Hour Cash Bar:** 5:00 to 6:30, Saturday

**Banquet:** 6:30 to 7:30 Saturday.

**Banquet Keynote:** 7:30 to 9:00 Saturday: Jared Hobbs – Owls of BC: Ecology, Conservation and Management.

## Registration Information

### TO REGISTER FOR THE AGM/CONFERENCE

#### Via regular mail

Complete the Registration Form in this issue of *BC Birding* and mail it along with your cheque for payment to:

P.O. Box 45111 Dunbar  
Vancouver,  
B.C.  
V6S 2M8

#### Via the BCFO website (PayPal)

Go to the AGM/Extension Payments tab under the Events > Annual Conference drop downs.

A fillable registration form is available for completion. *To pay for more than one registration*, simply make sufficient single payments for each person you wish to register.

### TO REGISTER FOR THE EXTENSION TRIP

#### Via the BCFO website

*Note: The only way to register for the Extension Trip is via the Website.*

Payment may be made either by cheque, or via the PayPal button supplied.

Go to the AGM/Extension Payments tab under the Events > Annual Conference drop downs.

The fillable registration form available on the website for completion will include a requirement to indicate your choice of pre or post-AGM Extension. *To pay for more than one registration* via PayPal, simply make sufficient single payments for each person you wish to register.

*On-line registrations  
open on April 2nd at 0900 PDT*

### FIELD TRIP SELECTION AND WAIVER FORMS

Field trip selections for the morning of May 28th and May 29th will be made when checking in on Friday, May 27th. At the same time, you will be asked to complete your conference waiver form.

*To ensure fairness,  
field trip selection will be opened at  
1700 on May 27th*

The opportunity to change the field trip you have signed up for on Sunday, May 29th will commence at 1345 on Saturday, following the technical session. This will enable us to open additional spaces if there is heavy demand for one of two of the field trips being offered.

# BCFO 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE May 27th – 29th, 2016 Cranbrook, BC

## Registration Form

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

.....

Phone: ..... Email: .....

### Conference Registration:

Attendance is limited to BCFO members and accompanying spouses/family members. \*Non-members may join BCFO at the same time as they register for the Conference.

Full conference fee includes: Friday night Meet & Greet, Saturday & Sunday breakfasts, lunches and Saturday evening Banquet plus all field trips and talks

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$170 /person = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Social events ONLY (Meet & Greet, and Banquet) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$75 /person= \$\_\_\_\_\_

\*Membership fee for non-members ` \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$30.00 – single/family = \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(see BCFO website for membership details: [bcfo.ca/joinrenew-2](http://bcfo.ca/joinrenew-2))

Total registration fee(s) for the Conference = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Will you be attending the Friday evening reception: Yes ..... No .....

Do you have any dietary requirements: Yes .... Requirement .....

### Waiver

All registrants for the conference and extension trip are required to complete the WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND RELEASE OF CLAIMS form. Forms will be made available at the AGM at the time of registering for the field trips.

Participation in the AGM is **not possible** without payment of applicable fee(s) by the registration date.

All fees are payable upon submission of this registration form. Please make cheque or money order payable to **BC Field Ornithologists**. If registering by mail, send your registration and payment to BC Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 45111 Dunbar, Vancouver, B.C. V6S 2M8

*Please submit AGM registrations by May 19, 2016*

*Below: Elizabeth Lake, from the website at [info@cranbrook.ca](mailto:info@cranbrook.ca).*





# BCFO 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE May 27th – 29th, 2016 Cranbrook, BC

## Jared Hobbs

### Introducing Our Banquet Speaker

Jared Hobbs has stood by a rattlesnake den to watch the sun go down; witnessed falcons streak past his tent while camping high on a cliff over Kamloops Lake; and observed the rare spotted owl hunt for its prey beneath towering giant Douglas-fir trees near Pemberton.

Jared is a Victoria-based biologist and wildlife photographer and has a portfolio rich with images of some of the province's most fragile creatures. While his work as a biologist studying species at risk informs his photography, he performs the two jobs separately.

#### BANQUET TALK

#### OWLS OF BC: ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

#### ON SILENT WINGS...

Each requires his full attention and afford a uniquely informed perspective about both the beauty of the species and the management challenges many of our species face in BC.

His images are represented by All Canada Photos and Getty Images. Since 1994 Jared's client base has grown steadily to include clients such as *Canadian Geographic*, *British Columbia Magazine*, government agencies and environmental groups.

Leading off with background information about BC's owl biodiversity, Jared will connect BC's diverse terrain and climate to explain why BC boasts the highest owl biodiversity of any Canadian province.

He will look briefly at our owl diversity, from grassland specialists like the Burrowing Owl, to forest-dependent species that occupy our forests along the coast, the interior and up into the

boreal forest and tundra ecosystems.

Delving deeper, Jared will give us a closer look at two of BC's better studied species: Spotted Owl and Western Screech-owl. Expect a stimulating visual journey that will acquaint you with the ecology of each species before touching on management and the current status of each species in BC. We'll see intimate images of these secretive species and hear first-hand stories of magical moments spent with owls in the field. We'll learn why Spotted Owls are virtually extirpated and why Screech-owls need our help to avoid a similar

fate. In short, we'll hear many fascinating tales of ecological adaptation as we follow Jared along on a visual journey to explore BC's diverse owl assemblage.

Jared will share an intimate perspective of management and mistruth. You will take away a strong sense of why we should care and why we need to be the voice for the wildlife that, without our empathy, may become just a ghostly whisper in the wind.

*Jared Hobbs.*



© Jared Hobbs



# BCFO 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE May 27th – 29th, 2016 Cranbrook, BC

## Accommodation Information

The Prestige Rocky Mountain Resort & Convention Centre will be the base of activities for the AGM. Field trips depart from here; breakfasts, lunches, technical sessions, the AGM and banquet will all be held here.

We have arranged BCFO AGM conference rates for the Prestige, Elizabeth Lake Lodge, and Flamingo Motel. All three locations are relatively close to each other on the south side of Cranbrook.

If booking accommodation in any of the three locations below please make sure to request the BCFO Conference Rate. This applies to on-line and direct bookings.

### Prestige Rocky Mountain Resort & Convention Centre

209 Van Horne St S  
Cranbrook, BC V1C 6R9  
Phone: (250) 417-0444

Fax: (250) 417-0400  
Cranbrook@PrestigeHotels.ca  
www.prestigehotelsandresorts.com

Room choices and rates are two queen beds, or a room with one king bed.

Rate is \$132 + applicable taxes a night, single or double occupancy

### Elizabeth Lake Lodge

This property is 1000m south of the Prestige.

590 Van Horne Street South  
(Hwy 3 SW Entrance to Cranbrook)  
Cranbrook, British Columbia  
V1C 4W7  
Phone: (250) 426-6114  
Fax: (250) 426-6221  
info@elizabethlakelodge.com  
www.elizabethlakelodge.com/

Room choices and rates are:

- Room with one queen bed overlooking the bird sanctuary
- Room with two queen beds overlooking the bird sanctuary

- Room with one king bed overlooking the bird sanctuary

Rates are \$102 – \$112 + applicable taxes per night single or double occupancy. Most rooms have a kitchen.

### Flamingo Motel

This property is located 200m from the Prestige Hotel.

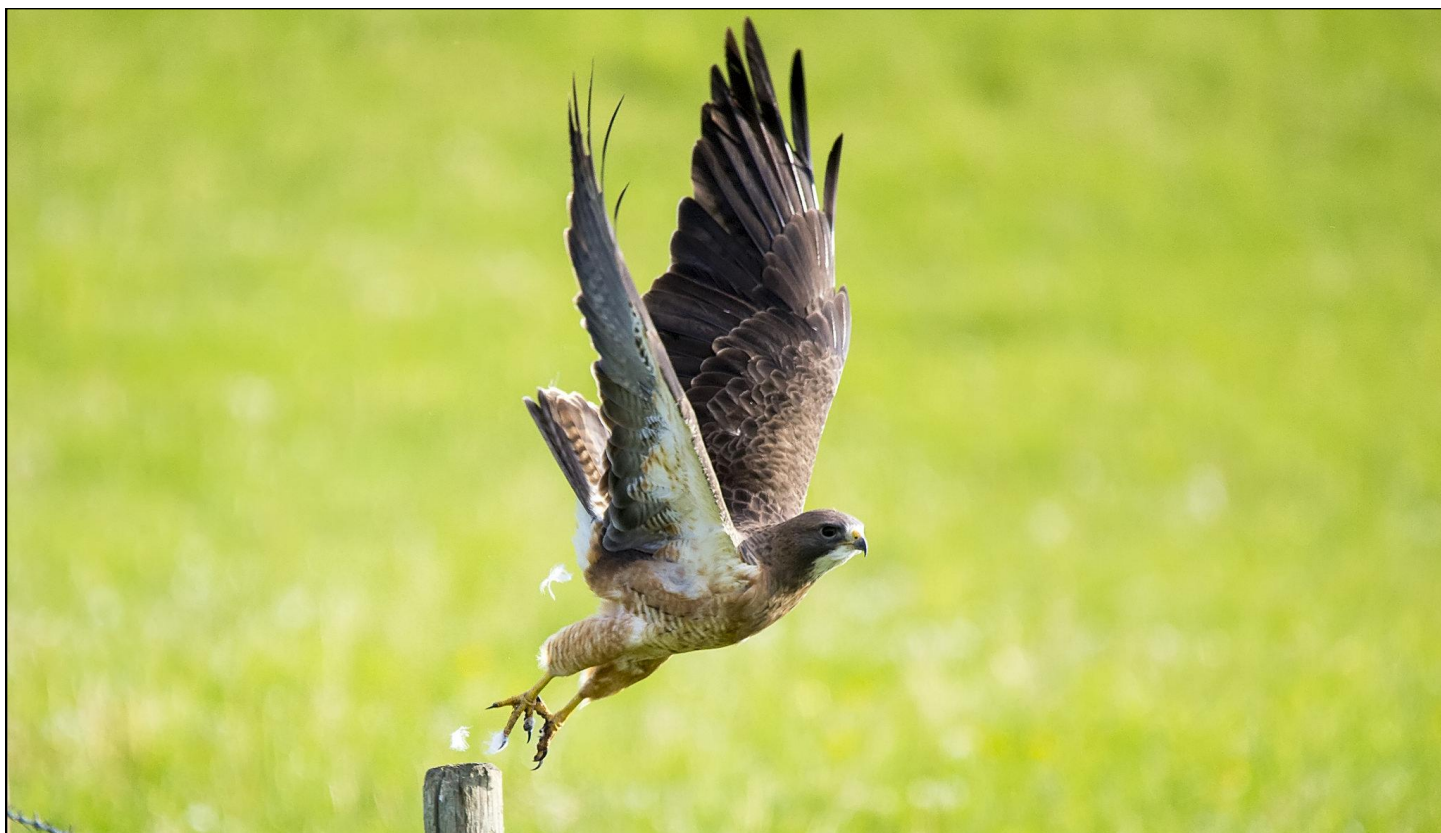
432 Van Horne Street S  
Cranbrook, BC V1C 4W7  
(250) 426-7073

Rooms with either one or two beds are \$69.95 + \$5 per extra person per night + applicable taxes.

All rooms have flat screen TV, microwave and small fridge. Some rooms have a kitchenette.

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*Below: a Swainson's Hawk—a fairly common sight in southern Alberta.  
(Daniel Arndt photo.)*





# BCFO 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE May 27th – 29th, 2016 Cranbrook, BC

## Conference Field Trips

### Trip 1: Ha Ha Creek Valley – Alan Barnard

Ha Ha Creek Valley is a 25 min drive SE on Hwy 3 towards Fernie. The valley is mostly ranchland with hayfields and pasture. We will be passing through ponderosa pine looking for Lewis's Woodpecker, and we will stop and hike along the privately owned protected wetlands at Tokai Ranch, which can be very productive with six flycatcher species and ten warbler species.

Further down the valley a stop and short hike at Lund Lake and the gully below for kingfishers, warblers, tanagers and possibly Bullock's Oriole. Finally, time permitting, we will do a 2km hike to Ha Ha Creek termination slough. The Ha Ha Creek Valley has recorded 174 species; 162 species in the 2015 calendar year.

### Trip 2: Skookumchuck Prairie IBA – Dianne Cooper

The Skookumchuck Prairie IBA is the only IBA in the East Kootenay. Long-billed Curlew and Lewis's Woodpecker are the target species. We will be mostly driving with stops and short walks on the edge of the curlew habitat. We'll start south of Skookumchuck,

then check out Bradford Rd, Wolf Creek Rd, and finish at Wasa Lake and sloughs depending on the time. 139 species have been recorded in May, including several mountain shorebird species, both bluebirds, and keep your eyes peeled for Common Grackle.

### Trip 3: Wycliffe Rambler – Ruth Goodwin

Drive 20 km towards Kimberly and turn onto Porteous Road to check for waterfowl and Long-billed Curlews. Continue on to Twin Buttes for a 3 km hike (100 m elevation) to look for bluebirds, Lazuli Buntings and Clay-coloured Sparrows. We will drive to Pighin Road with woods, open grasslands and a marsh. Williamson's Sapsuckers have been seen in this area. We will finish at Pine Butte Ranch scoping down to Reade Lake for phalaropes, grebes and waterfowl. Bobolinks have often been seen in this area.

### Trip 4: Spray Irrigation, Three Ponds – Dean Nicholson

This low-elevation site lies off Highway 3 just after the turnoff to Fernie. The area is dominated by pastureland and a number of natural and artificial ponds. Waterfowl will be in abundance, as well as raptors, Mountain and Western Bluebirds and a variety of sparrows. A side trip to the Isadore Canyon area



will allow for a number of warblers and various woodpeckers and flycatchers.

### Trip 5 (if needed): Elizabeth Lake – Daryl Calder

Explore the Elizabeth Lake bird sanctuary, a popular bird watching wetland and grassland habitat on the southwestern edge of Cranbrook. Walk along a trail system built by Rocky Mountain Naturalists, which traverses gently rolling terrain through a variety of habitats. Observe as many as 60 bird species, both resident and migratory. Grebes, bittern, shorebirds, Black Tern, swifts, flycatchers, swallows, bluebirds, warblers, sparrows and blackbirds can be observed.



Above: Prairie Falcon.  
Left: American White Pelican.  
(Daniel Arndt photos.)

# BCFO 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE May 27th – 29th, 2016 Cranbrook, BC

## Extension Trips

### Southern Alberta, Prairie Potholes Extension Trips

New this year! We are offering two Extension Trips – Pre and Post-AGM.

#### Dates

*Pre-conference Extension:* May 24 to May 27 – Starts in Canmore, ends in Lethbridge

*Post-conference Extension:* May 29 to June 1 – Starts in Cranbrook, ends near Calgary

*Leader:* Daniel Arndt

*Group size:* 15 maximum, 8 minimum

*Transportation:* Carpooling. Should you carpool with others, a suitable do-



*Vesper Sparrow by Daniel Arndt.*

nation to the driver for gas costs is expected.

*Cost:* \$200 per person. Transportation, accommodation, and food not included.

*Registration:* Will be opened on April 2, 2016 at 9:00 am. No prior registrations can be accepted.

Registrations will be accepted first-come, first served. To ensure you reserve your place on an extension trip, please read the information below very carefully. If the trips fill, waitlists will be made.

You may register for the extension via the BCFO website only. Payments may be made on-line when registering (preferred), or by mailed cheque following online registration.

1. Complete the online registration form, and pay via the PayPal button provided, OR...

2. Complete the online registration form. Mail your cheque to BCFO, which must be received within two weeks of your online registration, or before May 19, whichever is sooner. Receipt of your registration and payment will be acknowledged.

When registering, you must indicate which trip you want to go on. If you wish to be considered for both trips if your first choice is filled, you must indicate a first and a second choice.

Spaces will be allocated in order of receipt of payment via PayPal, or date and time of on-line registration. For those paying by cheque, registration

*Photo: a Black-necked Stilt photographed by Daniel Arndt, leader of the AGM pre- and post-conference trips.*







*Dinosaur Provincial Park. (Daniel Arndt.)*

will be confirmed upon payment being received by BCFO.

### Important Information

Both extensions are scheduled to visit the same locations, and target the same species, but the routes will be reversed. This will enable participants to arrive on time for the start of the AGM from the Pre-conference Extension, and depart from Cranbrook at the conclusion of the AGM to start the Post-conference Extension.

Extension trips are part of AGM activities. Participants are required to be paid-up delegates to the AGM.

Detailed itineraries of both trips are shown below.

## Pre-Conference Trip 2016

### Southern Alberta Prairie Potholes May 24 – 27, 2016

#### Day 1: 24 May, half-day

After a scenic drive into Alberta through the Rocky Mountains, we'll meet our guide, Dan Arndt, in Canmore at noon to begin our search for species more common to Southern Alberta than to much of British Columbia. We will meander east through the front ranges and foothills of the Rockies in search of Red-naped Sapsucker, Dusky Flycatcher, Veery, Ovenbird, American Redstart and White-winged Crossbill. We'll work our way southwest to Frank Lake where we'll begin our search for various shorebirds and waders, such as White-faced Ibis, Willet, Long-billed

Curlew, Marbled & Hudsonian Godwit, Red Knot and Wilson's & Red-necked Phalarope. If luck is on our side, a local breeding colony of Bobolink will be on territory by this time of year, and we will certainly find many American White Pelicans and Swainson's Hawks along the way. After birding the lake, we'll head back to Calgary for an early evening check-in.

