

BC BIRDING

Newsmagazine of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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Short-eared Owl at Boundary Bay – see page 2 for details, and the back page for another image.

Publisher

BC Birding is published four times a year by the British Columbia Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 61670, RPO Brookwood, Langley, BC V3A 1K0.

A subscription to this quarterly is a benefit of membership in the society. Members 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 the BCFO address given above under "Publisher."

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).

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. Trip reports by members, both in Canada and elsewhere, are welcome. Items can be of any length up to a maximum of 2,000 words. Please remember to give the full name of the photographer for any photographs submitted.

Deadlines (i.e. *final* dates for submission of material) are as follows. Material received after the deadline will be held over to the subsequent edition.

- March edition: February 15
- June edition: May 15
- September edition: August 15
- December edition: November 15

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BCFO members are welcome to include classified ads, of up to 25 words, at no cost.

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Front Page Photo

John Gordon writes: The development of cranberry and blueberry farms has shrunk their traditional hunting grounds, but Boundary Bay still has a few areas left where owls can hunt. Although this image looks like I've used great stealth and expertise, the truth is that this owl has become so habituated to humans it frequently hunts very close to the dyke pathway. The bird became a regular visitor to the same fenceline where it caught numerous Townsend's voles, stashing its catch for later consumption and away from the marauding Northern Harriers.



IMPORTANT DATES

HOPE CONFERENCE & AGM 2018

REGISTRATION

April 1

Online registration opens for Conference & AGM, and post-conference trip.

EVENT DATES

May 31 – June 1

Pre-conference Princeton area two-day trip (see page 11).

June 1 – 3

Hope Conference & AGM.

June 3 – 6

Post-conference Williams Lake area Extension Trip (see page 10).

CLOSING DEADLINES

May 20

Registration for the pre-conference and post-conference trips.

May 20

Registration for Hope conference and AGM.

Contents

Notices & Notes

President's Message	4
Welcome New Members	4
Notes.....	5
Upcoming Meetings & Events	13
Oddments	35

AGM & Conference Details

Registration Form.....	7
Conference Speakers	7
Schedule of Events	8
Registration Information.....	8
Accommodation	9
Field Trips.....	9
Extension Trip	10

BCFO Two-day Trips

Princeton, May 31–June 1, 2018.....	11
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Farewell

Martin K McNicholl	11
Peter Blokker.....	12

Avian Encounters

Young Birders Program.....	15
Welcome Visitors	17
The Unexpected.....	19
Southern Travels	20
CBC 2017	22

Features

In the Media	24
Featured Species – <i>Marbled Godwit</i>	30
Wintering Marbled Murrelets.	34
Gallery	37

Briefings

How Vulnerable Are Birds to Climate Change?	25
Instant Bird.....	26
More Instant Birds.....	26
Not So Instant Bird.....	27

Book Reviews

The Biggest Twitch	28
Birding Without Borders	29

Regular Columns

Gone Pishing – <i>Get Away from My Berries</i>	32
The Reflective Birder – <i>Profundity from a Snail Kite</i>	36

Listers' Corner

Introduction and Tables	38
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President's Message

The AGM

The Hope area has mainly been a location that I passed through on Highway 1 to go birding in the Interior and in northern parts of BC. It is usually a location to fill up the car with gas and to have lunch. My only birding experience in the Hope area was on two camping trips in the 1980s to the Skagit Valley where my wife, Barb, and I were able to enjoy a great variety of birds found in this valley.

The Hope area offers some excellent birding opportunities and the field trips planned for the 2018 Annual General Meeting and Conference will take BCFO members to many of the birding habitats in this area. With the assistance of Kelly Pearce and Scott Denkers of the Hope Mountain Centre, five field trips have been planned to take participants into the Skagit Valley, to nearby wetlands and to birding hotspots

that have produced some exciting rare birds. There will also be a trip to Manning Provincial Park for a look for higher elevation species.

Saturday evening will be a highlight as Kelly and Scott will be giving the banquet presentation on the bird blitzes held in Manning Provincial Park and the Skagit Valley. These annual birding events have provided a considerable amount of data on bird abundance and we will be treated to some analyses of bird trends and some highlight species from the bird blitzes.

The previous two AGMs have been our largest with over 70 members attending the Cranbrook and Tumbler Ridge meetings. Hope is located within easy access for a large number of our members. This year's event will be held at the Hope Golf & Country Club and is a smaller venue than the previous two years. Therefore, we are limiting attendance to 100 participants.

The pre-conference two-day field trip will take place in the Princeton area while the post-conference extension trip will be to the Williams Lake area. These trips are described in this issue of the newsmagazine (pages 10 and 11).

Registration information for the 2018 AGM and conference in Hope is also presented in this issue (pages 8–10) and will be posted on the website in the Events Section. Online registration for both the AGM and the post-conference extension trip will open on April 1, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. PDT.

On a sad note, two of our long-time members recently passed away. Martin McNicholl was a board member in the 1990s and a long-time editor of our journal, *BC Birds*, and he was a recipient of the Steve Cannings Award in 2014 for his contributions to ornithology. It was a shock to learn that Peter Blokker passed away on a trip to Italy earlier this year. Peter was an active birder in the Vernon area and regular participant at BCFO AGMs and on the extension trips. You can read farewell notes for Martin and Peter on pages 11 and 12 of this issue.

I look forward to seeing you at the Friday evening social in Hope.

Mike McGrenere, President

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

CAROL STOROSZ –
VANCOUVER

PAUL & ROSEMARY CLAPHAM – VANCOUVER

GENEVIEVE R SINGLETON – DUNCAN

ALICE KORFMAN – NORTH VANCOUVER

IVOR BROWN – NEW WESTMINSTER

SIMON ANDREWS – FORT ST. JOHN

ERIC NEWTON –
PENTICTON

CATHERINE CRAIG – REVELSTOKE

ALAN MACLEOD –
VICTORIA

JARED HOBBS –
VICTORIA

MICHELLE HAMILTON – KELOWNA

SUZY WRIGHT –
QUESNEL

RONALD JAVITCH – MONTREAL

(GLOSSY IBIS. CNK PHOTO)



Notes

Late-breaking news: Adam Dhalla is ABA Young Birder of the year. See page 15.

Year-end Membership

Membership Secretary Larry Cowan reports that as of December 31, 2017 the BCFO had 296 regular members, up from 273 a year previously. There were also (2016 figures in square brackets) 3 honorary members [4], 20 Young Birder Award recipients [15], 2 complimentary memberships [6] and 6 [6] institutional members, for a total of 327 [304] members. There were 39 new members in 2017 [35] with 27 members [29] not renewing from 2016.

This represents an increase in regular membership over the year of almost 8% – the fourth year of healthy growth.

Membership by Region

- Vancouver, Coast & Mountains: 38% [41%]
- Vancouver Island: 24% [26%]
- Thompson, Okanagan: 16% [14%]
- Northern BC: 5% [5%]
- Kootenay, Rockies: 7% [6%]
- Cariboo, Chilcotin, Coast: 3% [4%]

Plus small numbers from the US, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Finland.

Year-end Finances

Treasurer Josh Inman reports that as of December 31, 2017, the Society had \$38,117 operating funds and \$50,000 earmarked for conservation and education. The year-end total of \$88,117 compares to \$82,356 at the end of the previous year.

Honour for Ann Nightingale

Ann Nightingale from Victoria is now a director of the American Birding Association, one of the two Canadians on the Board. For information on the ABA, head to www.aba.org.

BCFO Records Committee

Rounds 18, 19, 20, and 21 were completed and the following species were accepted to the Main Provincial List:

- Acorn Woodpecker
- Black Phoebe
- Black-throated Sparrow
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- Burrowing Owl
- California Scrub-Jay
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Costa's Hummingbird
- Curlew Sandpiper
- Dickcissel
- Hermit Warbler
- Indigo Bunting
- Lark Bunting
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Lesser Goldfinch
- Little Gull
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Northern Cardinal
- Northern Parula
- Painted Bunting
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Red-necked Stint
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Ruff
- Tufted Duck
- White-winged Dove

A full account will be published in the forthcoming edition of *British Columbia Birds*.

Know Those Sparrows

Oops, the Clay-Colored Sparrow shown in the December 2017 edition wasn't – it was in fact a Brewer's or Timberline Sparrow. Faces were a bit red on the editorial desk.

It's not surprising that Rick Wright spotted the error immediately, since he is writing a book on the identification of sparrows. His *Sparrows* volume of the Peterson's Guide series will before too long be joining his other bird-related publications, and will no doubt be reviewed in this magazine.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The BCFO provides a service to the birding community and general public by giving one-stop-shop information on the CBCs in the province – see the website at bcfo.ca, clicking on CBCs.

A volunteer is now needed to maintain and update the website information. This essentially involves identifying and chasing up the various organisers for CBC dates and reports. (Note that BCFO has no involvement in how the CBCs are operated and organized.)

If you would be willing to take on this task, please contact gclulow@shaw.ca.

*Which sparrow is which?
The answer – we hope we got it right
this time – is on the next page. Photos
from Creative Commons.*





Left: Purple Sandpiper, Creative Commons photo.

Those Sparrows

(Previous page) The Clay-colored is on the top, and yes, the bottom one is a Brewer's. For those finding sparrow identification difficult, Rick Wright promises to get his ID book finished as soon as possible.

Canada's National Bird?

BC Bird of the Year

The annual BC bird-of-the-year vote run by Kevin Neill (Victoria) had a remarkable abundance of candidates. On top of the regional firsts, which were bound to pick up some votes, there were *five* apparent BC firsts: Northern Cardinal, Pink-footed Goose, Purple Sandpiper, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Piping Plover. There were also some other very fine birds that might have been seen before but still counted as megaticks. It's quite a year when Redwing, Red-flanked Bluetail and Black-tailed Gull get to be considered also-rans. Kevin writes:

After much thought, debate, and internal strife that some birders put themselves through with their deep and sometimes scientific examination of this year's candidates, a clear winner has emerged. Others simply sent me two words:

Purple Sandpiper

In a relatively close second place was the Northern Cardinal. The Pink-footed Geese and the Curve-billed Thrasher tied for third place. The Summer Tanager received quite a few votes in the waning days of December, but couldn't quite place.

Ken Otter writes: "Unfortunately, Gray Jay (or Canada Jay, as the call has come out to officially reclaim the original name) isn't the national bird yet, and the government has taken a stance "not to consider adding any new national symbols at this time."

"I have two official letters from the Heritage Minister on this point, after being asked to write to her as President of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

"...There is still poking at the government to consider this, and there is a group actively lobbying the American Ornithological Society's nomenclature committee to re-establish the original name (based on an investigation by Dan Strickland that was published last spring in *Ontario Birds* that found the original name change was brought in under faulty reasoning, and actually the officially recognized American Ornithologists' Union name was Canada Jay from the 1850s to 1957 when Canada Jay and Oregon Jay were merged."

The jay – Gray, Canada, or Wisakedjak – nevertheless bows to his many fans. CNK photo of a January 2018 visitor to a Prince George feeder.



BCFO 28th AGM & CONFERENCE, June 1 – 3, 2018, Hope, BC

Registration Form

Name(s)

Address

.....

Phone Email

Conference Registration

Maximum registrations: 100. Attendance is limited to BCFO members and accompanying spouses/family members. If spaces are available, 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 = \$ _____

BCFO Young Birders _____ @ \$85 /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)

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 61670, RPO Brookwood, Langley, BC V3A 1K0. *Please submit AGM registrations by May 20, 2018.*

Conference Speakers

David Manning

Although Dave has been a birder for over 50 years, he didn't get hooked on Turkey Vultures until ten years ago, when he discovered a young chick in its nest cave. A former elementary school teacher, Dave is retired and lives on Pender Island. He recently completed a book on Turkey Vultures with the same title as his presentation.

Title: The Old Man & the Vultures.

Kelly Pearce and Scott Denkers (joint presentation)

Kelly Pearce is Program Director for the Hope Mountain Centre, a local non-

profit promoting outdoor education. Kelly worked as a naturalist in Manning Provincial Park for 14 years and has lived in Hope since 1997. He has devoted his life to celebrating nature and enjoys sharing that passion with others.

Scott Denkers developed his passion for birds, and nature in general, early in life while growing up in the Chiltern Hills near London. His interest in birds followed him when he moved from the UK to North America to follow academic pursuits in the early 1970s. With degrees in biology and physical geography, Scott changed direction and established a 25-year career in information technology in the United States, keep-

ing birding as a favourite hobby in his spare time. After immigrating to Canada in 2006 and a stint of IT consulting work, Scott decided to leave technology and bureaucracy and return to his natural roots and joined Hope Mountain Centre where he is currently Administrative Director. Much of Scott's life as a volunteer in Canada has been with the Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve Society and as an executive committee member of the Chilliwack Field Naturalists.

Title: The Bird Blitz Legacy (Manning Park and Skagit Valley Bird Blitzes).

BCFO 28th AGM & CONFERENCE, June 1 – 3, 2018, Hope, BC

Schedule of Events

Location: Hope Golf & Country Club, 900 Golf Course Rd, Hope. All conference activities and field trip departures take place from here.

Friday, June 1

5:00 pm to 9:00 pm – Registration and Social (appetizers & cash bar). Pick up your conference package, socialize with fellow birders and confirm your field trip selection for the Saturday trips.

Saturday and Sunday, June 2 & 3

Breakfast: 5:15 to 5:45 am, prior to field trips (both days).

Conference Field Trips: 6:00 am departures both days from the golf course parking lot.

- Trip 1 - Cheam Wetland.
- Trip 2 - Thacker Marsh and Thacker Mountain.
- Trip 3 - Hope Airpark/Jack Delair Property.
- Trip 4 - Silver Lake.
- Trip 5 - Manning Park (Spruce Bay, Strawberry Flats).

Lunch: 12:00 to 1:00 pm (both days).

Afternoon Speaker: 1:15 to 2:00 pm, Saturday. David Manning: "The Old Man & the Vultures."

Annual General Meeting: 2:15 to 3:30 pm, Saturday. Field trip selection for the Sunday trips will occur after the AGM.

Social Hour Cash Bar: 5:00 to 6:15 pm, Saturday.

Banquet: 6:15 to 7:15 pm, Saturday.

Steve Cannings Award Presentation: 7:15 to 7:30 pm, Saturday.

Banquet Keynote: 7:30 to 9:00 pm. Kelly Pearce and Scott Denkers: "The Bird Blitz Legacy."

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 61670
RPO Brookwood
Langley, BC V3A 1K0.

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.

Go to the *AGM/Extension Payments* tab under the *Events > Annual Conference* drop-downs. The fillable registration form will include the opportunity to indicate your desire to attend the post-AGM Extension.

To pay for more than one registration via PayPal, simply make sufficient single payments for each person you wish to register.