#### Day 2: 25 May, full day

A pre-sunrise start will put us on the road heading back to the northwest of Calgary to the Horse Creek Road marshes which have always been a reliable spot to look and listen for Yellow Rails. While here, we'll be on the look out for both LeConte's and Nelson's Sparrows, watching for Mountain Bluebird boxes along the way. From there, we meander east towards Brooks, taking a few back roads here and there to check for Loggerhead Shrike, Sprague's Pipit, and Baird's Sparrow in the prairies, while also stopping at Weed Lake, Eagle Lake, and Marsland Basin where we'll find Black-crowned Night Heron, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Black and Forster's Tern, and with the possibility of a slight detour to look

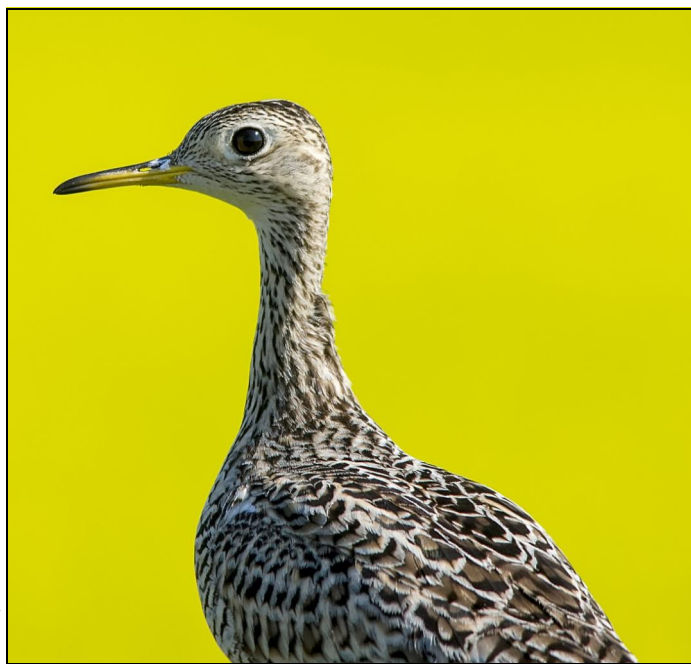
for Piping Plover. We'll take a midday break in Brooks before taking the rest of the day to continue our meandering tour of the prairies, with targets such as Chestnut-collared Longspur, McCown's Longspur, Lark Bunting and Brewer's Sparrow throughout the Eastern Irrigation District, while keeping our eyes open for much harder to find birds like Burrowing Owl and Ferruginous Hawk before ending our day back in Brooks.

#### Day 3: 26 May, full day

On our third day of prairie birding, we'll spend the early morning in Kinbrook Island Provincial Park on the shores of Lake Newell looking for migrants that may have stopped over for the night in the well-established riparian areas surrounding the lake. We'll also be looking for Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Least & Alder Flycatcher, and of course the massive colonies of Franklin's & California Gulls along the edges of the lake. Once finished at the lake, we'll head north to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dinosaur Provincial Park where we hope to find Sprague's Pipit, Lark & Baird's Sparrows, Rock Wren and Yellow-breasted Chat in the rocky badlands.

After breaking for lunch under the canopy of balsam poplar and trembling

*Upland Sandpiper. Daniel Arndt..*



aspen, we'll continue birding the Red Deer River valley in the early afternoon to find Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Alder and Least Flycatcher, Bank Swallow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Once we've completed our tour of Dinosaur Provincial Park, we'll make our way south to Brooks and continue on to Lethbridge along the secondary highways in search of any species we've missed so far along the way, and also stopping near Lomond to take another look for Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs, Lark Bunting, Grasshopper Sparrow and Common Nighthawks. We'll end our day in Lethbridge birding along the Oldman River Valley before calling it a night. Throughout the day, we'll undoubtedly run across family groups of Pronghorn, White-tailed and Mule Deer, and if we're exceptionally lucky, Plains and Wandering Garter Snakes.

#### Day 4: 27 May, half day

Our final morning together will be spent birding at the Elizabeth Hall Wetlands and a few other parks along the Oldman River picking up a few migrant species here, and finish up our time together birding the general area around Lethbridge in search of Gray Partridge, Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawk, and the well-established populations of American White Pelican. If there are any other target species we've missed along the way, we'll spend the later part of the morning tracking them down



before heading to Cranbrook to meet for the Annual General Meeting. From Lethbridge, it is a 3.5 hour drive to Cranbrook.

### Post-Conference Extension Trip

#### Southern Alberta Prairie Potholes May 29 – June 1, 2016

##### Day 1: 29 May, half day

Crossing into Alberta via Highway 3, we will drive east experiencing the foothills fescue and mixed grass prairie passing through Pincher Creek, Fort Macleod, finally arriving in Lethbridge. After checking into our hotels we will

meet our guide, Dan Arndt, and begin our trip birding the Lethbridge area in search of typical prairie species such as Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Gray Partridge, American White Pelican, and the first of many prairie sparrows.

##### Day 2: 30 May, full day

We'll have an early start to the morning birding the Elizabeth Hall Wetlands in search of overnight migrants that may have stopped in the riparian belt along Oldman River Valley. From here, we'll head north and east to Brooks, stopping on the prairies near Lomond to look for Grasshopper Sparrows, Chestnut-collared Longspurs, Lark Bunting, and Common Nighthawks then continuing on to Brooks.

From Brooks, we'll head north to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dinosaur Provincial Park where we hope to find Sprague's Pipit, Lark and Baird's Sparrows, Rock Wren and Yellow-breasted Chat in the rocky badlands. After breaking for lunch under the canopy of balsam poplar and trembling aspen, we'll continue birding the Red Deer River valley in the early afternoon to find Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Alder and Least Flycatcher, Bank Swallow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Once we've completed the tour of Dinosaur Provincial Park, we'll make our way back to Brooks a round-about way stopping at various ponds, sloughs and marshes in the Eastern Irrigation

*Above: Forster's Tern; below: Brown Thrasher. (Daniel Arndt).*





District to search for shorebirds, especially Black-necked Stilt, White-faced Ibis, Upland Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlew and Wilson's Phalarope, with the usual accompaniment of both Black and Forster's Terns before ultimately continuing our search for some harder to find prairie species, such as Brewer's Sparrow, Burrowing Owl, and McCown's Longspur in some of the extensive native grassland in the area. Along the way, we'll undoubtedly run across family groups of Pronghorn, White-tailed and Mule Deer, and if we're exceptionally lucky, Plains and Wandering Garter Snakes.

### Day 3: 31 May, full day

Another early morning begins birding the north shore of Lake Newell in Kinbrook Island Provincial Park. This lake is one of the largest lakes in south-eastern Alberta, and home to colonies of California and Franklin's Gulls. Our focus will mainly be in the wooded area to spot some of the riparian specialists that breed here, such as Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, White-throated Sparrows and any number of migrants stopping over on their travels northward. Following our exploration of the park, we'll make our way towards Calgary along a meandering route that will take us in search of any prairie species we may have missed, but with an eye towards a search for Piping Plover, Red Knot, Prairie Falcon and Loggerhead Shrike.



We'll stop at Marsland Basin, Eagle Lake, and Weed Lake to round out our shorebird observations for the trip, and complete our last full day in Calgary with an early evening check in.

### Day 4: 1 June, half day

Our last day of birding will be a pre-dawn start in order to track down the elusive Yellow Rail at the Horse Creek Road marshes northwest of Calgary. While here we'll wait out sunrise in order to look and listen for LeConte's and Nelson's Sparrows before heading

to one of two optional locations as our final birding destination of the trip. One option would take us down Sibbald Creek Road through the mixed parkland and boreal habitats parallel to the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains for species such as Red-naped Sapsucker, Dusky, Willow, and Olive-sided Flycatcher, Veery, White-winged Crossbill, and possible Ovenbird.

This area is also home to one of the few Limber Pine populations remaining in Alberta. Alternately, a trip to Frank Lake south of Calgary may turn up any recent shorebird arrivals, as well as one of the largest Franklin's Gull colonies in southern Alberta, late migrating Tundra or Trumpeter Swans, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and if luck holds out, spot one of our small Bobolink populations along the way. From Frank Lake, it is about a 4.5 hour drive to either Revelstoke or Cranbrook BC.



*Photo above: a Chestnut-sided Longspur, a target bird for many. Left: one of the rewarding sightings in Southern Alberta grasslands: a pronghorn. (Daniel Arndt photos.)*

# BCFO

## Two-day Trips

### Clinton & Ashcroft

May 14–15, 2016 with an extension trip on May 16 morning.

#### Leaders

Brian Murland, Quesnel 250-747-1802  
murlands@msn.com

Adrian Leather, Quesnel 250-249-5561  
qabis4@gmail.com

#### Registration/Admin

Adrian Leather – as above.

#### Accommodation

Nights of May 13–14: Cariboo Lodge, Clinton. 250-459-7992. Special BCFO rate based on two nights: single occupancy \$76 per night + tax; double occupancy \$85 per night + tax. (Cariboo Lodge has a pub and restaurant.)

#### Other Accommodation

Nights of May 13–14: Nomad Motel, Clinton 250-459-2214, Round-Up Motel, Clinton 250-459-2226, Clinton Pines Campground, 250-459-0030.

Night of May 15: Sandman Inn, Cache Creek 250-457-6284, Bonaparte Motel, Cache Creek 250-457-9693, Brookside Campsite, Cache Creek 250-457-6633.

#### Catering

- Bag breakfasts and lunches on Saturday via Cariboo Lodge.
- Bag breakfast on Sunday via Cariboo Lodge.
- Sunday lunch at Horstings Farm, Cache Creek 250-457-6546.
- Sunday dinner at Heartland Restaurant (Sandman Inn) Cache Creek 250-457-9330.
- Oregon Jack extension on Monday breakfast 6:00 AM at Husky House Restaurant, Cache Creek 250-457-9312.

#### Itinerary

- *Saturday, May 14:* Clinton Sewage Ponds; Big Bar Lake – Jesmond

Loop, including Echo Valley and Hidden Valley. Tally-up at Cariboo Lodge, Clinton.

- *Sunday, May 15 morning:* Kelly Lake – Pavilion; Horstings Farm (lunch).
- *Sunday, May 15 afternoon:* Venables Valley; The Slough.
- *Monday, May 16 morning:* extension trip to Oregon Jack Loop.

#### Target Birds

Clark's Nutcracker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Kingbird, Lazuli Bunting, Chukar, Say's Phoebe, White-throated Swift.

### How the Trips Work

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

- Day 1: all-day birding and then evening get together at a restaurant to recap the day and tally species.
- Day 2: morning birding, afternoon optional birding.

Carpooling is encouraged, and will be arranged on the morning of Day 1.

Register at least two weeks in advance. The leader will give specific details of when and where to meet.

*Cost:* Members \$10 per person; non-members \$40, which includes BCFO membership.

### Creston Valley

May 26–27, 2016

#### Leader

Gary Davidson, Nakusp, 250-265-4456  
gsd37@yahoo.ca  
Paul Prappas

#### Registration/Admin

Adrian Leather – as above

#### Accommodation

Nights of May 25–26. Downtowner Motor Inn, 1218 Canyon St, Creston, 800-665-9904 or 250-428-2238. BCFO rates based on two nights, single occupancy \$70 per night + tax, double occupancy \$80 per night + tax, suite which sleeps four (includes kitchen), \$120 per night + tax.

#### Other Accommodation

Creston Valley Motel, 1809 Canyon St, 250-428-9823; Creston Hotel & Suites, 1418 Canyon St, 250-428-2225; Pair-a-Dice RV & Campground, 1322 Northwest Blvd (Hwy3) 250-428-2347.

#### Catering

Bag breakfasts and lunches via A Break In Time, 1417 Canyon St, Creston, 250-428-5619.

#### Itinerary

- Thursday, May 26: Meet at Downtowner Motor Inn 6 AM; Leach Lake; Duck Lake; Hwy 21S and Kootenay River Road. Tally-Up at Creston Hotel, 1418 Canyon St, 250-428-2225.
- Friday, May 27: Meet at Downtowner Motor Inn 6 AM; Balancing Rock Trail; Nature Centre boardwalk trails; West Creston Loop and Reclamation Road (to 2 PM, then birders can proceed to Cranbrook AGM).

#### Target Birds

Bobolink, Wild Turkey, Forster's Tern, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, waterfowl.

### Vancouver Shorebirds

September 2016

Details are still being worked on, and will be given on the website and the next edition of this newsmagazine.

#### Leader

Brian Self, Delta, 604-943-9378  
brianself@eastlink.ca

#### Registration/Admin

Adrian Leather – as above.



# 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](http://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.

## **March 11–13: 14th 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](mailto:dharger@cityofblaine.com), or check the website at [www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com](http://www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com)

## **March 18–20: 19th Annual Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, Othello, WA.**

For information, check the festival website at [www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org](http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org), or contact the Grant County Conservation District at 1107 South Juniper Way, Moses Lake, WA 98837 (phone 509-765-9618).

## **March 19–April 17: Brant Wildlife Festival, Qualicum, BC.**

For information, phone Robin Rivers at 1-866-288-7878 (in Greater Vancouver, 604-924-9771, ext 226), e-mail [rrivers@naturetrust.bc.ca](mailto:rrivers@naturetrust.bc.ca), or check the festival website at [brantfestival.bc.ca](http://brantfestival.bc.ca).

## **April 8–10: Harney County Migratory Bird Festival, Burns, OR**

Focusing on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. For information, check the festival website at [www.migratorybirdfestival.com](http://www.migratorybirdfestival.com), send an email to [info@migratorybirdfestival.com](mailto:info@migratorybirdfestival.com), or phone (541) 573-2636. (With luck, the Malheur occupation will be long over by then!)

## **April 15–17: Olympic Birdfest Sequim, WA**

For information, check the festival website at <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>, send an email to [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org), or contact the Dungeness River Audubon Center (phone,

360-681-4076; snail mail to 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA 98382.

## **April 23: First Westport Seabirds pelagic birding trip of the spring from Westport, WA.**

This is the first of 19 trips scheduled from April through October 2015. For information and to sign up for a trip, please visit the Westport Seabirds webpage at: [www.westportseabirds.com](http://www.westportseabirds.com).

## **May 6-8: 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>. (2016 information is not online yet, but it should be there soon.)

## **May 6-8: 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](mailto:info@hopemountain.org) or by phone at 604-869-1274.

## **May 9-15: Wings Over The Rockies Festival (20th 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](mailto:info@wingsovertherockies.org), or check the website at [www.wingsovertherockies.org](http://www.wingsovertherockies.org).

## **May 12-15: BC Nature Annual General Meeting, Comox, BC, hosted by Comox Valley Nature.**

For information, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AGM-Comox-2016-Schedule.pdf> or phone Betty Davison at the BC Nature office (phone 604-985-3057; e-mail [manager@bcnature.ca](mailto:manager@bcnature.ca)). To register, visit the Comox Valley Nature website at [comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca/bc-nature-agm](http://comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca/bc-nature-agm).

## **May 19-23: 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 [www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca](http://www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca).

## **May 19-22: Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, Leavenworth, WA.**

For information, email [info@leavenworthspringbirdfest.com](mailto:info@leavenworthspringbirdfest.com) or check the festival website at: [www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com](http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com)

## **May 27-29: BC Field Ornithologists Annual General Meeting, Cranbrook, BC.**

Full details and registration information are included in this newsmagazine General information and will appear on the the BCFO website at <http://bcfo.ca/annual-conference>.

**June 2-6: Washington Ornithological Society Annual Conference, Walla Walla, WA.**

No details on the Society website yet, but check the website at <http://www.wos.org> closer to the conference date.

**June 3-5: 27th Annual Mount Robson Provincial Park Bird Blitz.**

For information, email Gail Ross at [gailross1@telus.net](mailto:gailross1@telus.net), or phone Nancy Krueger at 250-563-7896.

**June 17-19: 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](mailto:info@hopemountain.org) or by phone at 604-869-1274.

**Aug. 16-20: North American Ornithological Conference, Washington, D.C., USA.**

This is the combined meeting for 2016 of the American Ornithologists' Union, Cooper Ornithological Society, Wilson Ornithological Society, and Association of Field Ornithologists (together with several smaller organizations). The website is located at [naoc2016.cvent.com/vents/naoc-2016/event-summary9cca7ad2f044f8790c\[-\]ja08d7f1d28536.aspx](http://naoc2016.cvent.com/vents/naoc-2016/event-summary9cca7ad2f044f8790c[-]ja08d7f1d28536.aspx). Registrations will be accepted starting in mid-February.

**Sept. 9-11: 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 [sally-lider@edmondswa.gov](mailto:sally-lider@edmondswa.gov)).

**Sept. 16-18: 30th 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 [www.fws.gov/refuge/Bandon\\_Marsh/visit/visitor\\_activities/shorebird\\_festival.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bandon_Marsh/visit/visitor_activities/shorebird_festival.html), phone Dawn Harris at (541) 867-4550 (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service office in Newport, OR), or email Dawn at [dawn\\_harris@fws.gov](mailto:dawn_harris@fws.gov).