*Online registrations open on
April 1 at 9:00 am PDT.*

FIELD TRIP SELECTION AND WAIVER FORMS

Field trip selections for the mornings of June 2 and June 3 will be made when checking in on Friday, June 1. At the same time, you will be asked to complete your conference waiver form. To ensure fairness, field trip selection will be opened at 5:00 pm on June 1.

Mountain Bluebird by Ken Willis.



BCFO 28th AGM & CONFERENCE, June 1 – 3, 2018, Hope, BC

Accommodation – Hope

All conference events will be held at the Hope Golf & Country Club so there will be no host hotel. There are many accommodation choices in Hope including hotels and motels, bed and breakfasts and campgrounds. Some of the possible accommodation choices are listed below:

Hotels

Colonial 900 Motel

900 Old Hope Princeton Way, Hope BC V0X 1L0. 604-869-5223; toll free:

1-866-508-5223.

www.colonial900motel.com.

Skagit Motor Inn

655 3rd Ave, Hope BC V0X 1L0.
604-869-5220; toll free: 1-888-869-5228. www.skagitmotel.ca.

Park Motel

832 4th Ave, Hope BC V0X 1L0.
604-869-5891; toll free: 1-888-531-9933. www.parkmotel.ca.

Heritage Inn

570 Old Hope Princeton Way, Hope BC V0X 1L0. 604-869-7166; toll free: 1-888-869-6577.
www.heritageinnhope.com.

Windsor Motel

778 3rd Ave, Hope BC V0X 1L0.
Phone: 604-869-9944; toll free: 1-888-588-9944.

Campgrounds

Coquihalla Campground

800 Kawkawa Lake Rd, Hope BC V0X 1L0. toll free: 1-800-869-7118.
www.coquihallacampground.ca.

Telte-Yet Camp Site

600 Water Ave, Hope BC V0X 1L0.
Phone: 604-869-9481.

Field Trips

Thacker Marsh & Thacker Mountain

Thacker Marsh is a Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) park located within Hope. It offers great bird habitat and accessible shoreline trails, including access to the Coquihalla River. Willow Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing and Red Crossbill should be seen. We then drive up to nearby Thacker Mountain which offers a different birding habitat.

Leaders – Scott Denkers and Kelly Pearce

Scott and Kelly both work for Hope Mountain Centre and co-manage the Manning Park Bird Blitz and the Skagit Valley Bird Blitz.

How To Get There

Leaving the Hope Golf Club, cross the bridge and turn left onto 7th Avenue. Travel to the end of 7th and turn right onto Wallace Street. Follow Wallace to 6th Avenue and turn left. Follow 6th Avenue over the railway tracks and past the recreation centre, turning left onto Kawkawa Lake Road. Follow Kawkawa Lake Road over the bridge and take an immediate left at the end of the bridge, onto Union Bar Road. After a short distance, you'll see a parking lot on your right.

Hope Airpark & Jack Delair Property

The Hope Airpark has the longest grass runway in BC, at 6,000 feet in length. Birds like to drop in here too, and many species gather in the forests that line the edges of the runway. We will look for Western Kingbird, MacGillivray's Warbler and Lazuli Bunting. We'll also visit the adjacent farm owned by Jack Delair, a local naturalist whose property is a paradise for birds.

Leaders – Jude and Al Grass

Jude and Al hardly need an introduction, being, as they are, legends in the world of birding. They've been coming to Hope for many years and have an intimate knowledge of the rich birdlife found here. Jude and Al played a key role in establishing the Skagit Valley Bird Blitz.

How To Get There

Leaving the Hope Golf Club, cross the bridge and turn left onto 7th Avenue. Travel to the end of 7th and turn right onto Wallace Street. Follow Wallace to 6th Avenue and turn left. Follow 6th Avenue over the railway tracks and past the recreation centre until it ends at Old Hope-Princeton Highway. Turn right and follow Old Hope-Princeton Highway to the intersection beside the overpass. Turn left onto Flood Hope Road, travel up a hill and down into the com-

munity of Silver Creek. Stay on Flood Hope Road, passing through Silver Creek, and over an overpass that crosses the Trans-Canada Highway. Immediately after the overpass, turn sharply right onto Tobina Road and follow to Yale Road, turn left, and follow Yale Road over the railway tracks. After the tracks, turn left and follow Yale Road to Airport Road. Turn right on Airport Road and stay on it for about 1 km. Keep an eye on your left for the airpark administrative building, where you can park.

Cheam Wetland

Cheam Wetland is an FVRD park located between Hope and Chilliwack. It offers wonderful bird habitat, accessible via shoreline trails, floating walkways, and viewing platforms. In addition to wetland habitat, there is adjacent forest and trails nearby. Species to look for will be Wood Duck, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Swift and Bullock's Oriole.

Leader – TBA

How To Get There

Travel east from Hope on Highway 1 for 35 km. At Exit 138, leave the highway and turn right at the first intersection, connecting with Yale Road East. At Yale Road East, turn left and travel to Popkum Road. At Popkum Road, turn right and travel to Elgey Road. At Elgey Road, turn left and drive to

BCFO 28th AGM & CONFERENCE, June 1 – 3, 2018, Hope, BC

Cheam Lake Wetland. Total travel time from Hope is about 30 minutes.

Manning Park – Lodge, Lightning Lake, Strawberry Flats

(Also: the Alpine Lookout if access is available)

Manning Park is an excellent location for birding at a higher elevation and in the transition area to the dry interior of BC. Our first stop after leaving Hope will be the Manning Park Lodge which often has turned up some interesting birds on the surrounding grounds. We then head to the Spruce Bay parking lot and hike the trail along Lightning Lake for about an hour. Our next stop will be Strawberry Flats where we will look for higher elevation birds such as Mountain and Boreal Chickadee, American Three-toed Woodpecker and Sooty Grouse. If the road to the alpine lookout is open, we will adjust the timing at some of the stops so that we will be able to take advantage of the birding opportunities along this route. Clark's Nutcracker is usually found at the lookout.

Leader – Marian Porter

Marian is a former park naturalist at Manning Park and is very familiar with the birds in the park. She is a long-time member of the BC Field Ornithologists as well as a past president.

How to Get There

Drive east out of Hope on Highway 3, traveling for 60 km until you see Manning Park Lodge on your right. Park in the parking lot in front of the main lodge and gather there.

Vehicles will stay in a convoy as you move to various birding areas within the park.

Silver Lake

Silver Lake is a popular birding hotspot enjoyed by birders as they travel into the Skagit. You can bird the road that runs along Silver Lake's eastern shore, visit the Provincial Park on the west shore, and explore the floodplain at the lake's southern end (protected by the Nature Trust of BC). Species to look for include Harlequin Duck, Black Swift, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Black-headed Grosbeak.

Leader – TBA

How To Get There

Leaving the Hope Golf Club, cross the bridge and turn left onto 7th Avenue. Travel to the end of 7th and turn right onto Wallace Street. Follow Wallace to 6th Avenue and turn left. Follow 6th Avenue over the railway tracks and past the recreation centre until it ends at Old Hope-Princeton Highway. Turn right and follow Old Hope-Princeton Highway to the intersection beside the overpass. Turn left onto Flood Hope Road, travel up a hill and down into the community of Silver Creek. As you pass through Silver Creek, a bridge will take you over Silverhope Creek, then take the first left onto Silver Skagit Road. Follow Silver Skagit Road for 8 km until you reach Silver Lake. Eventually the road turns from pavement to gravel, but any two-wheel-drive vehicle can navigate the road. A Bailey bridge on your right takes you to the Provincial Park on Silver Lake's western shore. If you avoid the bridge and stay left, continuing to follow Silver Skagit Road, you will arrive at Silver Lake's eastern shore. Continuing south along the eastern shore, you will eventually come to the southern end of the lake where an access trail on your right takes you to the floodplain protected by the Nature Trust.