**Sept. 20-23: 40th Annual Meeting, The Waterbird Society, New Bern, North Carolina.**

For information and to register, visit the conference website at [www.waterbirds.org/annual\\_meeting-2015](http://www.waterbirds.org/annual_meeting-2015).

**Sept. 28-Oct. 2: Western Field Ornithologists Annual Meeting, Fortuna, CA (Humboldt County).**

For details, check the WFO webpage at [www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php).

**Oct. 15-19: 23rd Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society, Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, North Carolina.**

For further information and to register, visit the conference website at <http://wildlife.org/tws-23rd-annual-conference>. Registration opens on May 15th.

**Oct. 16-20: Raptor Research Foundation Annual Conference, Cape May, New Jersey.**

For further details, visit the conference website at

[www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference](http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference).



*Left: One of the compensations of cold-weather birding in the north of the province. Total species seen may not be large, but the quality can be high. This was one of 46 Ruffed Grouse spotted on the Quesnel bird count, January 3, 2016.*

CNK



# Young Birders Program

## Young Birders Awards

The BCFO is delighted to announce and introduce the recipients of our Young Birders Award for 2016. This program, now in its third year, offers free membership to the BCFO until age 18, and each recipient receives a commemorative plaque that acknowledges the accolade. The 'flock' for this year is the largest to date, with eight new recipients! Five are from the Vancouver area, two from Victoria, and one from the Fraser Valley. For the second time, we have a pair of sisters who individually qualified for the award.

Each of our new Young Birders have demonstrated remarkable levels of skill, passion, and enthusiasm for birding, and some have already expressed an interest in pursuing a career in bird studies. Skills and interest alone does not qualify them for our Award; they must also have demonstrated significant contributions to the birding community. Most of them regularly enter sightings to eBird, many take photographs and share them on-line, and some are regular contributors to local on-line birding forums. Other volunteer activities include participation in surveys such as Christmas Bird Counts and Feeder-watch, assisting at banding stations and involvement with local field trips. When not in school, these youngsters

*Bridget Spencer*



are out chasing birds!

Here, are the recipients for 2016:

**Bridget Spencer, nominated by Melissa Hafting.**

14 year old Bridget from Vancouver is passionate about having more young women in birding and has actively been participating in CBCs for years in the city of Vancouver. She submits to eBird regularly and actively rescues birds of all sorts. Bridget has got her young sister into birding and is always eager to help out young birders and adults alike at the Birding in British Columbia Forum where she is an active participant. Her knowledge of birds is astonishing and she enjoys travelling around the world to accumulate her life list which is ever growing.

**Virginia Spencer, nominated by Melissa Hafting.**

12 year old Virginia (Vancouver) quickly began birding after she saw how much fun her sister was having.. Bridget has taught her a lot but now Virginia is a fine young birder in her own right. She is passionate about bird rescue and has rescued many window strike birds near her home and sick ducks. When she turns 16 she plans to volunteer at The Wildlife Rescue Association. She enjoys looking after the nesting Barn Swallows and Owls in her barn and takes part in Project Nest Watch.

**Ian Harland, nominated by Melissa Hafting**

16 year old Ian from North Vancouver enjoys volunteering at Grouse Mountain's Raptor Program where he specifically works with Barn and Snowy Owls. His work with these owls has sparked a major interest in conservation and wetland habitat restoration. Ian is an avid



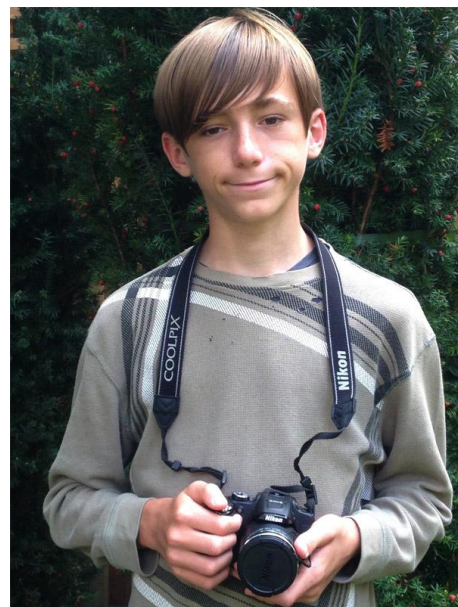
*Alice Sun*

hiker and enjoys taking part in birding youth field trips especially when situated in the mountains. Now that he has recently turned 16, he plans to volunteer at Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society (OWL) and The Wildlife Rescue Association.

**Cole Gaerber, nominated by Melissa Hafting.**

14 year old Cole from Vancouver is a walking encyclopedia on rare birds in North America which are his passion. Cole enjoys reading everything he can to further his knowledge on birds. He is always eager to share information on birds (both common and rare) with other children which is inspiring. He volunteers at The Vancouver Aquarium and specifically takes an interest in working with the Penguins.

*Cole Gaerber*





**Jamie Gadsden, nominated by Len Jellicoe.**

12 year old Jamie from Chilliwack actively contributes to the Fraser Valley Birding Forum as a moderator where he has written an article on leucism and

*Jamie Gadsden*



albinism. He is always eager to help out anyone who posts with identification questions. He submits to eBird and loves to bird with his dad especially in such events as the Christmas Bird Count.

**Alice Sun, nominated by Melissa Hafting.**

17-year-old Alice from West Vancouver is a passionate bird photographer. She has used her love of bird photography to enhance her birding skills and

*Leo Donnecke*



pursue her love of birding. Alice volunteers with the Stanley Park monthly bird count and the bird banding program at Colony Farm with the Vancouver Avian Research Centre. Alice participates in stewardship events with Evergreen and has recently begun participating in the Vancouver Window Collision Project with

Bird Studies Canada. Alice plans to pursue her love of Birding in University with an Environmental Science degree. When she is not birding she is a competitive swimmer.

**Liam Singh, nominated by Anne Nightingale**

13 year old Liam from Victoria has been birding for three years and is the "Census Scribe" for the Rocky Point Bird Observatory's standard census. He leads Sunday walks at The Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. In his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of volunteer work he has accumulated over 200 hours at RPBO's banding station in Pedder Bay. Liam also donates proceeds from the sale of his photos to RPBO. Liam helps out with the youth education program there and has begun training to be a licensed bird bander.

**Leo Donnecke, nominated by Anne Nightingale**

14-year-old Leo from Victoria loves birding with his dad who is an active birder as well. He enjoys pelagics and is an excellent spotter. He has co-lead bird walks at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory and has volunteered at the Pedder Bay Banding station for many years. When Leo is not birding he is busy enjoying his other hobby: competitive rowing.

To our eight new Young Birders: congratulations and a hearty welcome into the BCFO! Study



*Liam Singh*

hard, bird hard, and we hope and expect to hear more from you in the years ahead.

**My Favourite Field Trip**

*Ian Harland, North Vancouver, Age 15*

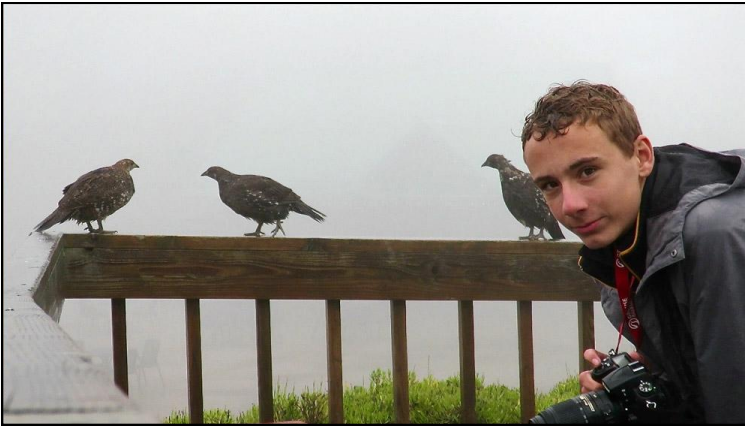
So far there have been three birding field trips. I have enjoyed them all, they all had things that made them great but my favourite was the Blackcomb Mountain field trip. Even though we didn't end up seeing the ptarmigan it was great because of the scenery, animals and everyone there.

To begin, the weather was amazing the day we went which allowed us to see some things that we may not have been able to see if there were clouds. The days leading up to the excursion I was constantly checking the weather. Every day it would change a bit but it was nice the day of the trip which was great. The weather allowed us to see things that we may not have seen, like the stunning surrounding mountains or the hundreds of Rosy Finches fairly far away from us. My family only ever does local hikes so it was absolutely incredible seeing these mountains and glaciers for the first time. It was actually the first time I had hiked above the tree line that day. Just being able to see mountains and no trees at the same level as me was interesting. To sum up, the incredible weather allowed me to see amazing things I would have been unable to see.

On this trip, even though there were



not as many species as our other trips the animals we saw were exciting. The



*Ian Harland*

first animals we saw were the hundreds of rosy finches above us while we were on the gondola. This was the first good thing I had spotted for the group in all of the excursions we had been on so it was exciting for me. Also rosy finches were my first lifer of the day. Just a few minutes later, Elsa found a Hoary Marmot which was also a lifer for me. This marmot let us get very close to him which was great. About a half hour later, while we were feeding the Whiskey Jacks (second favourite part of the trip) Elsa spotted a Pygmy-Owl (favourite part of the trip). Even though I had already seen three Pygmy-Owls before they are so entertaining. It was amazing how close he got to us. The animals at Blackcomb were my favourite out of all of the trips.

Finally, the thing that made all of these outings so much better were the people. I am amazed with how much everyone else knows about birds and other things. For example in the car Cole was talking about rare birds that had been spotted in different countries and penguins that came to British Columbia, while Liron was on playing bird calls that I almost never knew while everyone else was guessing. Also, many people knew specific places that were good for things. Alice knew about a place called Porto Cove which is apparently great for astrophotography which I will go to because of a meteor shower. Melissa knew about where to find elk in Squamish (I didn't even know you could find them near Van-

couver) and showed us her secret bear spot on the way to Whistler. These stories are always fascinating to hear. Being surrounded with people who share the same interest as me when it comes to birds and other animals is amazing. Without Melissa I definitely would have never met these incredible people. So

thanks.

In conclusion, all of the trips were fun but our trip to Blackcomb was a bit better. I loved the mountains, trees (and no trees) that we saw on our adventure as well as the various animals we saw. I can't wait for the next trip and I can't wait to find out when it will be!

## **Twitching The Siberian Accentor**

*Virginia Spencer, Vancouver, age 12*

When my sister Bridget and I heard there was a Siberian Accentor – which is an ABA code 4 bird – within one hour of our house, we really wanted to go!

Our good friend Melissa, who we bird with quite frequently, asked us if we would like to go with her on January 9th to try and find the accentor. Of course our answer was an enthusiastic yes! Cole Gaerber, another youth birder, came with us as well. We were hoping to see the bird but knew it would be hard to find, as it was only being reported every couple of days with no great views.

When we arrived at the blueberry farm in Surrey there was a long line of cars and a large group of birders with scopes, cameras and binoculars.

Within five minutes the accentor was spotted. People helped us spot it in the blackberry bushes and from there

we started to take as many record shots as possible. Through our cameras, binoculars and scopes, we could easily see the distinctive orange and black facial pattern. After a few moments the bird dipped into the bushes and was gone again. We then started to look at our photos to make sure we had something that was recognizable.

After that sighting a couple of people left but most stayed in the hopes of another sighting.

After about an hour and a half, the Siberian Accentor was spotted again in a flock of juncos and other sparrows. At first it was on the roof of the house, before it flew down to the bush. While everyone rushed to the other side of the house, people lost sight of the bird. With everyone's eyes pinned on the bushes it was soon spotted again. It then flew to the ground and was feeding with a flock of Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Most people got great looks and photographs this time. It then flew into the blueberry fields

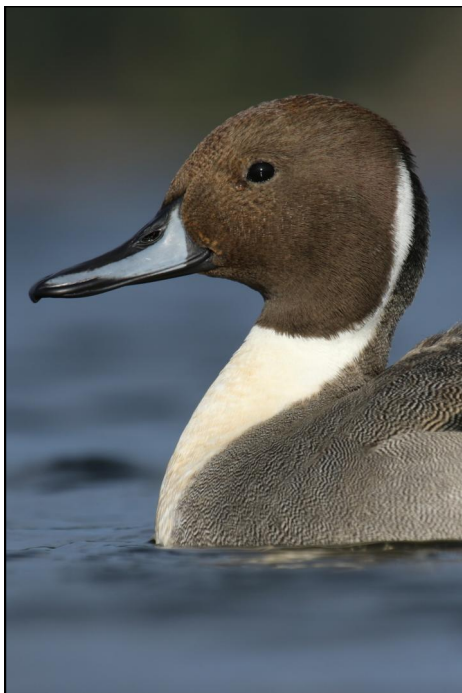
*Virginia Spencer*



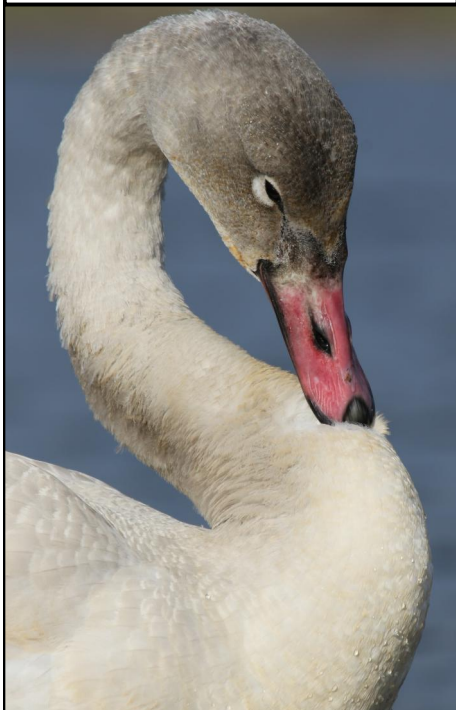
and we did not see it again. After that, Bridget, Mel, Cole and I decided to leave to look for some other target birds and get a celebratory donut and hot chocolate at Tim Hortons. Thank you so much, Mel, for taking us! It was a fun and rewarding day, although cold.

## More YB Trip Notes

In September fifteen young birders went on a mini pelagic trip from Victoria to Race Rocks on the "Fantasea" boat which Melissa Hafting had chartered. Guy Monty spotted birds and brought chum, which must have been



Young birder Liam Singh, age 13 from Victoria, took these photos – Tundra Swan and Northern Pintail – at the Esquimalt Lagoon in November 2015.



highly effective, as the group saw, among many other things, all three Jaeger species and some Red Phalaropes. Melissa said she was blown away by the sheer appreciation of the birds shown by the kids.

Another of their activities was an October visit to Blackcomb Lake. This one would have challenged some BCFO stalwarts, as it involved an 11.9 km hike. Highlights included:

- 450 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches, including both the coastal and interior races

- A Northern Pygmy-Owl perched just six metres away
- Eight Sharp-shinned Hawks
- Four Clark's Nutcrackers
- Fifty Gray Jays, taking food from the kid's heads and hands

Any children interested in participating in future field trips should email Melissa Hafting at [bcbirdergirl@gmail.com](mailto:bcbirdergirl@gmail.com)

*Young birders on the Blackcomb trip. Photo by Melissa Hafting.*



*One of the best things a new birder can do is sketch the birds spotted – but it helps when you've a lot of talent. Below is a page from the sketch book of Bridget Spencer from Vancouver, aged 14.*





# Trip Report

## Birding Argentina

*Lee Harding*

### The Andes

Jeff and I followed a narrow road up and up, switch-back after switch-back, until the car overheated. We coasted into a wide turnout by a deep gully. My GPS said we were at 3700 metres (12,200 feet) elevation. The Andes Mountains were dry as bone, but beautiful, the eroded arroyos brilliant with white and red strata.

Immediately a shadow passed over the car and we both swung our binoculars: "Mountain Caracara" we said in unison. The eagle-like predator/scavenger came by a second time, looking us over carefully as we scrambled for cameras and snapped shutters. We wondered: maybe they forage on tourists whose cars break down?

We peered down into the canyon. "Fox!" I yelled and again we clicked cameras. "Hey," said Jeff, "what are those birds by the yellow flowers? Hummingbirds," he answered himself hesitantly, astonished at their size.

"Giant Hummingbirds," I said. I knew them from past expeditions in Chile; they were a new species for Jeff. Giant Hummingbirds are so big that their wings don't buzz like other hummers: they flap.

While the car cooled, we grabbed our 'scopes and walked up a gully. There were birds everywhere and most were lifers. My brother, Jeff, has birded Peru, where we went together ten years ago, and extensively in Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil. I had birded in Peru and all over Chile, but this was our first time in Argentina.

Walking up the gully, in a few minutes we saw about 30 life birds: Black Siskins, ground-tyrants, spinetails, canasteros, earthcreepers, sierra-finches and yellowfinches. Birding in Argentina is like this: at any random stop, we were treated to magnificent scenic splendour and so many birds that we got finger cramps from writing them all



*Savannah Hawk. All photos by Lee Harding.*

down.

Birding Argentina is like birding Western Canada, except that it has more than double the avian diversity. The size of BC, Yukon, Alberta and Saskatchewan combined, Argentina has over 1,000 bird species. In 30 days, driving 8,000 km, we saw more than a third of them, 368 species. Our route took us from the mid-Atlantic coast at Buenos Aires, north up the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers to Iquazú waterfall on

the border with Brazil, back southwest to the Iberá wetlands, west across the dry Chaco shrub land to isolated mountain ranges covered in cloud forest, into the dry Andes, then south across the Pampas grasslands to the cold Patagonia coast, and back to the capital city.

Since this short article can not do justice to such a vast and biodiverse place like Argentina, here are a few vignettes:



### Iguazú Falls

Broader and higher than Niagara Falls, Iguazú is surrounded by Atlantic Forest, a world hotspot of biodiversity. It has tropical jungle species like toucans, trogons, parrots, macaws and an immense variety of colourful tanagers.

### Iberá Wetlands

Iberá is the second-largest freshwater wetland in the world after the Pantanal in Brazil. We saw immense flocks of waterbirds, including Roseate Spoonbills and three kinds of storks. There were marsh-tyrants, spinetails, giant

*Red-tailed Comet.*



wood-rails, kingfishers. We saw screamers, a giant bird like a cross between a goose and a turkey. Greater Rheas ran around in flocks, while tinamous flushed from underfoot. And hunting these were the predators: hawks, caracaras, harriers, kites and falcons.

### The Chaco

The Chaco is dry shrubland. Inauspicious it might seem at first, but it is filled with birds. Antshrikes, parrots, parakeets and other birds there were in

abundance, but the highlights for us were the “big game”: our lists included all three subfamilies of the Cracidae (guans, curasows and chachalacas), turkey-sized birds endemic to South America that have no other relatives.

### The Pampas

Jeff and I thought we’d missed flamingos because the overheating car made us turn back before reaching the high Altiplano where they summer in salt lakes. But driving through the pampas en route to Patagonia, we saw lake after lake with flamingo—and other waders, shorebirds and waterfowl galore. In late October they had not yet left their winter range.

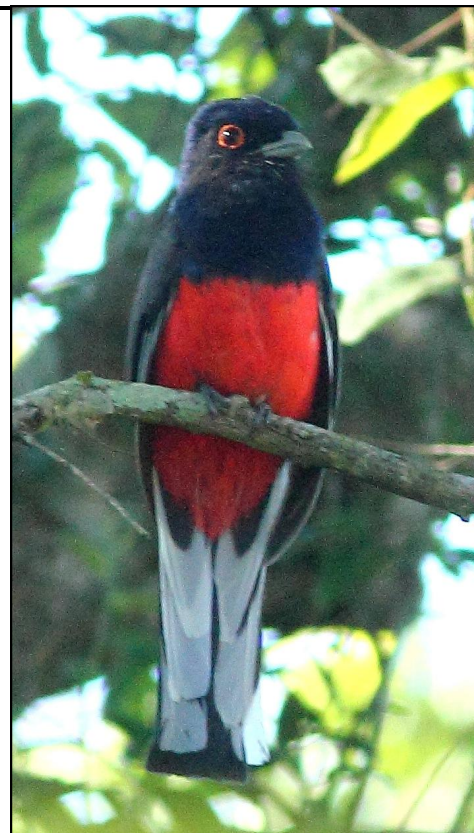
Running from the Atlantic to the Andes, the Pampas grasslands with its great cattle ranches and the gauchos who tend them are central to Argentina’s identity, as well as its geography. There are birds here aplenty. Numerous wetlands host waterfowl, while winding rivers and copses of trees and harbor riparian and woodland birds.

There were beautiful and surprising birds on the pampas, too: hummingbirds, parrots, and the unique seriemas, two species of long-legged, knee-high predators unrelated to any other bird on the planet.

Some night work with good lights and call-playback gear produces some great owl and nightjar sightings.

### Patagonia

Patagonia, comprising several provinces in the “southern cone” of South America, is a top spot for birders. Lesser Rheas were there in abundance, along with myriad species of shrubland species and, along the meagre rivers, waterfowl. But the coastal birds are the big draw. On the Valdes Peninsula, we watched giant petrels soar by at eye level, terns and gulls trade back and forth, steamer



*Surucua Trogon.*

ducks bob in the waves and penguins waddle around. There were flocks of burrowing parrots with their bright yellow bellies and rumps.

If anyone is interested in going, I’d be happy to give contacts for accommodations.

### CLUB REPORTING TECHNIQUE

For an interesting technique for club reports, taking advantage of new tools available, see the example of the following— a report by a member of the Prince George Naturalists Cub.

[www.flickr.com/photos/bubba55/sets/72157663764384171](http://www.flickr.com/photos/bubba55/sets/72157663764384171)

*More photos from this trip can be found at:*

<https://picasaweb.google.com/113664418404513429838/ArgentinaBirds?feat=directlink>



# Briefing 1

## Contested Airspace

We are familiar with the conflicts that arise between wildlife and human society on the ground; ‘habitat loss’ is a major issue affecting the survival (or not) of most wildlife. But we think a lot less about conflict in the atmosphere. Yet humans increasingly occupy airspace with buildings, power lines, and antennae, and we increasingly populate the atmosphere with aircraft, including

ascend to considerably greater heights), and that is where virtually all structural impediments are located. Bird collisions with buildings – almost always with windows that reflect a false impression of continuing space – or lit structures – kill millions of birds annually. Collisions with aircraft mostly occur on landing or takeoff; that is to say, in the immediate vicinity of airports. Accordingly, airports employ more or less elaborate strategies to discourage birds in their vicinity – including, in some instances, shooting them. But there are dangers near the ground away from airports. Drones are con-

settlements, but in the crowded countryside of Europe low flying military aircraft are everywhere. This writer has stood on a Scottish peak and watched military jets fly by below the peaks – through passes likely to be frequented by hunting raptors.

The most serious problems arise on major migration routes; on the coastal and mid-continent flyways in North America and Asia, and on the Mediterranean crossing routes in Europe. It is suggested (see the reference) that ‘aerial reserves’ be established in critical places along routes heavily travelled by birds but it is difficult to see, with the pervasiveness of human settlement, how this could be very successful. Think, for example, of the Vancouver airport, located on the seaward end of Fraser delta, also the site of Canada’s most important IBA (Important Bird Area, an international designation), and a reserve in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

For some hazards, more specific technical ‘fixes’ are possible: windows can be made visible by the application of suitable markings (but building codes do not mandate such); radar is beginning to be used to detect birds in the vicinity of wind turbines; lighting can be reduced to essential minima and selected to discourage collision; cables can be buried. Such specific engineered fixes are more likely to be socially acceptable than

general restriction of airspace with the exception of the near-ground atmosphere above wildlife reserves, generally located in relatively isolated places. The intrusion of humans into the atmosphere remains a serious problem for all forms of airborne biota.

### Reference

Lambertucci, S.A., Shepard, E.L.C. and Wilso, R.P. 2015. Human-wildlife conflicts in a crowded airspace. *Science* 348: 502-504.

Summary and comments by M. Church.



Photo by Mark Habdas.

now drones (also called ‘unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs). We also pollute the atmosphere with industrial and domestic exhausts and project light into the atmosphere from myriad sources. For flying animals, obviously birds, but also bats, insects and microbiota (algae; bacteria) these all present serious risks of collision or disturbance.

Most aerial animals operate within 100 metres of the ground (though large birds and long-distance migrants may

strained to fly near the ground (to avoid interfering with aircraft: in Canada the elevation limit is 120 m) where they may pose a particular threat to birds. Indeed, larger territorial birds might actually attack a drone, with mutually disastrous results. Military aircraft training to avoid radar detection regularly fly at high speed close to the ground. We do not see much of this practice in North America, where there is abundant practice space away from

# Avian Encounters

## Prairie Falcons in the Northern Rockies

*Charles Helm, Jack Carrigan, Carina Helm*

The first time we saw a Prairie Falcon in the mountains above Tumbler Ridge it was a lifer for all three of us. We were descending through a cliff-lined bowl on August 2nd 2014, after a successful first entry of a cave opening we had noted from below. Suddenly a raptor was flying at great speed around the cliffs, and we knew enough about our falcons to recognize the dark axillaries ("dark armpits" or "dark wingpits") that unmistakably identified this species. There was just enough time to haul out a camera and take a slightly out-of-focus picture with the cliffs of Mt Crum in the background, but it was good enough for ID purposes, and we posted it to ncnbird, the northern BC birders' list.

We did a quick literature search and realized that a Prairie Falcon sighting so far north was a rare phenomenon indeed – there were just a couple of such records. We asked the experts on ncnbird if the species could maybe have been overlooked in the northern Rockies. Perhaps an absence of birders (rather than an absence of falcons) in this remote habitat had been responsible for the absence of records.

The response was cautious: the Prairie Falcon breeds on cliffs in southern BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and might conceivably venture north after the breeding season to our mountains. We accepted this opinion and added it as an accidental summer species to the Tumbler Ridge bird checklist.

A short time later, on August 17th 2014, on a trip to the eastern reaches of Monkman Provincial Park at Lower Blue Lake, we encountered another Prairie Falcon. We dutifully elevated the species to casual status on the

checklist.

The summer of 2015 brought a whole new series of sightings. The first was at Windfall Lake on July 11th. The bird seemed to insist on showing us all aspects of its flight and perching behaviour over a fifteen-minute period. Then on August 7th on Mt Babcock, there was a crippling view: a magnificent Prairie Falcon crested a ridge immediately ahead, the dark axillaries seemingly almost within touching distance. Not long after, on August 20th, one was seen in the distance on the western flank of Mt Spieker.

Finally, on September 7th, back at Windfall Lake on a fossil-collecting trip for the Tumbler Ridge Museum, a falcon was seen and discussed in the morning. We concluded that the sighting had not been good enough for an accurate ID. The same afternoon, however, while some members were emerging from a muddy cave, they were greeted by a commotion at the cave mouth. The falcon had appeared again, complete with distinctive axillaries.

Six sightings over the course of two summers: based on our experiences of the past two seasons, Prairie Falcons are the raptor most likely to be found in our mountains, followed by Merlin and Northern Harrier. In spring and fall that changes, of course, as raptor migrations led by Golden Eagles take over.

It seems to us that based on these sightings, it is reasonable to repose the question: could these impressive, easy-to-identify raptors have been overlooked in the past, and could they in fact be breeding on the cliffs of these spectacular mountain bowls? The absence of records from late spring and early summer may have a number of causes, but the most compelling is that we wait for the snow to melt before we go searching for fossils in the alpine cirques.

For us the splendid sight of a Prairie Falcon has rapidly become a symbol of our Tumbler Ridge alpine wilderness. Finding a nest on one of the suitable cliffs has become our ornithological

Holy Grail.

## Northern Parula at Vaseux Lake

*Jim Ginns*

On the morning of November 5, 2015 Janna Leslie and I had just arrived at Vaseux Lake (on Hwy 97 between Oliver and Okanagan Falls, ~49°17'25", 119°31'52") when we spotted a bird foraging among the leafless Water Birch, Red-osier Dogwood and Alder at the beginning of the boardwalk. The bird was active so it took several minutes to get good enough looks to identify it as a male Northern Parula. After 15 minutes of enjoying the rarity we continued along the boardwalk to the blind. In a few minutes Paul Graham with his camera joined us. We hustled him back to the Parula and in short order he had photographs showing the critical features needed to identify the bird.



*Northern Parula at Vaseux Lake, photographed by Paul Graham.*

The Northern Parula is uncommon in British Columbia. There are only 15 accepted reports for the Province. Three of the 15 are from the Interior (Edgewood (south of Nakusp), Loon Lake (near Cache Creek), and Inkaneep Provincial Park, Oliver.

The status of the Northern Parula in British Columbia was recently reviewed by Toochin and Cecile ([http://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/efauna/documents/Northern\\_Parula-RT-DC-d.pdf](http://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/efauna/documents/Northern_Parula-RT-DC-d.pdf)).



## Siberian Accentor Sighting

The Vancouver Sun on January 22 2016 ran the following story:

### BIRDERS FLOCK TO SURREY FARMLAND FOR RARE ASIAN BIRD

Birders from around the continent are taking flight to a patch of south Surrey farmland to see a striking little bird that belongs in Asia — the Siberian Accentor.

"This particular bird is in an easily accessible area," George Clulow, president of BC Field Ornithologists, said in an interview Friday.

"People can easily fly in, which is what they've been doing from all over North America. I was standing next to people from Massachusetts, California, Florida, Minnesota."

There are only six or seven recorded sightings of the wayward bird in BC, Clulow noted. Normally it is found in Southeast Asia and breeds across Siberia.

Clulow first spotted the Siberian accentor with fellow birder Mandy Lu on Jan. 3 during the annual Christmas Bird Count, an event that forces birders to look in unusual and less-visited areas to help pump up their counts.

They were in an agricultural area on 160th Street when he noticed small birds flying in a blueberry field. "I turned around and saw this bird for a split second perched in a blueberry shrub," he recalled.

"It dropped down and we couldn't find it. It was a bird I'd never seen before — sparrow-sized but with a striking head pattern (featuring dark and rust stripes)."

That evening at home he pulled out a reference book, *Rare Birds of North America*, and there on the cover was a photograph of the Siberian accentor. "That's it. That made it easier."

He returned three days later and after four hours had a good sighting of the bird, snapped a few photos to confirm identification and posted it on the Internet. "It just went viral from there," he said. "It's a rare bird."

## Memorable Avian Moment

### #5

Hmmm, wonder why the hospital is phoning? Probably want to speak to my wife, one of the lab techs. No, the call was for me.

"How can we get a bird out of the hospital?" the other lab tech asked. "It's flying around the atrium over the nursing station."

Becoming known as one of the very knowledgeable (actually highly over-rated) birders in a fairly small community can result in some interesting situations. This being a windowed atrium that might be at least six metres (20 ft) high and, of course, the windows won't open. Not expecting success, I grabbed a fishing net and duct tape, then drove to a friend's place to get an extendable pruning saw. This is not going to work, I know it, I know it.

What a relief when I arrived at the hospital. No the bird hadn't escaped, but it had flown down into a small meeting room and one of the nurses closed the door. So, this should be a piece of cake as on two occasions I'd captured hummingbirds at a school by slowly and

calmly reaching up and grasping the bird. This was not a hummer, but an agitated male Oregon Junco which wouldn't let me near it, not even to reach it with the fishing net.

Hoping it would help, I turned the lights off. No help as all the light from the hallway and nursing station kept the room fairly bright. Though I hadn't noticed them, I believe someone called in that drawing the curtains might help. After doing so, the junco only had the window of the door to go to for light. Twice when I attempted to approach him at the window, he flew further back into the room. Success happened when I sat on a chair right in front of the door and calmly waited for him to come to the window to perch on the edge, then slowly reached up to catch him with my hand. Release outside occurred after the emergency doors closed behind us.

Thinking back on the ten-minute event, if the bird had stayed up in the atrium, perhaps playing some junco audio might have enticed it to come down to follow me out the doors like the Pied Piper.

Dennis Leonard

White-winged Crossbills have been relatively abundant around Prince George this winter – 336 were spotted during the Christmas Bird Count – but it has been in some ways a mixed blessing. They just don't have any road sense. When most bird species appear on the road ahead, it's just necessary to slow down in case they don't fly away in time, but for White-wings, that's really not enough. Keep your eyes peeled! CNK



CNK

## Location Review

### Why Every Birder May Want to Visit Tumbler Ridge

Charles Helm

In 2014 Tumbler Ridge became the centre of the second Global Geopark in North America, and the first in the west. There are currently 120 Global Geoparks worldwide, and in 2015 Global Geoparks became a formal UNESCO program, in parallel with UNESCO World Heritage Sites and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Tumbler Ridge's distinctive ornithological history and attractions played a role in achieving this distinction of becoming Canada's newest UNESCO site.

How does this translate into what a visiting birder can expect to find in Tumbler Ridge? To appreciate the implications of this question, a new birding mindset is required, one that goes beyond the usual "What cool birds can I expect to see?" and "What are the best birding sites?" into the perhaps unfamiliar territory of avian evolution and palaeo-ornithology. Just as our usual three-dimensional spatial environment becomes more meaningful when the fourth dimension of time is added into the concept of "space-time", so the addition of time (deep time) creates an extra dimension to ornithology in Tumbler Ridge. The result is a birding experience unlike any other in North America, one that arguably should be on the bucket list of every BC birder.

The journey back in birding time begins with a relatively small hop to the Pleistocene: understanding the Ice Ages is key to an appreciation of the "east meets west in Tumbler Ridge" birding phenomenon. During these glaciations, which occurred in cycles over the last two million years, most of Canada was covered by ice. Forests survived in two widely separated refugial areas in North America, between which were huge

glaciers and grasslands. Species that were isolated in these two refugia developed differences over time. As the glaciers melted, expanding forests from the western and eastern refugia met in places like Tumbler Ridge, and along with the forests came birds. Sometimes the changes that had developed were sufficient to create distinct species, in other cases just different subspecies. Examples of the resulting east-west species pairs whose distributions now just overlap include Townsend's Warbler and Black-throated Green Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler and Mourning Warbler (and Connecticut Warbler) and the Audubon's and Myrtle forms of the Yellow-rumped Warbler.

A number of other target eastern Canadian species can be found with some effort around Tumbler Ridge, but the prime example of an east-west pair is provided by the Pacific Wren and Winter Wren, and the story of the splitting of the Winter Wren based on research done a few kilometres from



Carina Helm with 2015 *Tyrannosaurus* track discovery.