Extension Trip

Williams Lake June 3–6, 2018

Overview

We will roam the wild west with this extension trip based at Williams Lake in the Central Cariboo. Habitats explored will include agricultural, riparian, and arid mountains, in spectacular scenery along the river valleys of the Fraser and Chilcotin. The rugged terrain makes carpooling with four-wheel or all-wheel-drive vehicles highly recommended.

Possible Species

Say's Phoebe, Lazuli Bunting, Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Meadowlark, Mountain Bluebird, Horned Lark, Western Kingbird, Dusky Grouse, Long-billed Curlew, Ring-necked Pheasant, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, Cassin's Finch, Bobolink, waterfowl.

Itinerary

Sunday 1.30 pm. Meet following BCFO Conference & AGM. Drive to Williams Lake (4.5 hours direct), stopping for refreshment and birding at Horsting's Farm, Cache Creek.

Monday. Farwell Canyon (bag lunch) followed by an evening search for Common Poorwill and Flammulated Owl.

Tuesday. Morning: Alkali Lake, Dog Creek Bluffs, Gang Ranch. Bag lunch. Afternoon: Gang Ranch, Dog Creek

Bluffs, Alkali Lake. Evening: Tally-up at The Point (restaurant), Signal Point Gaming, 1640 Broadway Ave. S. 250-398-5554.

Wednesday morning. Scout Island, Mission Rd. Bag lunch or restaurant of your choice.

Maximum Participation

20 in one group.

Leaders

Adrian Leather & Brian Murland.

Fee & Registration

\$200 per person. See page 8 for registration details.

Suggested Accommodation

- Super 8, 1712 Broadway Ave. S. 250-398-8884
- The Stampede Campground, 250-398-6718, williamslakestampede@campground@gmail.com.

BCFO Two-day Trips

**Princeton
May 31–June 1, 2018**

Itinerary

Thursday morning: Kettle Valley Railway Trail. Walk by the Tulameen River to the hoodoos for grassland, riparian, and forest species, including Harlequin Duck, Lazuli Bunting and Black-headed Grosbeak.

Bag lunch (items available at Thomasina's, Save-on-Foods, Subway, and Chevron station).

Thursday afternoon: Swan Lake Sanctuary hiking trails – 57 hectares of grassland and riparian habitat. Birds include Pied-billed Grebe, Ruddy Duck, Western Meadowlark, rails.

Tally-up at The Vermilion Fork, 157 Vermilion Ave. (250-295-7711).

Friday morning: Lake tour, which could include Separation Lakes, August

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.

Ideas for future two-day trips are always welcome. Contact Adrian Leather at q-birds@xplornet.com.

Lake, and Ferguson's Pond. Species expected include waterfowl, swallows, Mountain Bluebird and Western Bluebird. Bag Lunch, or restaurant of your choice.

Friday afternoon: Drive to Hope (95 minutes direct), with birding stops en route. Manning Park is 45 minutes from Hope.

Accommodation

The guides have recommended the following for overall convenience: Canada's Best Value Inn & Suites, 169 Hwy 3. 250-295-3537.

RV/Camping options:

- Rivers Edge RV Park, 305 Sander-son Way. 250-295-6568.
- Princeton RV Campground, 365 Hwy 3. 250-295-7355.

Registration: Adrian Leather, 250-249-5561, q-birds@xplornet.com.

Trip Leaders: Ed & Cathy Lahaie.

Maximum Participants: 30 (2 x 15).

Local Organizers

Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists – see vffn.ca.

Farewell

The BCFO lost two well-known members in recent months. Both had contributed significantly to the organization.

Martin K McNicholl

Martin joined the BCFO board in the early 1990s and was editor of our journal, *BC Birds*, from 1994 to 2002, as well as a regular contributor to *BC Birding*, including acting as compiler or co-compiler of the "Upcoming Meetings and Events" column. He was also a valued member of the Awards Committee since its inception.

As a result of Martin's many contributions to ornithology, he received the Steve Cannings Award at the BCFO AGM held in Pemberton in 2014. The citation for this award was published in the September 2014 issue of *BC Birding*. An extract follows:

Martin was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on April 16, 1946, and grew up in

the Winnipeg area. He became interested in birds at a very early age, and says that his first memory of a bird, at age three, was a Common Loon yodeling as it flew over a rowboat containing Martin, his father, and his grandfather.

...Martin enrolled in a Zoology program at the University of Manitoba, and earned a bachelor's degree (Honours Zoology) in 1968. While an undergrad-

uate, he met Dr Roger Evans, who employed him one summer to do surveys of waterbirds and Sharp-tailed Grouse. He then embarked on an MSc program under Dr Evans, and completed his Master's thesis on Forster's Tern biology in 1971. For his PhD work, Martin moved to Edmonton and studied Blue Grouse (now called Sooty Grouse) biology under Dr Fred Zwickel. However, his study area, where he did research for four summers, was in the Comox Burn on Vancouver Island. Martin's PhD dissertation, which he completed in 1978, was entitled *Behavioural and Social Organization in a Population of Blue Grouse on Vancouver Island*.

After completing his PhD, Martin worked for several environmental consulting firms between BC and Ontario. From 1984 to 1987, he served as General Manager and Executive Director of the Long Point Bird Observatory, now part of Bird Studies Canada. Since moving to BC, and until recently, he has worked mainly at the Vancouver International Air-



port, first for LGL Environmental Research Associates and then with Airport Wildlife Management International, with the objective of managing birds on the airport and reducing bird hazards to aircraft.

Martin is widely known for his encyclopedic knowledge of the scientific literature of ornithology, and for his strong abilities as a writer and editor. He has published dozens of articles and short notes in scientific journals. He edited *Manitoba Bird Studies: a Bibliography of Manitoba Ornithology* (1975), and was senior editor of *A Bibliography of Alberta Ornithology* (1981), as well as *Ornithology in Ontario* (1994), a 400-page historical review of ornithology and ornithologists in Ontario. He also authored 45 entries in the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, mainly dealing with birds and natural history. Finally, for more than 30 years, he was in charge of the "Recent Literature" section of the *North American Bird Bander*.

Martin has served in many volunteer capacities, and has always been willing to donate his time to worthwhile projects and activities. Over the years, he has served on more than 30 boards and committees from BC to Ontario.

Peter Blokker

Peter, who died at the age of 84 on a trip to Europe, was well known in a number of BC communities, not least because he was an active figure in more than one pursuit. Known as an avid birder in communities including Quesnel, Prince George and Vernon, he was probably best known as a very serious speed skater. He took up speed skating when he lived in Prince George, and is remembered there partly because of his role in creating skating circuits. Needless to say, he was also a well-remembered fixture at naturalist events.

After moving to Vernon in 1992, he became a key member of the North Okanagan Naturalists, the head of their birding section, and coordinator for the Vernon CBC. Meanwhile, he started a skating club there, now known as the Vernon Vortex Speed Skating Club.

Vernon Vortex Speed Skating Team's Laura Hall and Peter Blokker dominated the recent CanAm International meet in Calgary. Peter ruled the Masters category, recording the world's top times for his age division while improving on his showings at the World Masters Championships last February.

As a master skater, Peter set ten Canadian Long Track records. He also



holds the Canadian Short Track record for the 1500 metres (age class 70-74).

A few days before his death, he had the 2017 Vernon Christmas Bird Count results published by the local media.

All in all, Peter was quite a guy. We were lucky to have had him in our midst.



LITTLE EGRET BY BARRY LANCASTER

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Compiled by Wayne C. Weber

The following meetings and other events are those that take place in BC and immediately adjacent areas or that potentially include information on birds that occur in BC. Information on additional meetings is listed in the bimonthly Ornithological Newsletter at www.birdmeetings.org and on the BIRD-NET website at 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 email address, we have included these as well; if no contact information is listed, it can be assumed that none was provided by the organization, at least not on the date when this listing was compiled. It is usually not necessary to contact a particular individual, except for scientific meetings when one is interested in making a presentation. Names and contact information for individuals are listed whenever they are available.

Mar. 16–18 – 15TH ANNUAL WINGS OVER WATER BIRDING FESTIVAL, Blaine, WA. For information, phone the Blaine Visitor Information Center at 1-800-624-3555, send an email to dharger@cityofblaine.com, or check the website at www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com.

Mar. 17 – First WESTPORT SEABIRDS pelagic birding trip of the spring from Westport, WA. Westport Seabirds will be operating about 22 trips in 2018 from February through October. For the trip schedule and other information, please check the website at westportseabirds.com.

Mar. 19–Apr. 28 – BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL, Qualicum, BC. For information, phone Robin Rivers at 1-866-288-7878 (in Greater Vancouver, 604-924-9771), email rivers@naturetrust.bc.ca, or check the festival website at brantfestival.bc.ca.

Mar. 23–25 – 21st ANNUAL OTHELLO SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL, Othello, WA. For information, check the festival website at www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org, or contact the Grant County Conservation District at 1107 South Juniper Way, Moses Lake, WA 98837 (phone 509-765-9618).

Apr. 5–7 – Joint Meeting of the ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL BIOLOGISTS (APBBC) and COLLEGE OF APPLIED BIOLOGY, Westin Wall Centre, Richmond, BC. For further information, please check the website at professionalbiology.com/professional-development-networking/annual-conference.

Apr. 5–8 – HARNEY COUNTY MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL, Burns, Oregon (near Malheur National Wildlife Refuge). For further information, check the festival website at www.migratorybirdfestival.com.

Apr. 9–14 – 136th STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Tucson, Arizona. For further information, check the AOS website at www.americanornithology.org/content/aos-2018-meeting.

Apr. 13–15 – OLYMPIC BIRD FESTIVAL, Sequim, WA. For information, visit the festival website at <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>, or contact the Dungeness River Audubon Center by phone (360-681-4076) or by email (info@olympicbirdfest.org).

Apr. 18–24 – GODWIT DAYS, Arcata, California. It's a little way away, but Godwit Days is one of the premier birding festivals in North America. For information, check the festival website at godwitdays.org.

Apr. 27–29 – 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 www.shorebirdfestival.com.

May 4–6 – TOFINO SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL, Tofino, BC. Events not all scheduled yet, but check the festival website at raincoasteducation.org/events/tofino-shorebird-festival.

May 4–6 – SKAGIT VALLEY BIRD BLITZ, Skagit Valley Provincial Park, BC. For information and to register, check the event website at hopemountain.org/programs/skagit-valley-bird-blitz-may-4-6-2018. Inquiries may be made by email to La Vern at lklassen@hopemountain.org or by phone at 604-869-1274.

May 7–13 – WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES FESTIVAL (22nd annual), Invermere, BC. For information, contact the Pynelogs Cultural Centre, PO Box 2633, Invermere, BC V0A 1K0, phone 1-855-342-2473, email info@wingsovertherockies.org, or check the website at www.wingsovertherockies.org.

May 10–13 – BC NATURE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Vancouver, BC, hosted by Nature Vancouver. For information and to register, check the BC Nature website at www.bcnature.ca, or phone Betty Davison at the BC Nature office (phone 604-985-3057; email manager@bcnature.ca).

May 11–13 – CRESTON VALLEY BIRD FEST, Creston, BC. For information and to register, please visit the festival website at www.crestonvalleybirds.ca.

May 17–20 – LEAVENWORTH SPRING BIRD FEST, Leavenworth, WA. For information, email info@leavenworthspringbirdfest.com or check the festival website at www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com.

May 17–21 – MEADOWLARK NATURE FESTIVAL, Penticton, BC. For information, please check the festival website at meadowlarkfestival.ca. A complete schedule of events will be posted, and registration will begin on April 14th.

June 1–3 – BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Hope, BC. For further information see pages 7–10 of this publication or check the BCFO website (bcfo.ca). Online registration will begin on April 1st.

June 7–11 – WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY annual conference, Hood River, Oregon. For information, visit the website at wos.org/annual-conference/current-year.

June 7–9 – WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY annual meeting at the Chattanooga Convention Centre, Chattanooga, Tennessee. For further information, check the website at wilsonsociety.org/meetings/2018-meeting.

June 7–9 – ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS annual meeting, jointly with Wilson Ornithological Society, at Chattanooga, Tennessee. For information, check the AFO website at afonet.org/wp_english/meetings.

June 15–17 – MANNING PARK BIRD BLITZ, Manning Provincial Park, BC (based at Loneduck Campground on Lightning Lake). For information and to register, check the website at hopemountain.org/programs/manning-park-bird-blitz-june-15-17-2018. Inquiries may be made by email to La Vern at lklassen@hopemountain.org or by phone at 604-869-1274.

Aug. 19–20 – ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WATERBIRD SOCIETY, Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC (in conjunction with the IOC). For details, check the society website at waterbirds.org/annual-meeting.

Aug. 19–26 – 27th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Vancouver, BC. This gathering of ornithologists from all over the world is a “must” for anyone with a scientific interest in birds. For information and to register, please visit the IOC website at www.iocongress2018.com.

Sept. 14–16 – PUGET SOUND BIRD FESTIVAL, Edmonds, WA. For information and to register (starting Aug. 1), check the festival website at www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org, or

contact Jennifer Leach at the City of Edmonds Parks Dept. (phone 425-771-0227), or email her at jennifer.leach@edmondswa.gov.

Sept. 16 – PELAGIC BIRDING TRIP from Ucluelet, BC on the MV “Frances Barkley”, organized by Nature Alberta. Tickets may be purchased at www.eventbrite.ca/e/nature-alberta-pelagic-trip-tickets-41032135221. For additional info, questions, comments or concerns, please contact the pelagic trip coordinator, James Fox at NApelagic@yahoo.com.

Sept. 26–30 – ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS at Ventura, California. For further details, check the WFO website at www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php.

Sept. 28–30 – ANNUAL MEETING OF OREGON BIRDING ASSOCIATION, Garibaldi, OR (near Tillamook). For details and to register, check the Oregon Birding Association website (www.orbirds.org) at a later date.

Oct. 7–11 – 25TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, Cleveland, Ohio. For information, check the TWS conference page at wildlife.org/2018-conference.

Dec. 14 to Jan. 5 (2019) – CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS. For information on dates of counts and contact information for count organizers, check the BCFO website in November and December, or check the December issue of *BC BIRDING*.

Below: A painting of a Black-throated Gray Warbler by BCFO Young Birder Viktor Vandereyk.