Tumbler Ridge. The two species may look similar, but they have distinctive songs, and they were discovered singing close to each other near the Quality Falls hiking trail. UBC researchers led the study, showing that the songs are as distinct in this overlap zone as they are in populations far away. Mist-netting and mitochondrial DNA analysis were conducted, and the results showed that these two species separated from each other 2–3 million years ago (Toews & Irwin, 2008). As a result in 2010 the American Ornithologists' Union officially recognized two distinct species in North America: the Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*) and the Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*), both now distinct from the Eurasian Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). Interpretive signage at the Quality Falls trailhead celebrates and interprets this research.

We then need to take a big flight back in time, to the Late Cretaceous Period, about 95 million years ago. Understanding how birds evolved allows for an enhanced appreciation of the dinosaur footprint tours offered by the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation (TRMF) during the summer months. The consensus is that modern birds evolved from theropod dinosaurs, and that this split occurred sometime in the Early Cretaceous. A group within the theropods, the *Paraves* (which includes dromaeosaurids or "raptors" of Jurassic

One of the Mt. Roman avian track pathways.

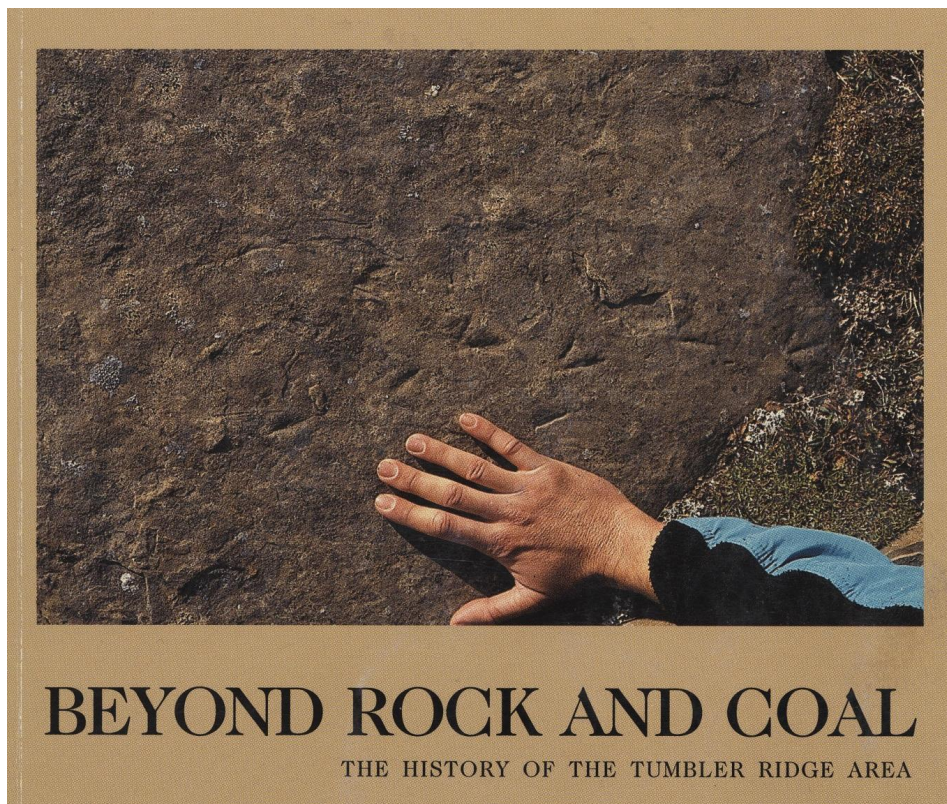




Park fame), evolved into modern birds. Birds are our modern-day theropod dinosaurs.

The tours to Cabin Pool (4km return) and Wolverine River (1km return) lead to very different types of Cretaceous theropod tracks. Those at Cabin Pool are deep, having been made in soft mud, and show unusual dewclaw impressions, while those at Wolverine River are shallow, having been made in a firm substrate, and show exquisite skin impressions. The latter are best appreciated by low angled light, through nocturnal lantern tours ("Tumbler Ridge nightlife"). These are therefore not the tracks of ancestors of birds, but of close cousins: they would have shared a common ancestor. (While on the subject of common ancestor, an even more distant one can be imagined by examining the remarkable replica in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery of some of the finest crocodilian trackways ever found – these Cretaceous tracks were discovered in one of the Tumbler Ridge coal mines in 2015).

Theropods perhaps reached their acme with the emergence of their most notorious representatives, the tyrannosaurs. As it happens, Tumbler Ridge is home to nine of the world's known tyrannosaur tracks, including the only trackways – these three parallel trackways provide evidence of tyrannosaur herding behaviour (McCrea *et al*, 2014). The fragile site is not currently



*Fossil bird trackway on 2000 book cover.*

accessible, but replicas are on exhibit in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, and a tyrannosaur footprint discovered in the fall of 2015 is due to be recovered and exhibited in the summer of 2016.

The rock exposures near Tumbler Ridge have yielded numerous other dinosaur trackways. Exploring for more of these has led to the discovery of four

fossil bird track or trackway specimens, all of which have been recovered or casted, and which are now being studied in the Peace Region Palaeontology Research Centre (PRPRC) in Tumbler Ridge. Bird tracks are relatively rare in the fossil record, and these four specimens, from four different ages of rock, provide for one of the most varied collections of such tracks in the world. As we are moving back in time, they are presented here in increasing order of age.

A block containing 100 million year old theropod tracks was reported to the museum by a visiting science student near the Boulder Gardens hiking and climbing area. It was lichen encrusted. After being flown out of the area by helicopter, special treatment techniques were explored by the PRPRC palaeontologists. This led to a published research article (Buckley & McCrea, 2009), and also exposed numerous small bird tracks. The research papers that followed described these idiosyncratic footprints as belonging to a new ichnogenus and species, *Paxavipes babcockensis* (McCrea *et al*, 2015). These

*Wolverine River theropod track.*





tracks are the subject of an interpretive exhibit in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, along with a Cretaceous *Confuciusornis* specimen from China.

In the mid-1990s the first fossil trackway in the region were found by a local physician on the northern slopes of Mt. Roman. The tracks had been made about 100–103 million years ago by a shorebird, of possible ichnogenus *Aquatilavipes*. A photo of this trackway appeared on the cover of a local history book (Helm, 2000). A coal mine was developed on the mountain, and after a few unsuccessful recovery attempts, the specimen was finally airlifted out by helicopter to the PRPRC in 2014. Lightening the specimen by using a rock saw had been contemplated, but the wisdom of not pursuing this became evident when the specimen was examined in the lab: over two dozen prints were visible from a number of ichnotaxa. Formal description and publication are pending.

An exploratory trip by TRMF volunteers up an unnamed creek in 2014 led to the discovery of an eroded bedding plane with numerous fossil footprints and trackways in 115–117 million year old rocks. The way back involved an unfortunate encounter with yellow-jackets that provided an obvious choice of name: Nine-sting Creek. Return expeditions led to further stings as well as the casting of the most important specimens. These large tracks are enigmatic, with widely splayed digits that suggest that they were made by birds. They are still being formally assessed, and a scientific report is anticipated.

A rancher's hired hands discovered dinosaur tracks in a creek above his ranch in 2010, and reported them to the museum. Field trips followed, which yielded more specimens (including the northernmost documented occurrence of sauropods in the world). One specimen, containing a good pair of theropod footprints, was deemed worthy of recovery by long-line and helicopter.

Once examined under optimal angled lighting in the lab, it provided an unexpected bonus that had not been visible in the field: five tiny bird tracks. These are some of the oldest known bird tracks in the world, from the very early Cretaceous Period (about 135 million years old). Description and publication are pending.

Together these Pleistocene and Mesozoic concepts provide a fascinating journey back into deep time. But birders also want to see the theropod descendants that are currently flying around. A visit to Tumbler Ridge will likely not disappoint. One target area is the alpine, thanks to the relatively low level of tree-line compared with much of the rest of BC.

White-tailed Ptarmigan and Willow Ptarmigan are coveted species for many visiting birders, and they can be found reasonably easily on hiking trails into the subalpine meadows and alpine tundra.

### Quality Falls trailhead sign.

#### How do closely related species interact?

On either side of the Rocky Mountains, there are birds which look similar to each other and are closely related. Once separated by glaciers, these species pairs are now meeting again. Dr. Darren Irwin and his lab are investigating what's happening in this contact zone.

MacGillivray's warbler  
*Geothlypis trichas*

Mourning warbler  
*Geothlypis philadelphia*

Pacific wren  
*Troglodytes pacificus*

Winter wren  
*Troglodytes hyemalis*

WESTERN RANGE

EASTERN RANGE

CONTACT ZONE

MacGillivray's and mourning warblers can interbreed, forming hybrid offspring. Hybrid warblers have intermediate plumage markings and genes from both eastern and western parents.

No hybrid wrens were found in the contact zone.

The winter wren was thought to be a single species throughout North America. Darren and PhD student David Toews found, through genetic markers and song analysis, that there are two species that do not interbreed, even though they live side by side in the contact zone. As a result of this work, the Pacific wren was recognized as a distinct species in 2010.

Song of the Pacific wren, note the repeated high falling notes.

Song of the winter wren, note the low trills. Song is used to mate selection, so different songs keep species from interbreeding.

Knowing the correct number of species and their relationships to one another is essential for monitoring and conserving these populations.

BEATY BIODIVERSITY MUSEUM

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#### WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

The location of Tumbler Ridge on the eastern flanks of the Rockies allows for a mix of eastern and western species that meet at the edge of their ranges. During ice age glaciations, which have occurred in cycles over the last 2 million years, most of Canada was covered by ice. Forests survived in two widely separated refugial areas in North America, between which were huge glaciers and grasslands. Bird species that were isolated in these two refugia over time developed differences. As the glaciers melted, expanding forests from the western and eastern refugia met in places like Tumbler Ridge, and along with the forests came birds. Examples include the Townsend's Warbler (western) and the Black-throated Green Warbler (eastern), the MacGillivray's Warbler (western) and Mourning Warbler (eastern), and the Audubon's Wren (western) and Myrtle Wren (eastern) of Yellow-rumped Warbler. Such contact zones allow biologists to study and understand the process of speciation.

A prime example is the research done at this site by Darren Irwin and David Toews, scientists from the University of British Columbia, which led to the splitting of the Winter Wren into two species (Winter Wren and Pacific Wren). The eastern and western birds have quite distinct songs, and they were encountered singing close to each other right here at the trailhead of the Quality Falls trail. The differences in song are as distinct in this contact zone as they are in populations far away. Specimens were mist-netted and released, and blood samples obtained for DNA analysis. The results suggest that these two species separated from each other about 3 million years ago.

The adjoining exhibit was developed and reproduced with permission from the Beaty Biodiversity Museum, University of British Columbia, and was designed by Derek Tan and Hana Dethlefsen.

The rocks at Quality Falls are in the Kaskapau Formation and are about 95 million years old, from the early part of the Late Cretaceous Period. The rocks are overlain by sandstones and shales of successively younger ages. The Wapiti Formation is the youngest rock in the area at 75 million years old, and is exposed at the top of the Heritage Highway.



dra such as Mt Spieker and Holzworth Meadows. Gray-cheeked Thrush and the Timberline race of Brewer's Sparrow may prove elusive en route, but other alpine species are common, and encountering Baird's Sandpiper migrating along these Rockies summits is a rare privilege. Plus of course there is the Golden Eagle migration.

For seven months of the year Golden Eagles are on the move along the eastern slopes of the Rockies, with spring migration peaking in March, and fall migration in October. Over 6,000 birds per year make the trip each way. Over 100 eagles may be seen flying above the ridge east of town on peak days in October. Alpine ridges provide ideal flying conditions and are preferred during good weather. An exhibit celebrating this great raptor migration is being developed in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, with the loan of a magnificent specimen from the Beaty Biodiversity Museum, and the help of Peter Sherrington and the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation ([eaglewatch.ca/](http://eaglewatch.ca/)).

One of the most birder-friendly sites is the Bullmoose Marshes Wetland Interpretive Area, 25 km from Tumbler Ridge off Hwy 29. The Sora Trail is 300m long and is fully board-walked; the Bittern Trail is 650m long and is partly board-walked. Both trails lead to viewing platforms over the wetland. Much further east, short trails lead to lakes on the Kiskatinaw Plateau, where Trumpeter Swans can be seen. These and adjoining lakes in neighbouring Alberta were the prime area for the great recovery of this species, which was once almost extirpated in Canada.

The exhibits in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery are themselves evolving. Each of the fossil bird trackway sites is unique enough to justify descriptions in the scientific palaeontological literature. These formal descriptions and submissions require dedicated effort and time until they are finally published. And scientific etiquette dictates that publication predates exhibition. One by one, therefore, they are being added to the "Birders' Corner" in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery.

*The Birds of Tumbler Ridge – A*

*Checklist* is available locally. Published by the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies, it documents the seasonal sightings of 237 species, of which 105 are known to breed. This number has grown to 240 since the publication of the checklist. (For the next printing, expect the addition of a checklist of ichnospecies that need to be ticked off!)

Some BC birders with long memories may recall that the annual conference of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists was held in Tumbler Ridge in June 2004. That was in largely pre-paleo days: a lot has changed and been discovered in the intervening twelve years, and the Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark now welcomes visiting BC birders to a truly unique, four-dimensional birding experience.

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## Book Review

*Being a Bird in North America Vol 1: Waterfowl to Shorebirds*, Robert Alvo. Babina.ca. Hardback, \$44.95.

This book made a bit of a media splash in Ontario, being covered both by newspapers and CBC TV and radio. The title is certainly intriguing, giving the impression that it is following in the Sally Carrighar tradition, by attempting to imagine the inner life and experiences of birds. In fact, it is concerned more with conservation. The thrust of the title is essentially "How tough is it to be a specific species of bird in North America?" Robert Alvo is a conservation biologist, and the book focuses on the current state of the birds, listing the conservation status of each of the 200 species covered.

The book is not really aimed at the birding community, but rather on piquing the interests and thus concerns of non-birders, using cartoons and interesting factoids about each species. The presentation of the book gives the impression that high-school students might be the chief target, as the hardback is extremely robust, capable of taking abuse in a school library, and reads in many ways like a school book, with great attention, for instance, to formal referencing.

While it's not a book to share shelf space with field guides or serious birding texts, it could serve a useful role by being left around the house for occasional dipping into. The factoids on each bird species take just a couple of minutes to read, and are sometimes rewarding. A few minutes reading yields items such as "The raft-shaped bodies of loons make these birds stable on the water surface such that there is little tendency to tip over sideways" and "the Magnificent Frigatebird sexes appear to breed on different cycles, the male every year and the female every two years. In no other seabird is this thought to happen."

More information on the book is available on the web at [babina.ca](http://babina.ca).

CNK

## Briefings, 2

### Those Little Green and Yellow Jobs, Part 1

You are out after wood-warblers in May. Along comes a bright yellow customer with a distinctive pattern of black marks; no doubt who he is. But the next bird is dull green above shading to dull yellow below: whazzat? (The experts, of course, will nail it by noticing that the tail protrudes by 1/8 inch beyond the folded wing feathers.) . . . Now it's September, and they are all dull green shading to dull yellow (well, almost all) and thoroughly frustrating. What's going on?

To find an answer to this question, researchers have noticed a remarkable pattern amongst our warblers, all of which are migratory (though not all the world's warblers are migratory). The spring dichromatism (difference in plumage) between males and the relatively drab females increases with the distance of their migration (not consis-

tently so, as a glance in Peterson or Sibley will show you, but – it turns out – significantly so statistically, as we shall see). The strength of dichromatism was established on the basis of the difference perceived by human evaluators examining standard drawings (such as those in the field guides) and using a four-point scale. Inter-observer consistency was high. 'Migration distance' was measured as the distance between the centroids of summer and winter range.

The difference has classically been put down to the requirements of male competition for territory and mates in the breeding season. But that does not explain the correlation with distance of migration. Researchers have formulated three hypotheses that focus mainly on the females, not the males. The first hypothesis is that drab female plumage – conferring 'crypsis' (zoo talk for camouflage) – reduces predation on them during migration. This is consistent with the observed correlation with migration distance. The second hypothesis is that female warblers, in common with most migratory female birds (but unlike some non-migratory females)

take no part in establishing or defending territory, hence do not need an imposing appearance to advertise their fitness. The third hypothesis, which tests whether in fact the dichromatism is male-based, supposes that it is correlated with breeding latitude. The underlying argument is that the shorter breeding season farther north imposes on the males an increased urgency to sort out territory and breeding hierarchy, hence a need for a more flamboyant spring plumage.

Tests based on correlation between the strength of dichromatism and occurrence of migration, distance of migration, and breeding latitude establish hypothesis one as the strongest hypothesis – drab female colour confers protection from predation during migration. Hypothesis two also gains support by implication, suggesting a social dimension to female plumage. Hypothesis three is not supported. Further to these hypotheses, ancestral warblers apparently were brightly coloured, non-migratory tropical birds, so it appears that the evolution of migratory behaviour has been accompanied by more radical modification of female plumage

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than of male plumage.