Young Birders Program

Just after this newsmagazine was initially completed it had to be pulled from the cyber-presses because of the news that Adam Dhalla (above), a 12-year-old BCFO Young Birder from Coquitlam, had been named one of the two ABA Young Birders of the Year. His award from the ABA includes a Leica Trinovid binocular – a step up from the plaque, spiffy hat, and free BCFO membership he gained from us.

But as a pleasing coincidence, Adam had just sent this magazine a terrific essay, which appears below.

Last-Minute Stocking Stuffers

Adam Dhalla

December 23, 2017

Christmastime was coming soon, and so were winter vagrants. But, it seemed as though the Summer Tanager (still here) would be the biggest thing this season and not much more was going to show up.

Close to home there was a Rufous Hummingbird, quite the rarity for this time of year, at a feeder in Port Moody. Thanks to the owner of the house, we were allowed to enter and we got to see

the little Rufous. Hopefully he/she will survive the winter – I have a feeling that it will, since I saw many people hanging their feeders out. Maybe this Rufous was a symbol of good luck! We got to see it twice before we decided to do some road birding.

“Road birding” doesn’t need a thorough explanation – it’s birding from a car. Pitt Meadow gives optimal road birding possibilities with the extensive backroads and bird habitat to explore. In fact, we have found many species here with this technique. It’s a good fallback for rainy days.

From what we saw, I think that it may have been, well, a slow day in Pitt Meadows. Except for a few eagles and Red-tailed Hawks there was no sign of the reported Prairie Falcon or Gyrfalcon. It’s okay, though, since we saw both earlier this year. This is the third year the PRFA has returned to Pitt Meadows (around Sharpe Road) and it seems as though the Gyrfalcons come back as well. Oh well.

We had lunch and then my dad remembered that a few weeks ago I learned about a small colony of Indian Peafowl in Surrey. It sounded far-fetched but there were multiple news articles about one nesting on someone’s doorstep. So we decided to head to Sullivan Heights, Surrey.

After a long drive to Sullivan Heights, we were perplexed. When we got to the neighbourhood, where the high school was, we couldn’t see any peacocks. There were at least 15 different townhouse complexes in the area,

which we decided to search one by one. First one: no. Second one: no. Third one: no. It continued for a while. Sullivan Ridge, Sullivan Parkway, but no peacocks. We parked on the side of the road, defeated. What would we do?

We decided to search the interwebs for any hints on how to find them. After a thorough Internet search we found an exact location – the crossing of 150 Avenue and 62 Street. So we headed there. We talked to a man walking his dogs (dog walker = local!) and he said that he just saw one a short walk from where we were. We said thanks and drove towards where he said they were when BOOM a flash of blue appeared on top of a townhouse roof.

We panicked and went down the street, parked and got out of the car with camera and winter clothing. We walked to the place we saw it, and there it was, a beautiful male peacock on top of a black-shingled roof, which is, uh, interesting behaviour for an Indian Peafowl. Being one of the most iconic birds in the world, the peacock didn’t think much of us and continued to sunbathe on the sun-drenched rooftop of an unsuspecting homeowner.

Many people we talked to are used to a life with peacocks. We talked and heard many people saying “Oh, there’s the peacocks again” and many people just walked past peacocks on the ground without acting surprised whatsoever. According to some news articles, in the early 2000s when Sullivan Heights was just farmland, a farm owner owned a small flock of peacocks.

Once the buildings came, the farmer decided to release the peacocks since he/she didn't have enough land for them anymore. Turns out they stuck in the area, and now have a full-blown mini-population, which now has successfully bred in the wild at least one time. Some homeowners loved them and some hated them, mostly for their noise and poop.

We walked down the road and spotted another male walking down the sidewalk, and right after we spotted another male and 11 females sitting on a car and a few compost bins in someone's driveway. It was crazy! They seemed not to be bothered by anyone's presence, and continued to feed on some scrumptious grass while we watched them. Another flock of females came walking down the road and before I knew it I had counted 21 peacocks. One man came up to us and told us that there were more by a nearby elementary school, about a block away, so we decided to walk there.

On our way there we saw quite the scene – one man on his doorstep with

his dog, on a leash. The dog then exploded off the doorstep, jumped down four steps and landed on the sidewalk – with the man still holding the leash. Apparently, the leash may have been a few feet too short because the dog pulled the man with him and he fell on the sidewalk. At the same time, another dog walker

was nearby. When the man fell on the ground, his dog ran off, unleashed, and began to attack the other dog and his dog walker. I swear he shouted "Garlic" multiple times in this hubbub. After the event, the first man got up and they both went on with their lives.

We then went to the school, and as soon as we entered the area I spotted 13 peacocks, which were, very surprisingly, all males. We watched them for a good amount of time, while they preened and fed. After that, we went back into the car, where we got a ridiculous report: a BLUE JAY in Richmond. And of course, we only had an hour left of daylight. Then again, it was a freaking Blue Jay.

We bolted to Richmond and got there by 3:20 pm, quicker than we expected. It was at the Woodward's Camping area, near Horseshoe Slough, in southern Richmond. When we got there, there were many birders standing outside of a metal fence. Apparently the place was closed for the season so the only views were from the outside of the gate. It was first found



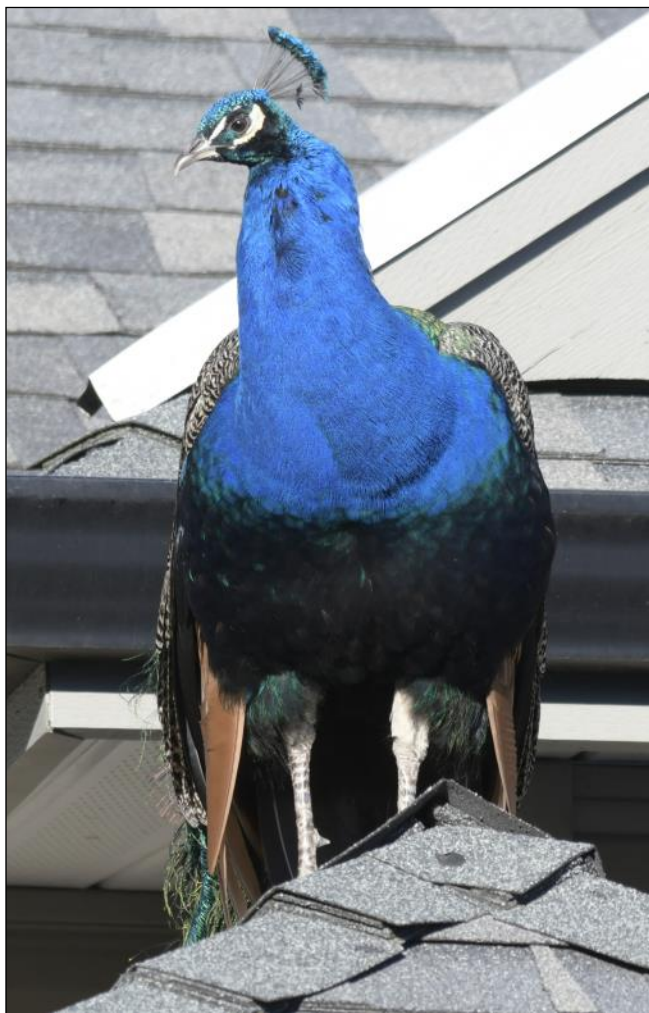
by Linda Koch earlier in the day and had been seen for an hour and a half when we got there.

The caretaker of the area has a large bird-feeding area which at least six Steller's Jays were using, while many peanuts were on the ground. When we got there, we waited. Time after time a Steller's came when we thought it was the Blue Jay, but then after two minutes, a smaller, much lighter bird flew in. It was the Blue Jay!

The Blue Jay is a very rare visitor on the West Coast of BC and even though they naturally live in areas in BC like Cranbrook and other places east of the Rockies, they are a rarity anywhere past the Rockies. It was a bird I had really, really wanted to see for a long time and it was awesome to finally see one, in Vancouver! It had a white belly and vent with a light blue back and crest and a diagnostic, easy-to-see black throat collar. It was a very cool-looking bird. It came down to the ground with us, coming quite close – sadly the dying light and fence made photography hard. It fed on the peanuts and tried to visit a tube feeder twice. It flew around the area, perching in faraway trees. Wow! It really appreciated peanuts. There were lots of rabbits around the area as well. Once it became too dark to shoot properly, we decided to leave.

Quite the day of Christmas birding.

*Blue Jay (top) and Indian Peacock
photos by Adam Dhalla.*



Welcome Visitors

Comox Valley

The Comox Valley has, unusually for the location, been seeing flocks of Common Redpolls – and, even more unusually, a Harris's Sparrow (below). Another welcome visitor was a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper hanging out with the Black-bellied Plovers and Killdeer. Notes and photo from Kathryn Clouston of Courtenay.



Quadra Island

Unexpected on Quadra were Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in the summer and then Mountain Chickadees and this Pine Grosbeak in the winter. Notes and photo from Vibeke Pederson (Heriot Bay).



Vancouver

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches are certainly not to be expected around Canada Place. This coastal Rosy is one of the recent celebrities there, photographed by Janice White.



Kootenays

Below is a Swainson's Thrush spotted in the Kootenays at a very unusual time – December 15 and 16, when it should have been somewhere between Southern Mexico and Argentina. Notes and photo from Gordon Brown (Kaslo).



Maplewood Flats

John Gordon

When I arrived at Maplewood Flats (December 2017) my spirits were high. As I made my way to the salt marsh I kept passing birder after birder heading back to their cars. There were smiles all around, that meant only one thing... they had seen *the bird*. The bird in question was the Northern Goshawk that had been well reported and first found by Perry Edwards a week previously. The Northern Goshawk is a bird rarely seen in Metro Vancouver. I had only ever seen one before; the chance to view another was high on my year list.

Arriving at the salt marsh I met another birder who motioned that the bird had just flown. He pointed to a tree way off in the distance but I couldn't see anything. It was time to catch my breath.

Any birder will know that sinking feeling, the abject disappointment when the seeker just misses the quarry.

I spent ten minutes at the salt marsh, but with nothing happening I decided to search elsewhere. Walking along the trail to the big pond I found the bird high up in a poplar. The view was obstructed but shooting through a tiny opening allowed me to get a decent "keeper" shot.

However, the bird was soon on the

move, flying at great speed through the forest about twenty feet above the ground, an amazing experience. It moved so fast that I lost contact within seconds. It reminded me of one of those Robert Bateman paintings, a special moment when time seems frozen. I don't think I'll ever forget that scene, something a camera would never be able to capture.

I continued my way back to the bridge and the car park thinking about my experience when just above me I noticed a dark shape – it was the goshawk again, but facing away from me. I watched and admired and then walked slowly under the bird (Kung Fu walking on rice paper style) to get a frontal view. It never moved. Here (below left) is the result.



Tofino

A lifer for many: this Laysan Albatross was photographed by Mark Yunker on a pelagic trip.

in as many years. It was a welcome addition to many birders' Vancouver list.

Richmond

This Blue Jay appeared during the Richmond December 23, 2017 Christmas Bird Count. A Metro Vancouver rarity, the species has been seen only a dozen times

Northern Goshawk (left) and Blue Jay (bottom) photos by John Gordon.



The Unexpected

Six-Pack Fitness

Barry Lancaster, normally of Oliver, but currently in Teneriffe, has been following the welfare of a juvenile Yellow-legged Gull, which he has understandably named Six-pack. The youngster has got itself tangled in some beer-can packaging – all those warnings about cutting the plastic up before discarding have clearly gone on some deaf ears.

Barry notes that while the bird is now unable to peck, it seems to have learned to cope, and is eating regularly, at least while it hangs around a fish stall. It bathes regularly, though whether it can preen is moot.

Attempts to get locals to help capture the bird, in order to remove the plastic, have not met with success to date.



Leucistic Bald Eagle

The leucistic Bald Eagle reported in the March 2017 edition has returned.

On the last day of 2016, then-new BCFO member Janice White (Langley) spotted and photographed this remarkable bird. One year on, the bird returned to Boundary Bay, and again Janice managed to get a



Smart Bird

The enterprising Black-capped Chickadee below was spotted by Lee Harding (Coquitlam) as it used a homemade ant trap for drinking and bathing. The tin was supposed to be used to keep ants out of a hummingbird feeder, but the bird had different ideas.



good photograph.

She was curious to see any changes in the plumage, and compared the latest photographs to those from the previous year. The most notable change was in the bill colour, which is now mostly yellow, while the head is less buffy in coloration with a patch of clear white.

Top: Yellow-legged Gull by Barry Lancaster. Left: Black-capped Chickadee by Lee Harding, Above: Bald Eagle by Janice White.

Southern Travels

Gordon Brown

Arizona, Ten Miles From Mexico

Having failed to get away from the RV park in Patagonia as early as we'd hoped, it was 9:00 by the time Jeannie and I finally got to the famed Sonoita Creek path at Patagonia Lake (see the opening pages of Mark Obmascik's *The Big Year* – and no, we didn't get a Nutting's Flycatcher). Almost immediately, we met an elderly gentleman birder who knew the entire Southwest like the back of his hand, and proved to be one of those who loved expanding the birding experience of others. He introduced us to the Henderson Bird Ponds (who knew there was actually a good reason to go to Las Vegas?); Mary Jo's birding mecca, Ash Canyon Bed and Breakfast in the Huachuca Mountains south of Sierra Vista; and the Sunday morning guided tour of the Sierra Vista sewage ponds (sounds magical, doesn't it?).

In response to my grumbling about having missed a male Northern Cardinal moments before, he told us good photo opportunities for that bird could be had when the feeders were filled at the Patagonia Lake State Park visitor centre. So, of course, we presented later that day on the appointed hour and scored a parking spot right beside the observation area. As I got out of the camper, I saw a lady and her teenage daughter walking an especially beautiful merle collie. Being unable to do otherwise, I went to meet them and asked if I might be introduced to the dog. I was, but before I'd even managed to get down on one knee the girl asked if we were interested in birds; I'm not sure I'd fully articulated the "yes" before she wondered if we'd like to see a Rufous-backed Robin. I'm sure I must have stammered something, but had only time enough to grab camera and binos before Jeannie and I were marshalled off to search an area where they'd found the bird earlier in the day. Feeders and cardinals were forgotten. Her name was Amara and I'm guessing

she was about fourteen. We've come to know some very informed birders in recent years, and this young lady is already arcing toward the best of them. She said the robin was often seen in the company of a Hermit Thrush and was partial to junipers, so we set out into a riparian tangle of hackberry, buckthorn and mesquite looking for both.