The findings make sense (even though correlation does not guarantee causation) when one considers that most of the birds make the southward journey with the advantage of relatively cryptic plumage (the source of our frustration) whereas, in spring, the males are already brightly coloured when they move north. It is an evolutionary advantage for the females – carrying the next generation – to assuredly get to the breeding grounds, hence their maintenance of a low colour profile, while it is a competitive advantage for the males to arrive on the breeding grounds prepared for territorial and mate competition. So, when next you are confused by a whack of fall warblers, consider that Nature has reasons that go beyond an apparent mission to frustrate we human observers.

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Summary by M. Church

## Those Little Green and Yellow Jobs, Part 2

We have noted a rough correlation between dichromatism (colour contrast) in male and female North American wood warblers and their distance of migration, and reviewed reasons why it may occur. Perhaps it's no surprise that this is merely the tip of a dichromatic iceberg (so to speak). Researchers have now formed an index of 'colour elaboration' amongst males and females for all 5983 passerines. They achieved this by objectively measuring colour intensity on red, green and blue scales at six anatomical positions of each bird, both male and female – three positions on the crown and neck and three on the



*Cooper's Hawk? A completely unexpected visitor to a bird blind in South Texas, February 2016. CNK.*

throat and breast, where plumage patches tend to be strong and distinct – using illustrations in the *Handbook of Birds of the World*. (This procedure is a good deal more rigorous than that used in the warbler study). For each bird they calculated a combined red-green-blue colour score and compared male and female combined scores.

Results show that colour dimorphism is weak amongst larger birds, tropical birds and cooperative breeders (species in which relatives help the breeding pair with rearing activities, or other group breeding practices occur), and strong amongst birds that practice a high degree of sexual selection for breeding (the opposite of cooperative breeding), and amongst migrant species. Reasons can be adduced for these outcomes. Larger birds experience much lower predation risk than small birds, hence there is little evolutionary advantage to crypsis (camouflage) in either sex. Tropical birds live in a highly variegated and colourful landscape where there may be little to be gained by being drab. On the contrary, sexual selection and competition for resources are high in and amongst tropical species; aggressive colouration may confer advantage in both competitions. Cooperative breeders avoid the

strongest reason for dichromatic colouration – sexual selection is repressed. We have discussed in Part 1 the more complex reasons for dichromatism amongst migrants.

The present study also reinforces some more general conclusions from the warbler study. Most passerines appear to have had tropical ancestors in whom dichromatism was weak – both males and females were relatively gaudy. Evolutionary selection for crypsis appears, then, to have worked mainly on females of smaller species in the cause of increasing their survival to bear the next generation. But many cooperative breeders are relatively cryptic in both sexes, presumably an adaptation to avoid the attention of brood parasites, who disproportionately disrupt the nests of cooperative breeders, presumably in hopes of superior child care. It's not just among humans that appropriate dress may be a complicated matter.

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Dale, J., Dey, C.J., Delhey, K., Kempenaers, B. and Valcu, M. 2015. The effect of life history and sexual selection on male and female plumage colouration. *Nature* 527: 367-370.

Summary by M. Church

## Briefing 3

### The Trouble with Ambelopoulia

Ambelopoulia? Whazzat? It's a Cypriot dinner dish – considered a delicacy – consisting of baked songbirds. Traditionally, the birds were Blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), a European warbler. However, the contents have expanded to include more than 20 songbird species, including the European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Cyprus Wheatear (*Oenanthe cypriaca*) – the last two classified as threatened species. The birds are caught in mist nets during autumn migration and sold to restaurants that charge from \$C55 to \$C125 for a platter of a dozen birds.

So trapping of the birds has become big business and, since it is illegal by both Cypriot and European Union law, it is poaching. Poachers go so far as to construct linear clearings through groves of planted acacia trees (much better to attract the birds than the native scrub vegetation) where mist nets are erected on poles set in concrete footings. The poachers also use a local 'goo', sticky material spread on the tree's branches, to ensnare the birds when they land. (This was the traditional means of entrapment: the nets are much more efficient.) They even use birdsong playback with speakers placed in the trees to attract the birds, which can increase the number of trapped birds by an order of magnitude (that's 10x). Bycatch includes birds as large as Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*). The traps are concentrated at places where the birds' flyways are funneled, such as Cape Pyla on the southeast coast,

the 'jumping-off' point for the Mediterranean crossing. By the indirect means available to them (one doesn't camp at a poacher's set and count the birds) Birdlife Cyprus estimates that as many as 2 million birds were caught in 2014, and that the toll is increasing.

All this can hardly go unnoticed. Indeed, authorities are on the case. The problem is that ambelopoulia is a traditional delicacy still approved of by many Greek Cypriots and there is considerable public and even political sympathy for the poaching. The poachers are belligerent and have assaulted enforcement officers and threatened their families. Poachers brought to dock are let off with minimal fines (though jail time is mandated). Political councils water down fresh legislation and regulations. The core of this problem lies in cultural regard for the dish, and that is very difficult to change. But things seem unlikely to be resolved until it does change.

And a similar problem occurs elsewhere in the Mediterranean with a total toll estimated to be up to 25 million birds! It is reckoned that more than 5.5

million are killed annually In Egypt and Italy, 4 million in Syria, and more than 2 million in Lebanon, as well as Cyprus.

The issue is critically important because, whilst a certain level of harvest of common birds might perhaps be sustainable, the trapping is, of course, non-selective and may be fatal for threatened or endangered species. For various reasons (prominently, habitat loss), most songbirds are in decline, so this is a real concern. But even common birds may quickly be in severe trouble if systematically preyed upon in this way, as shown by the example of the Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiztia aureola*). The Cyprus story continues to unfold.

#### Reference

Bhattacharya, S. 2015. Slaughter of the songbirds. *Nature* 529: 452-455 (news feature)

Summary by M. Church

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*Below: Another of the remarkable Northern Pygmy-Owl shots by William Murdoch.*





# Ornithological History

## Captain Cook's Birds of Canada

Rick Wright

Brian E Sharp's recent review of the occurrence of the California Condor in its northern range (*Western Birds* 43.2) is a remarkable contribution to the historic record of one of the rarest birds in the Americas. Sharp adduces nine reports of the species from British Columbia, beginning with "a bird of the vulture tribe" shot by the eccentric fantasist Alexander Milton Ross in 1871. Just how many of the remaining eight reports genuinely pertain to condors can probably not be determined, but Sharp is to be commended for having published them all in one easily accessible place. There may, however, be a tenth possible report of California Condors from British Columbia, one that would antedate all those cited in the *Western Birds* article.

In spring 1778, James Cook and the *Resolution* were at Nootka Bay on Vancouver Island. The crew had little time for zoological investigation, but they did observe

*two or three raccoons, martins, and squirrels ... the prints of a bear's feet near the shore.*

They learned more from "the skins which the natives brought to sell"; the most commonly offered were bears, deer, foxes, and wolves. Ermines and squirrels were scarcer, but lynx seemed to be "by no means rare."

Somewhat surprisingly, the Englishmen found birds to be both scarce and shy. In the woods, they encountered Northwestern Crows and Common Ravens, Steller's Jays, Pacific Wrens, and "a considerable number of" Bald Eagles. The local residents also brought them "fraents or dried skins" of a small hawk, a heron, and the Belted Kingfisher.

Certain of the forest birds struck the visitors as likely new to science, including

*one less than a thrush, of a black colour above, with white spots on the wings, a crimson head, neck and breast, and a yellowish olive-coloured belly....*

Indeed, Gmelin soon thereafter named the Red-breasted Sapsucker on the basis of specimens brought back by the expedition and first described by Pennant. (Gmelin, though, attributed it to north-eastern South America rather than to northwestern North America).

Cook also observed

*a larger, and much more elegant bird, of a dusky brown colour, on the upper part, richly waved with black, except about the head; the belly of a reddish cast, with round black spots; a black spot on the breast; and the under-side of the wings and tail of a plain scarlet colour....*

That one, too, made it into Gmelin's edition of the *Systema*, though this time the German taxonomer was even more geographically mixed up when he named the Red-shafted Flicker *cafer*.

The third suspected novum was

*a small bird of the finch kind, about the size of a linnet, of a dark dusky colour, whitish below, with a black head and neck, and white bill.*

It's impossible to know which flavor of Dark-eyed Junco is being described here; Gmelin assumed, reasonably enough, that it was identical to the *Junco hyemalis* of Linnaeus's 1758 edition, and thus felt no obligation to name it himself.

The last of the small land birds encountered, which "the natives brought ... to the ships in great numbers" towards the end of the mariners' stay, were hummingbirds, which

*seem[ed] to differ from the numerous sorts of this deli-*

*cate animal already known, unless they be a mere variety of the trochilus colubris of Linnaeus.*

The natives called the bird "sasinne, or sasin." Lesson would later use that name to denote a different species, our Allen's Hummingbird. Gmelin named Cook's bird, descriptively enough, *Selasphorus rufus*, the Rufous Hummingbird, the only hummingbird to be first described from a Canadian locality.

Oddly, though vast numbers of shorebirds can be seen in the area in spring, Cook and his crew, busy with their ships, found only "a plover differing very little from our common sea-lark" and two sandpipers, neither of them identifiable from the descriptions provided; one was "the size of a small pigeon," the other "about the size of a lark" and said to bear "a great affinity to our burre," a name as mysterious as the bird. Waterfowl and other seabirds were reported as "not more numerous than the others." Gulls and cormorants were seen offshore and in the Sound, as were two species of ducks, a few swans, and a Common Loon.

Cook and his men also observed "quebrantahuessos." This is a bird name not easy to come to terms with. In the early nineteenth century, Vieillot the *Nouveau dictionnaire d'histoire naturelle* wrote that it was in use by Spaniards for the giant-petrels, southern hemisphere birds never seen off western Canada that Cook and his sailors had identified a year earlier at the Falklands.

The word was also applied, however, to the Lammergeier, an impressive accipitrid vulture of Old World crags and coasts. It seems possible that what Cook was reporting was a similar scavenger, large and long-winged and with an appetite for bones. The Englishmen were not seeing giant-petrels on the Canadian coast; they may instead have been using the word to refer to Turkey Vultures or perhaps California Condors.

A few weeks later, in May 1778, Cook again encountered "a few quebrantahuessos," this time on the shore of Kaye Island in southern coastal Alaska. Again, he provides no informa-

tion that would let us identify the birds with real confidence, but the locality is not much farther north than some of the other historical condor reports Sharp cites.

In the absence of specimens or detailed descriptions, it is impossible to say exactly what the birds identified as *quebrantahuesos* were. But Cook's should be added to the list of possible records of the California Condor in Canada, and the contributions made to American ornithology by the *Resolution* and its crew should not be forgotten.

*Rick Wright is a widely published writer, sought-after lecturer, and popular leader with Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. He and his wife, Alison Berlinger, left Vancouver in 2010 for northern New Jersey.*

## Briefing 4

### A Place to Live

In our world of increasingly intense agricultural development and urban sprawl, essential habitat for birds is becoming more and more restricted. Accordingly, many species are suffering significant declines in numbers. Hence protected areas represent an attractive strategy for assuring their long-term survival. Most countries have established such areas, including 8283 IBAs ('Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas'). But how effective they are depends on how well they map the annual pattern of the birds' activities – an issue that is most critical for migratory species that use different habitats at different times of the year. A group of researchers has examined this issue.

They superimposed a world map of protected areas on range maps and deemed a species to be adequately protected if the protected areas covered all of the range of a bird occurring in an area of less than 1000 km<sup>2</sup>, with step reductions in protected area coverage to 10% of ranges greater than 250,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

(These areas seem large, but they represent squares of only 32 km to 500 km on a side.) It turns out that 45% of non-migratory birds (of 7457 species investigated) have adequate protection in some part of their range.

Of 1451 migratory species, between 26% and 44% have recourse to protected areas at some stage in their annual round of breeding, migration and wintering. BUT only 2% of migratory species have access to protected areas at ALL stages of their year. In breeding and wintering habitats 34 to 44% of species (but not necessarily the same species in each case) may find protected habitat. Most critically, only 26% of the birds can find protected stop-over sites during migration. Migrations cluster along the continental coasts, the flanks of mountain ranges and the great north-south river valleys – just the places that are the axes of most intensive human activity. Nor is this the end of the issue: many 'protected' areas are not off-limits to hunting or land-use change. While international conventions (notably the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals – adhered to by 120 countries – and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands) commit nations to provide protection for wild creatures, there is no mechanism in place for international coordination in respect of migratory species.

Surprisingly, the comparatively most adequate provision of protected areas (where more than 60% of species have protection when in the country) is found in Central America and northern South America, south-central Africa, Mongolia, Thailand, Japan, Australia, and western and central Europe. Apart from the latter regions, it is developing countries that lead the way. Canada provides protected areas for between 10 and 20% of migratory species for breeding and migration. This may not be so inadequate as it superficially appears since much of this country, away from the border strip, is still wildland, beyond the reach even of intensive forestry.

The international Convention on Biological Diversity has set ambitious targets for biodiversity reserves to be achieved by 2020; perhaps a significant chance to improve a globally desperate situation.

### Reference:

Runge, C.A. + 5 others. 2015. Protected areas and global conservation of migratory birds *Science* 350: 1255-1258.

Summary by M. Church

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*Below: a Clapper Rail spotted while birding in South Texas, February 2106. CNK*





# The Reflective Birder # 14

## Learning the Tough Birds

Clive Keen

If you are having longstanding problems with the more difficult birds, it might be because you – like the rest of us much of the time – are suffering from Listitis. *Listitis* is the condition of observing birds just to spot the minimum fieldmarks necessary for an ID. You know how it goes. Large raptor → black wrist patches → *Rough-legged Hawk*! Crested passerine → rufous undertail → *Bohemian Waxwing*! Large black seabird → white hip patch → *Pelagic Cormorant*! And thus three ticks are swiftly added to the list. For the World Series of Birding, the Christmas Bird Count, and the tables that conclude this edition of *BC Birding*, this is no doubt the way to go. You can move quickly and confidently to the next sighting. But if it becomes the default mode whenever you are birding, problems arise, and can become insurmountable with the more difficult birds.

The first problem with Listitis is that the approach fails too often to deliver the required ID. Wrist patches are great field marks, much of the time, for Rough-legged Hawks, but not if you're looking at a dark-morph individual. The rufous undertails of Bohemian Waxwings might be definitive, but not if the birds have their backs to you. That white hip patch allowing you to spot a Pelagic Cormorant half a mile away might be a gift to listers, but the patch is only there in breeding season.

Listitis does, of course, pay off much of the time with the easier birds, which is why we tend to default to it. For the toughest ones, though, it is hopeless, because straightforward fieldmarks don't exist. That's precisely why the birds are tough. The only way of confidently identifying such birds is to *look at the bird as a whole*, not some small subset of their characteristics.

This goes against the grain for most of us; the whole of our technique as apprentice birders has involved learning, and spotting, specific, definitive, fieldmarks.

How do we overcome Listitis? The classic, much-praised, technique for earlier generations of birders was to head into the field with a notebook and pencil, to sketch the birds seen. This is certainly a marvellous technique for seeing the bird as a whole, forcing one's eyes beyond the learned fieldmarks to all aspects of the bird. It has been a long time, though, since I saw a birder sketching away in the field. The main reason, no doubt, is that in times past serious birders needed sketches to



*"The rufous undertails of Bohemian Waxwings might be definitive, but not if the birds have their backs to you."*

prove that a rare bird had been spotted; since the advent of digital cameras, there's been a much easier, and more persuasive, way of recording a rarity.

An alternative way of overcoming Listitis is to consciously abandon the habit of looking away from a bird as soon as it has been ID'd. If one only cares about the length of the list, then time spent observing a bird after it has been identified might seem like time wasted, but that is to miss, not just much of the joy of birding, but a vital future opportunity. Looking long and hard at the whole bird can mean that

future ticks won't be missed.

I discovered this one day at my usual haunts at the septic lagoons, where shorebirds were pleasantly mud-pecking away. It was such a nice day that a lie-down on the grass, to observe the peeps, seemed a splendid idea. There were only Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers in close view, easily told apart because only the Least among small peeps have yellow legs, but there was no reason to hurry; lunch was ninety minutes away. Over the next hour, though, it was certainly not just the yellow legs of the Least that allowed me to tell them apart. Semis, I decided, smoked fat cigars, their bills being quite unlike the sharper, slightly droopy, Least bills. And the posture of the two species was quite different. In future, it wouldn't matter at all if the yellow legs were covered in mud and thus a fieldmark had been lost, because I'd come to recognize the jizz of both species. I'd come to see them as a whole, not as a collection of fieldmarks. And it gets better. After a while a Western Sandpiper dropped in – Wow, what a huge bird, and look at that enormous bill! Well, of course the bird is far from huge, and the bill is certainly not enormous, but they seem that way when you've really got to know the smallest peeps.

This gives a useful clue in recognizing the more difficult birds that are rarely seen in your area. If you really know the birds that *are* in your area – not just by fieldmark, but by jizz – then you'll instantly spot something new. You might not know what it is, but at least you're on the trail.

Getting positive IDs of tough birds first time round, though, can be very challenging. If you live just outside the normal range of, say, Brewer's Sparrows, and a suspect appears, how would you be able to definitely identify it? One approach is to imagine how you'd react to a claim to have spotted it by a sceptical colleague.

"How did you know it was a Brewer's?"

"Well, it was unlike any sparrow I'd seen here before."

"And?"

"Well, it was very plain."

"And?"

"Um, duh...."

Humiliation being a great teacher, for the tougher birds you've not seen before, the only way forward is to accept that there aren't any definitive field marks, so you have no choice but to know the bird as whole. But you can't just glance at the pictures in the guides, as you did for the easier birds; some serious study is needed. At the least you'll need to mug up on all the characteristics listed in the serious field guides, but better is to read the detailed descriptions found in publications such as *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion*. Having done that, looking through the scores of images of the bird available on the Web can help firm things up in your memory. You won't get the jizz of the bird – you need to see it in the field for that – but when you are next asked to explain your ID decision, there'll be no reason at all for humiliation.

All this might seem like hard work, so here's something encouraging to think about. If you are suffering from Litis, and Bohemian Waxwings drop into a tree nearby, you are in danger of missing a real treat. If you can get beyond listing and keep looking, you'll find something a lot richer than a tick: that the medium-sized passerines don't just have erect crests (therefore Waxwings), and don't just have rufous undertail coverts (therefore Bohemian) – there's far more to savour. There's those bold white markings on the wings that don't appear on the smaller Cedar Waxwings. There's not just red waxy spots on the wings, but some lovely yellow edgings. And the face is rufous tinged, contrasting beautifully with the grey of the breast. Keep looking, and you might see the birds play pass-the-berry; you might even get into the swing of things and fully into the moment, becoming almost an honorary member of the flock.

In future, if the waxwings have their backs to you, you'll have no trouble recognizing Bohemians, and you'll be surprised just how different Cedars "feel." But more importantly, you'll be reminded that the joys of birding go far beyond the length of the list.

## Briefing 5

### On the Lone Prairie

Some time ago one of these briefings (*BC Birding*, September, 2012; p.29) drew attention to the plight of the Lesser Prairie Chicken [*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*], which inhabits the southern Great Plains of the USA. It seems that invasive juniper trees and human structures (utility poles) are driving the birds off their habitat, probably because they perceive these as advantageous perches for marauding raptors. But that is just one of the hazards they face. There are also fences (with which these low-flying birds collide), roads and power lines (that the birds are reluctant to cross), and center-pivot irrigation – all of which fragment their habitat. Overgrazing by cattle leaves less long grass in which to hide, and climate change is creating summers too hot and dry for successful breeding. And now intensive oil and gas exploration has invaded their territory. From a high of some two million birds in the 1920s (oddly enough, promoted by early farming practices that, with the demise of the bison, provided both long grass and grain for food), there are estimated to be only about 20,000 birds remaining on 16% of their former range.

Accordingly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has declared the species to be 'threatened'. This has raised howls of protest from conservationists who think the bird should be designated 'endangered'. But that would alienate land owners who resent the compulsory land use restrictions that follow an 'endangered' designation (95% of the range is privately owned), and create congressional battles that might endanger the Endangered Species Act. Instead, officials have instituted a novel cooperative program in which land owners who undertake to participate in a range improvement program to benefit the birds will not be charged for actions that

unintentionally disturb or harm them. The idea is to maintain and increase residual areas of long grass and shrubs that the birds prefer, with occasional clearings for their leks. On the other hand, individuals and businesses (read, largely, oil and gas) that damage such habitat as part of their operations must pay for the creation of replacement habitat on the basis of two acres gained for each one lost. The goal is to create sufficient habitat to sustain 67,000 birds within ten years, and the strategy is designed to do it with the support of land owners and state officials and at minimum net cost. In part, the funds will be used to compensate landowners who set aside land for habitat. There is a reasonable chance of success: the birds have recovered from drastic population declines before, notably during the 'Dust Bowl' years of the 1930s.

This is a management strategy that might be highly successful insofar as it avoids political controversy and it might create more effectively distributed habitat than the alternative of attempting to establish dedicated reserves. It might be applied to other larger birds with particular habitat requirements – one thinks of other upland game birds, including the Greater Sage Grouse [*Centrocercus urophasianus*], Sharp-tailed Grouse [*Tympanuchus phasianellus*] or Gray Partridge [*Perdix perdix*]. It's a strategy that might usefully be tried here in British Columbia.

#### Reference

Lavelle, M. 2015. Last dance? *Science* 348: 1300-1305. (A 'news' article: not technical.)

Summary by M. Church





## BCFO Listers' Corner 2015 Lists

Welcome to the 2015 BCFO 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 2014. An “asterisk” preceding a total indicates a number wasn't submitted for 2015. 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 2014. There were four new members to Listers' Corner for 2015: Ilya Povalyaev, Eric Tull, Dan Tyson, and Neill Vanhinsberg.

**BC:** **Keith Riding** had the highest increase of the group adding an astounding 26. Next highest were *John Hodges* adding 18 and *Lee Harding* with 12. *John Vooyoys* moved past the 400 plateau. *Mike Tootchin* remains atop the list by a comfortable margin.

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 523					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	471	Mike Tootchin	90	3	468
2	444	Dale Jensen	84.9	2	442
3	442	Sharon Tootchin	84.5	5	437
3	442	Jo Ann MacKenzie	85	0	442
5	434	Wayne Weber	83.0	4	*430
5	434	Dan Tyson	83.0	new	
7	<b>432</b>	<b>Keith Riding</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>406</b>
8	431	Roger Foxall	82.4	4	427
9	429	Carlo Giovanella	82.0	6	423
10	425	Brian Self	81.3	3	422
10	425	Tony Greenfield	81.3	2	423
10	425	David Stirling	81.3	1	424
13	421	Val George	80.5	4	417
13	421	Brian Stech	80.5	3	418
15	418	Murray Brown	79.9	1	417

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 523					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
15	418	Lloyd Esralson	79.9	0	418
17	412	Kevin Neill	78.8	9	403
18	*411	Dick Cannings	78.6	0	411
19	410	Mike McGrenere	78.4	2	408
20	406	Thor Manson	77.6	1	405
21	405	Ilya Povalyaev	77.4		new
22	<b>401</b>	<b>John Vooyoys</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>398</b>
23	*400	Bryan Gates	76.5	0	400
23	400	Russ Tkachuk	76.5	0	400
23	*400	Brian Scott	76.5	0	400
26	399	Larry Cowan	76.3	4	395
27	398	Hank Vanderpol	76.1	0	398
28	396	Len Jellicoe	75.7	3	393
29	394	Nathan Hentze	75.3	3	*391
30	393	Barbara Begg	75.1	1	392
31	388	Chris Charlesworth	74	5	383
32	381	Gary Davidson	73	0	381
32	*381	Jeremy Gatten	73	0	381
34	375	Rand Rudland	72	3	372
35	369	Don Wilson	71	0	369
36	368	Laird Law	70.4	1	367
36	368	Ken Morgan	70.4	0	368
38	366	Bruce Whittington	70.0	0	367
39	365	Quentin Brown	69.8		new
40	361	Art Martell	69	3	*358
40	361	Eric Tull	69		new
42	357	Gwynneth Wilson	68.3	2	355
43	*356	Martin McNicholl	68.1	0	356
44	350	Peter Blokker	67	0	350
44	350	Andy Buhler	67	0	350
44	350	Marilyn Buhler	67	0	350
47	333	John Sprague	64	1	332
48	322	Dorothy Copp	62	1	321
48	322	Ted Goshulak	62	0	322
50	<b>310</b>	<b>Lee Harding</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>298</b>
51	305	Janice Arndt	58.3	1	304
52	301	Mike Mulligan	57.6	0	301
53	284	John Hodges	54	18	266
54	261	Neill Vanhinsberg	50		new
55	*246	Michael Sather	47	0	246

**ABA:** With an increase of 7, *Hank Vanderpol* moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> place. **Keith Riding** had the highest increase at 37. With the addition of four *John Sprague* reached the 650 mark. The 600 plateau was passed by

Mike McGrenere and Sandra Eadie with gains of 34 & 21 respectfully.

ABA - 983					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	785	Hank Vanderpol	79.9	7	778
2	784	Mike Toochn	79.8	2	782
3	782	Roger Foxall	79.6	1	781
4	778	Thor Manson	79.1	6	772
5	773	Mike Mulligan	78.6	0	773
6	738	Russ Tkachuk	75	0	738
7	723	Art Martell	74	1	*722
8	715	John Voos	72.7	6	709
9	714	Dorothy Copp	72.6	4	710
10	711	Jo Ann MacKenzie	72.3	0	711
11	709	Dale Jensen	72.1	0	709
12	705	Brian Stech	71.7	5	700
13	698	Sharon Toochn	71	5	693
13	698	Wayne Weber	71	14	684
15	688	David Stirling	70	2	686
16	684	Eric Tull	69.6		new
17	673	Dan Tyson	68.5		new
18	670	Chris Charlesworth	68.2	2	668
19	<b>663</b>	<b>Keith Riding</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>626</b>
20	654	Gary Davidson	66.5	1	653
21	652	Brian Self	66.3	0	*652
22	<b>650</b>	<b>John Sprague</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>646</b>
23	*643	Brian Scott	65.4	0	643
24	640	Andy Buhler	65	0	640
24	640	Marilyn Buhler	65	0	640
26	*639	Dick Cannings	65	0	639
27	630	Kevin Neill	64	1	629
28	628	Gwynneth Wilson	63.9	0	628
29	625	Barbara Begg	63.6	2	623
30	624	Don Wilson	63.5	0	624
31	619	Nathan Hentze	63	9	*610
32	618	Carlo Giovanella	62.9	1	617
33	614	Tony Greenfield	62.5	4	610
34	<b>610</b>	<b>Mike McGrenere</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>576</b>
35	<b>608</b>	<b>Sandra Eadie</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>587</b>
36	600	Lloyd Esralson	61	0	600
37	*597	Jeremy Gatten	60.7	0	597
38	595	Len Jellicoe	60.5	9	586
39	584	Ken Morgan	59	0	584
40	*568	Bryan Gates	57.8	0	568
41	567	Larry Cowan	57.7	2	565
42	561	Rand Rudland	57	0	561
43	544	Val George	55	2	542

ABA - 983					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
44	535	Murray Brown	54	3	532
45	527	Laird Law	53.6	0	527
46	*526	Martin McNicholl	53.5	0	526
47	514	Ted Goshulak	52	1	513
48	466	Lee Harding	47	3	463
49	427	Janice Arndt	43	7	420
50	412	Peter Blokker	42	0	412
51	395	John Hodges	40		new

**Canada: Keith Riding** had the largest increase at 25 moving him into the top 10. *Sandra Eadie* wasn't far behind with 19. *Len Jellicoe* added one to reach the 450 plateau. *Dan Tyson & Eric Tull*, new to Listers' Corner, joined this listing in 4<sup>th</sup> place.

CANADA - 676					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	546	Roger Foxall	81	2	544
2	527	Jo Ann MacKenzie	78	0	527
3	507	Mike Toochn	75	3	504
4	496	Eric Tull	73.4		new
4	496	Dan Tyson	73.4		new
6	492	Brian Self	72.8	1	491
6	492	David Stirling	72.8	3	489
8	489	Sharon Toochn	72	5	484
9	486	Dale Jensen	72	0	486
10	<b>481</b>	<b>Keith Riding</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>456</b>
11	478	Russ Tkachuk	71	0	478
12	476	Wayne Weber	70	3	*473
13	*471	Dick Cannings	70	0	471
14	468	Thor Manson	69	0	468
14	468	Kevin Neill	69	2	466
16	467	Carlo Giovanella	69	2	465
17	462	Mike McGrenere	68	2	460
18	460	Murray Brown	68	1	459
19	457	Mike Mulligan	68	1	456
20	453	Barbara Begg	67	1	452
21	451	Brian Stech	67	2	449
23	*450	Brian Scott	67	0	450
23	<b>450</b>	<b>Len Jellicoe</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>449</b>
24	449	Art Martell	66	2	*447
25	446	Larry Cowan	66	1	445
26	445	Hank Vanderpol	66	1	444
26	445	Ilya Povalyaev	66		new
28	*444	Martin McNicholl	66	0	444
28	444	Rand Rudland	66	1	443



CANADA - 676					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
30	442	John Vooy	65	0	442
31	441	Lloyd Esralson	65	0	441
32	439	Chris Charlesworth	65	0	441
32	439	Nathan Hentze	65	6	*433
34	436	Tony Greenfield	64	2	434
35	433	Ken Morgan	64	0	433
36	*432	Jeremy Gatten	64	0	432
36	<b>432</b>	<b>Sandra Eadie</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>413</b>
38	*421	Bryan Gates	62	0	421
39	420	John B. Sprague	62	4	416
40	418	Gwynneth Wilson	62	1	417
41	412	Quentin Brown	61	3	409
42	411	Gary Davidson	61	0	411
43	410	Peter Blokker	61	0	410
44	409	Don Wilson	61	0	409
45	399	Andy Buhler	59	0	399
45	399	Marilyn Buhler	59	0	399
47	395	Laird Law	58	1	394
48	393	Janice Arndt	58	0	393
49	387	Ted Goshulak	57	2	385
50	380	Dorothy Copp	56	1	379
51	350	Lee Harding	52	8	342

**World: Rand Rudland** rocketed over the 3,000 plateau with an impressive increase of 806. Other plateaus achieved were 5,000: *Jo Ann MacKenzie*; 4,500 – *Art Martell*; 3,000 – *Laird Law*; 2,500 – *Val George*, *Dorothy Copp* & *Brian Stech*; 1,500 – *Larry Cowan*.

WORLD - 10,307					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	6,737	Keith Riding	65	202	6,535
2	5,475	Roger Foxall	53	161	5,314
3	5,232	Nigel Mathews	51	165	5,067
4	5,151	Mike Tootchin	50	148	5,003
5	<b>5,025</b>	<b>Jo Ann MacKenzie</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>4,954</b>
6	<b>4,522</b>	<b>Art Martell</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>*4,304</b>
6	4,522	Gwynneth Wilson	44		new
8	4,301	Eric Tull	42		new
9	4,286	Sharon Tootchin	42	165	4,121
10	4,054	David Stirling	39	9	4,045
11	3,577	Mike Mulligan	35	2	3,575
12	3,387	Brian Self	33	221	3,166
13	3,346	Dale Jensen	32	22	3,324
14	3,213	Barbara Begg	31	13	3,200

WORLD - 10,307					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
15	*3,154	Dick Cannings	31	0	3,154
16	<b>3,151</b>	<b>Rand Rudland</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>2,345</b>
17	3,126	Hank Vanderpol	30	12	3,114
18	<b>3,071</b>	<b>Laird Law</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>2,948</b>
19	<b>2,903</b>	<b>Val George</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>2,460</b>
20	2,623	Don Wilson	25	0	2,623
21	<b>2,609</b>	<b>Dorothy Copp</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2,447</b>
22	2,602	Gary Davidson	25	6	2,596
23	<b>2,553</b>	<b>Brian Stech</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>2,388</b>
24	*2,324	Brian Scott	23	0	2,324
25	2,241	Ken Morgan	22	150	2,091
26	2,199	Sandra Eadie	21	372	1,827
27	2,163	Chris Charlesworth	21	8	2,155
28	*2,135	Lee Harding	21	0	2,135
29	2,060	Nathan Hentze	20	50	*2,010
30	*1,869	Bryan Gates	18	0	1,869
31	1,726	Andy Buhler	17	224	1,502
31	1,726	Marilyn Buhler	17	224	1,502
33	1,530	Tony Greenfield	15	3	1,527
34	<b>1,502</b>	<b>Larry Cowan</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>1,306</b>
35	1,273	Mike McGrenere	12		new
36	1,114	John Hodges	11		new
37	1,004	Kevin Neill	10	1	1,003
38	948	John Sprague	9	62	886

**Okanagan Valley: Dorothy Copp** had the largest increase adding 24. **Chris Charlesworth** raised his list leading total by adding 3.

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 342					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	314	Chris Charlesworth	92	3	311
2	*306	Dick Cannings	89	0	306
3	300	Gwynneth Wilson	88	2	298
4	290	Don Wilson	85	1	289
5	272	Peter Blokker	80	0	272
5	272	Mike Tootchin	80	1	271
7	262	Wayne Weber	77	4	*258
8	261	Gary Davidson	76	2	259
9	259	Hank Vanderpol	76	0	259
10	253	Dan Tyson	74		new
11	242	David Stirling	71	0	242
12	234	Jo Ann MacKenzie	68	0	234
12	234	Tony Greenfield	68	2	232
14	224	John Vooy	65	2	222
15	219	Laird Law	64	0	219
16	215	Lloyd Esralson	63	0	215

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 342					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
17	*193	Bryan Gates	56	0	193
18	<b>186</b>	<b>Dorothy Copp</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>162</b>
19	186	Brian Stech	54	0	186
20	171	Larry Cowan	50	3	168

**Vancouver:** Kevin Neill had the highest increase with 24. Dan Tyson entered the list in third place. Brian Self and Wayne Weber moved past the 350 plateau.

VANCOUVER AREA - 409					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	372	Mike Toochn	91	2	370
2	357	Jo Ann MacKenzie	87	0	357
3	<b>356</b>	<b>Dan Tyson</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>new</b>	
4	<b>351</b>	<b>Brian Self</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>349</b>
4	<b>351</b>	<b>Wayne Weber</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*344</b>
6	347	Carlo Giovannella	85	3	344
7	343	Keith Riding	84	2	341
8	334	Lloyd Esralson	82	0	334
8	334	Roger Foxall	82	2	332
10	323	Quentin Brown	79	new	
11	321	Larry Cowan	78	2	319
11	321	Brian Stech	78	5	316
13	310	John Voos	76	1	309
14	305	Ilya Povalyaev	75	new	
15	*286	Dick Cannings	70	0	286
16	<b>284</b>	<b>Kevin Neill</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>260</b>
17	272	Ted Goshulak	67	new	
18	243	David Stirling	59	0	245
19	*235	Bryan Gates	57	0	235
20	234	Don Wilson	57	0	234
21	226	Neill Vanhinsberg	55	new	

**Washington:** Larry Cowan had the highest increase at 24 and comfortably moved past the 200 plateau. Wayne Weber added 4 to his list leading total.

WASHINGTON STATE - 507					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	404	Wayne Weber	80	4	*400
2	349	Jo Ann MacKenzie	69	0	349
3	325	Mike Toochn	64	1	324
4	315	Dan Tyson	62	new	
5	284	Hank Vanderpol	56	1	283
6	*280	Brian Self	55	0	280
7	268	John Voos	53	2	266

WASHINGTON STATE - 507					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
7	*268	Dick Cannings	53	0	268
9	*262	Chris Charlesworth	52	0	262
10	260	Roger Foxall	51	2	258
11	254	David Stirling	50	0	254
12	239	Brian Stech	47	3	236
13	235	Lloyd Esralson	46	0	235
14	*234	Dale Jensen	46	0	234
15	231	Art Martell	46	new	
16	228	Dorothy Copp	45	2	226
17	<b>223</b>	<b>Larry Cowan</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>189</b>

**ATPT:** The list continues to grow adding three. Eric Tull joined at a list topping 3,014. The largest increase was 20 by Sandra Eadie.

(Ticks) All Provinces & Territories					
#	2015	Name	incr	2014	
1	3,014	Eric Tull		new	
2	2,959	Roger Foxall	7	2,952	
3	2,158	David Stirling	1	2,157	
4	*1,858	Dick Cannings	0	1,858	
5	1,703	Mike Mulligan	5	1,698	
6	1,699	Wayne Weber	4	*1,695	
7	1,578	Art Martell		new	
8	1,435	Dan Tyson		new	
9	1,294	Janice Arndt	1	1,293	
10	1,267	Barabara Begg	1	1,266	
11	1,259	John Sprague	9	1,250	
12	1,188	Gary Davidson	3	*1,185	
13	1,061	Laird Law	3	1,058	
14	<b>989</b>	<b>Sandra Eadie</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>969</b>	
15	*871	Brian Stech	0	871	
16	782	Larry Cowan	6	776	
17	*757	Dorothy Copp	0	757	

**Alberta:** Three members added their totals to the list with Eric Tull joining Mike Mulligan in first place. Mike had the highest gain with 5. There are more than a few members very close to the list threshold of 190. This year's AGM extension trips to Southern Alberta should see a few additions for 2016.

ALBERTA - 419					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	<b>362</b>	<b>Mike Mulligan</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>357</b>
1	<b>362</b>	<b>Eric Tull</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>new</b>	
3	320	Hank Vanderpol	76	4	316



ALBERTA - 419					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
4	286	David Stirling	68	0	286
5	241	Roger Foxall	58	0	241
5	*241	Martin McNicholl	58	0	241
7	240	Jo Ann MacKenzie	57	0	240
8	235	Wayne Weber	56	0	*235
9	227	Chris Charlesworth	54		new
10	*222	Bryan Gates	53	0	222
11	218	Dan Tyson	52		new
12	216	Gary Davidson	52	0	216
13	*214	Dick Cannings	51	0	214
14	195	Len Jellicoe	47	0	195

**NWT:** *Art Martell* and *Eric Tull* joined the list with *Eric* taking top spot at 180. **Tony Greenfield** was the only person to add to his total.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - 326					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	180	Eric Tull	55		new
2	176	Laird Law	54	0	176
3	<b>155</b>	<b>Tony Greenfield</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>154</b>
4	148	David Stirling	45	0	148
5	133	Rand Rudland	41	0	133
6	105	Roger Foxall	32	0	105
7	98	Brian Self	30	0	98
8	97	Barbara Begg	30	0	97
9	86	Mike Toochin	26	0	86
10	*84	John Sprague	26	0	84
11	71	Art Martell	22		new
12	64	Lee Harding	20	0	64
13	*54	John Hodges	17	0	54
14	53	Gary Davidson	16	0	53
15	52	Wayne Weber	16	0	*52
16	*40	Dick Cannings	12	0	40

**Yukon Territory:** **Tony Greenfield** and **Mike Toochin** shared the largest increase with 2. Three members added their totals to this growing list with *Eric Tull* joining in third spot.

YUKON TERRITORY - 314					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	*172	Dick Cannings	55	0	172
2	<b>163</b>	<b>Tony Greenfield</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>161</b>
3	<b>155</b>	<b>Eric Tull</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>new</b>
4	150	David Stirling	48	0	150
5	142	Roger Foxall	45	0	142

YUKON TERRITORY - 314					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
6	123	Gary Davidson	39	0	123
7	113	John Sprague	36	0	113
8	112	Rand Rudland	36	0	112
9	106	Art Martell	34		new
10	102	Brian Self	32	0	102
11	90	Dan Tyson	29		new
12	87	Wayne Weber	28	0	*87
13	*86	John Hodges	27	0	86
14	<b>84</b>	<b>Mike Toochin</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>82</b>
15	*80	Dale Jensen	25	0	80
16	64	Dorothy Copp	20	0	64
16	64	Brian Stech	20	0	64

**Vancouver Island:** The largest gain was 12 by **Wayne Weber**. This gain was over a two year period. *Mike McGrenere* added 4 to his list bringing him to within 2 of *David Stirling's* list topping 350.

VANCOUVER ISLAND - 388					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	350	David Stirling	90	0	351
2	<b>348</b>	<b>Mike McGrenere</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>344</b>
3	343	Barbara Begg	88	2	341
4	*335	Bryan Gates	86	0	335
5	332	Hank Vanderpol	86	2	330
6	316	Bruce Whittington	81	0	316
7	305	Mike Toochin	79	3	302
8	*286	Ken Morgan	74	0	286
9	<b>273</b>	<b>Wayne Weber</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*261</b>
10	262	Roger Foxall	68	2	260
11	261	Dan Tyson	67		new
12	253	Jo Ann MacKenzie	65	0	253
13	246	Eric Tull	63		new
14	206	John Sprague	53	2	204
15	203	Larry Cowan	52	0	203

**Victoria:** This list grew by four with **Wayne Weber** pushing to the 250 plateau with a gain of 12. As happened in the Vancouver Island list *Mike McGrenere* raised his total to within one of *David Stirling's* list topping 333.

VICTORIA AREA - 362					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	333	David Stirling	92	0	334
2	<b>332</b>	<b>Mike McGrenere</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>328</b>
3	328	Barbara Begg	91	2	326

VICTORIA AREA - 362					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
4	320	Hank Vanderpol	88	0	320
5	*317	Bryan Gates	87.6	0	317
6	305	Bruce Whittington	84	1	304
7	*296	Jeremy Gatten	82	0	296
8	261	Mike Toochin	72	1	260
9	<b>250</b>	<b>Wayne Weber</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*238</b>
10	222	Eric Tull	61	new	
11	216	Dan Tyson	60	new	
12	169	Kevin Neill	47	new	
13	165	Larry Cowan	46	0	165
14	141	Lloyd Esralson	39	0	141
15	*137	Dick Cannings	38	0	137
16	131	Ted Goshulak	36	new	

**Peace River:** No one on the list improved their total. The only change was the *Dan Tyson* adding his total to the list to hold sixth place.

PEACE RIVER AREA - 272					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	245	Laird Law	90	0	245
2	209	Tony Greenfield	77	0	209
3	203	Mike Toochin	75	0	203
4	193	Jo Ann MacKenzie	71	0	193
5	*184	Bryan Gates	68	0	184
6	165	Dan Tyson	61	new	
7	164	Wayne Weber	60	0	*164
8	163	David Stirling	60	0	163
9	153	Larry Cowan	56	0	153
10	144	Lloyd Esralson	53	0	144
11	128	Brian Stech	47	0	128
12	*128	Dorothy Copp	47	0	128

**North Pacific Pelagic Waters:** Adding 15 **Mike Toochin** strengthened his commanding lead over second place *Ken Morgan* who added 3, the only other person to add to their total in 2015.

NORTH PACIFIC PELAGIC WATERS					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	<b>131</b>	<b>Mike Toochin</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>116</b>
2	<b>104</b>	<b>Ken Morgan</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>101</b>
3	77	Bruce Whittington		0	77
4	70	Kevin Neill		0	70
5	68	David Stirling		0	68
6	63	Lloyd Esralson		0	63
7	*45	Bryan Gates		0	45

**Non-motorized Transport:** Mike McGrenere still holds down 1<sup>st</sup> place and managed to improve his lead over 2<sup>nd</sup> place *Dick Cannings* by 6 to stretch his margin to 45. *Larry Cowan* had the biggest increase with 8 moving him to the 100 plateau.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT					
#	2015	Name & location	%	incr	2014
1	<b>292</b>	<b>Mike McGrenere - Victoria</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>286</b>
2	*247	Dick Cannings - Penticton		0	247
3	155	Janice Arndt - Nelson		2	153
4	113	Barbara Begg - Sidney		2	111
5	<b>100</b>	<b>Larry Cowan - Pitt Meadows</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>92</b>
6	78	Lee Harding - Coquitlam		3	*75
7	*54	Ted Goshulak - Langley		0	54

**BC Winter:** Covers the "Winter" period Dec/Jan/Feb with a life total to Dec. 31, 2015. **Mike Toochin** had the best increase with 5. *Dan Tyson* & *Brian Self* joined the list to occupy 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places respectively.

B.C. Winter List - Dec / Jan / Feb					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	<b>298</b>	<b>Dan Tyson</b>			<b>new</b>
2	<b>293</b>	<b>Brian Self</b>			<b>new</b>
3	<b>289</b>	<b>Mike Toochin</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>284</b>
4	264	Wayne Weber		new	
5	254	David Sterling		0	254
6	216	Larry Cowan		1	215
7	180	Eric Tull		new	
8	122	Janice Arndt		0	122

**World Families:** This list has grown from five in 2014 to seven in 2015. *Mike Toochin* remains in top spot with *Art Martell* joining the list at number 2.

World Families 241					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	<b>211</b>	<b>Mike Toochin</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>211</b>
2	<b>206</b>	<b>Art Martell</b>	<b>85</b>		<b>new</b>
3	201	Sharon Toochin	83	0	201
4	*194	Barbara Begg	80	0	194
5	155	Sandra Eadie	64	new	
6	*142	Bryan Gates	59	0	142
7	121	Kevin Neill	50	new	
8	104	Larry Cowan	43	1	103



**Fraser Valley:** Anyone interested in exploring an under birded area with great potential check out the supplied link. The species count stands at 318 according to the website.

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

Fraser Valley - 318					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	246	John Vooy's	77	new	
2	153	Larry Cowan	48	new	
3	131	Ted Goshulak	41	new	

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

CRESTON VALLEY AREA - 301					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	184	Gary Davidson	61	9	175
2	172	Janice Arndt	57	4	168
3	142	Wayne Weber	47	0	*142

Haida Gwaii					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	122	Mike Tootchin		0	122
2	106	Bruce Whittington		0	*106
3	*97	Laird Law		0	97

KAMLOOPS AREA - 306					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	256	Wayne Weber	84	1	*255
2	200	Gary Davidson	65	0	200
3	198	David Stirling	65	0	198

Mt. Robson PP					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	145	Dick Cannings		0	145
2	142	Laird Law		0	142
3	120	David Stirling		0	120

North America 2011					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	1,380	Mike Tootchin	69	1	1,379
2	1,260	Art Martell	63	New	

Princeton Area					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	103	Lloyd Esralson		8	95
2	91	Larry Cowan		0	91
3	90	Bryan Gates		0	90

PRINCE GEORGE AREA - 297					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	274	Laird Law	92	1	273
2	271	Cathy Antoniazzi	91	1	270
3	214	Nathan Hentze	72	5	*209
4	190	Don Wilson	64	0	190
5	168	Dan Tyson	57	new	
6	151	Peter Blokker	51	0	151

Salt Spring Island					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	173	John Sprague		1	172
2	172	Ren Ferguson		6	166
3	114	Wayne Weber		0	*114

SUNSHINE COAST - 307					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	277	Tony Greenfield	90	1	276
2	256	Russ Tkachuk	83	2	254
3	252	Rand Rudland	82	4	248
4	*228	John Hodges	74	0	228
5	176	Dan Tyson	57	new	
6	136	Wayne Weber	44	0	*136

WEST KOOTENAY AREA - 313					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	284	Gary Davidson		2	282
2	248	Janice Arndt		4	244
3	185	Jo Ann MacKenzie		0	185
4	182	Wayne Weber		0	*182

MANNING PROVINCIAL PARK - 206					
#	2015	Name	%	incr	2014
1	154	Mike McGrenere	75	1	153
2	125	Wayne Weber	61	0	*125
3	*118	Dick Cannings	57	0	118
4	110	Jo Ann MacKenzie	53	0	110
5	109	Dan Tyson	53	New	
6	101	David Stirling	49	0	101
7	90	Larry Cowan	44	0	90

BLACKIE SPIT (Vanc)				
#	2015	Name	incr	2014
1	192	Jo Ann MacKenzie	0	192
2	<b>185</b>	<b>Wayne Weber</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>*183</b>
3	176	Dan Tyson		new
4	117	Larry Cowan	0	117
5	114	Brian Self		new
6	*91	Dick Cannings	0	91

SEA & IONA ISLANDS (Vanc)				
#	2015	Name	incr	2014
1	278	Mike Toochin	1	277
2	246	Keith Riding	0	246
3	238	Wayne Weber	1	*237
4	234	Dan Tyson		new
5	204	Lloyd Esralson	0	204
6	180	Larry Cowan	1	179
7	*167	Dick Cannings	0	167
8	*127	Ted Goshulak	0	127
9	124	Neill Vanhinsberg		new

Semiamhoo Peninsula (Vanc)				
#	2015	Name	incr	2014
1	240	Jo Ann MacKenzie	0	240
2	223	Carlo Giovanella	1	222
3	<b>205</b>	<b>Roger Foxall</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>199</b>
3	205	Dan Tyson		new

WESTHAM & REIFEL ISLANDS (Vanc)				
#	2015	Name	incr	2014
1	224	Wayne Weber	1	*223
2	210	Brian Self	1	209
3	207	Dan Tyson		new
4	194	Lloyd Esralson	0	194
5	<b>184</b>	<b>Keith Riding</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>179</b>
6	158	Larry Cowan	1	157
7	*148	Dick Cannings	0	148
8	105	Neill Vanhinsberg		new

Pitt Meadows				
#	2015	Name	incr	2014
1	203	Wayne Weber	2	*201
2	194	Larry Cowan	2	192
3	82	Neill Vanhinsberg		new

Over 1,500m				
#	2015	Name	incr	2014
1	112	Mike McGrenere		112
2	106	Wayne Weber		*106

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	2015	Name	+	2014
Gwaii Haanas NP	81	Bruce Whittington		*81

Cariboo/Chilcotin	2015	Name	+	2014
Cariboo Plateau	*136	Michael Sather		136
Williams Lake Area	*160	Bryan Gates		160

Kootenay/Rockies	2015	Name	+	2014
Columbia Valley	*123	Bryan Gates		123
Revelstoke	150	Wayne Weber		*150
Yoho NP	124	Wayne Weber		*124

Thompson/Okanagan	2015	Name	+	2014
<i>Nicola Watershed</i>	<i>253</i>	<i>Wayne Weber</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>*252</i>
North Okanagan	253	Peter Blokker		253

Vancouver Coast & Mnt.	2015	Name	+	2014
Abbotsford	*207	John Vooys		207
City of Richmond	288	Mike Toochin		288
<i>Colony Farm RP</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>Larry Cowan</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>164</i>
Derby Reach RP	*97	Ted Goshulak		97
Iona Island	265	Mike Toochin		265
Langley	*167	Ted Goshulak		167
<i>Maplewood CA</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>Quentin Brown</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>208</i>
<i>Trinity Western U Campus</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>Ted Goshulak</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>*149</i>
Vancouver CBC Circle	296	Dan Tyson		new

Vancouver Island	2015	Name	+	2014
Comox Valley	247	Art Martell		new
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	2015	Name	+	2014
<i>ABA Photographed</i>	<i>592</i>		<i>52</i>	<i>540</i>
Yard List (Victoria)	*151			151

Reminder, there are other opportunities for listing areas & categories not encompassed by BCFO Listers' Corner. These include the American Birding Association and Canadian Listers' Corner.

<http://www.neilyworld.com/neilyworld/listerscorner/listers-corner.htm>

I would like to thank all those who submitted their life totals for this article. Wishing everyone continued good birding in 2016. See you at the BCFO AGM and Conference in Cranbrook this coming May.

Larry Cowan