She led us over the marina bridge and progressively further afield until we were bushwhacking into ravines

which only a week earlier were almost certainly full of rattlesnakes. Frankly, I wasn't all that confident of their departure. Finally, the going got so rough that Jeannie, mother, and dog hung back in a little clearing from which Amara and I ventured further. After a scramble of only another twenty yards, Amara, finger on lips, froze and pointed. My line of sight wasn't as good, and I got nothing but the back end of a thrush; the robin had been there, but departed almost immediately. Fortunately, it flew back toward the rest of our troop where Jeannie spotted it, this time in the company of a female Cardinal (which none of us had seen until the images were on the monitor). In dense thicket and backlit by regrettably dappled sunlight, it stayed just long enough to allow a couple of difficult record shots. But, that's birding. It was still a great experience: a rare sighting for which the kindness of others was wholly responsible. We can't help but think that in years to come the ornithological world will hear a good deal more from Amara. Our experience would seem to suggest she'll be a force with which to be reckoned.



The very Rufous-backed Robin. Photos by Gordon Brown.

desert, half way between Deming and Silver City, New Mexico. It's now a spectacular campground and a very rewarding birding destination. We've camped there a number of times over the years and had always been lucky enough to secure a campsite with the electrical hook-up so essential to battery charging and coffee grinding. Not this time. But, as Jeannie had long expressed a desire to camp instead out among the magical rock formations, this time she got her wish.

Birding at City of Rocks has always been very satisfying; it's a place where Cactus Wrens will gladly access an open camper door looking for tortilla chip crumbs (or "illegal alien" stowaway BC cedar bugs).

There have always been Roadrunners, Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Loggerhead Shrikes, Say's Phoebe, Western Bluebirds, Canyon Towhees, and the inevitable Black-throats, White-crowns, and Red-tails.

This time however, a special treat lay in store. A meadowlark appeared the second morning we awoke in the nonelectric site. Across the road, a less-monolithic rock was very close to an occupied campsite, so birds perched on it the previous afternoon had not been photographically pursued out of respect for the camper's privacy. On this morning however, I realized we were seeing something unusual. The binoculars said "meadowlark," but the bird was somehow different. As the occupants of the

Lillian's and the City of Rocks

Foundations for the City of Rocks State Park were laid 34.9 million years ago when volcanic eruptions deposited the

camper had yet to put in an appearance, I grabbed the camera and began my approach. Predictably, the bird left before I got as close as I'd have wished, so only a couple of "portraits" and some out-of-focus flight shots were recorded.

A short time later we were sitting at the picnic table, over a second cup (I'd ground some beans at the visitor's centre), when the campground host and park ranger drove up. They stopped to visit, and when the subject of birds came up it quickly became apparent the ranger was an ornithological specialist. I told him I'd just photographed a meadowlark that wasn't a Western and didn't quite seem typically Eastern, at which he laughed and said, "It's neither – it's a Lillian's." He then said the bird was on the cusp of being recognized as a separate species, and would be once Clements Checklist and the IOC World Bird List had finally got around to formalizing it.

The host was also a birder, and



asked me if I'd seen the Scrambled Quail. I provided the blank look I'm sure was expected, so he went on to explain that the Scaled/Gambel's intergrade was called the "scrambled." Walking to the visitor's centre, we'd probably flushed the flock more than once without realizing what we were seeing. He also told us that on the previous day a Roadrunner had done an extended "happy dance" on a bare area beside what was to become our third-night electrical site. Sadly, there was no repeat performance; gladly, nor was there for the five-foot Prairie Rattler seen stretched across a path I'd walked the day before.

The City of Rocks experience ended with another lovely birding moment. We attended a late evening presentation

by the New Mexico State Parks Astronomical Observatory which has a 14-inch Meade telescope with monitor hook-up permanently on site; this location has some of the least light-polluted and most contrail-free skies in the lower forty-eight. At dusk, about thirty campers had assembled in the shallow box canyon housing the Orion Loop group sites and the telescope building. As we sat and stood around in the waning light waiting for workable darkness, I happened to look west to the head of the canyon and saw an unmistakable silhouette: a Great Horned Owl was looking down at us from the top of the rock. I had just enough time to get everyone's attention before the bird took off and flew right over us, down the canyon and out to the open desert beyond the rocks. Later, the ranger told us the owls have nested in the trees growing tight between the rocks for much longer than records have been kept.

On any Southwest trip we set a goal of finding new birding experiences, but inevitably can't help revisiting most of our favourite locations as well. A bit out of the way, like Kaslo, City of Rocks is a jewel and especially rewarding once the commitment has been made.

Trusty Caracara

If you're leaving the Gilbert Ray campground just west of Tucson and need to find a grocery store before heading farther west to find Organ Pipe National Monument and a Harris's Hawk, don't expect to find Tina's Market where the Google map leads you to believe it will be. In fact there won't be any markets at all; expect nothing but cactus and mesquite. And, fifty-nine miles later, when you find yourself in the middle of the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation you can't help but think there might have been a better course of action. But don't despair, because at that moment the town of Sells presents itself and promises a Bashas' Grocery. The wise birder, or ordinary traveller with more rational sensibilities, will take this option not only because the store actually exists – although the department signage on the walls is of another language written in a different alphabet – but also because a native family plies its lunch trade out in the plaza courtyard. The "Indian" tacos and burgers,

surrounded by fresh fry bread "popovers," are wonderful. Best to have your own water though, because the canned soft drinks are unchilled and prove instant wasp magnets once opened.

When you leave town after lunch, retracing your route back to the highway intersection and find yourself stopped, respecting the sign, be sure to check the huge dead tree beside the houses directly across the highway. That's where the magnificent Crested Caracara was perched, imperturbably watching the proceedings. I'd have asked permission, but as there wasn't anyone around I took a chance trespassing on native land to get the shots. I had expected someone would suddenly appear and challenge me, but it didn't happen and I was lucky enough to escape with the photos and deeply felt gratitude.

Although the bird is uncommon, we'd spotted another from the car just an hour earlier. We doubled back but couldn't locate it, and so were thrilled with this much better second chance. It continues to amaze me that we'd made about ten trips into this bird's typical habitat before it decided to reveal itself. Of course the same can be said of the trip's thirteen other "new" birds, but that's birding.

Left: Lillian's Meadowlark. Below: Crested Caracara. Photos by Gordon Brown.



CBC 2017

Audubon Data

The Audubon Society reports that 1,634 official Christmas Bird Counts were completed in 2017, tallying 36,455,144 birds.

Bird Count Mania

Gareth Pugh

Is it manic to want to take part in four CBCs? I know my better half thinks so, her opinion of birding being much the same as my opinion of shopping. This year I took part in the Ladner, Alouette, Vancouver and White Rock Counts and a number of our well-known local birders were at all of those as well so I knew I was in good company.

The Alouette Count took place on December 16 with my team covering the southwest portion in North Surrey. We met in the parking lot at the Barnston Island ferry on a cold, damp morning, but no rain, and all commented on how much better it was than the previous year's snow and ice conditions. Due to illness, vacations etc., we were a small group of five taking the ferry to Barnston where we spent the morning walking the road around the island in two groups, each walking a kilometre at a time leap-frogging each other with Al Achulze driving for us. The morning was very successful with several Ring-necked Pheasants and a Northern Shrike being good sightings. Absent this year was the large number of Canada Geese usually seen here but we did see about eighty decoys set out in one field so hunting may well be the reason.

Back across the river we stopped at Surrey Bend Park to have lunch and decide what areas to focus on in the afternoon. We split into three groups and had an average count as the day quietened down, the major highlight being a large number of Common Ravens which appeared to be flying to roost.

For the Ladner count, a week later, the weather was again dry. Our team for Area D, led by Peter Candido, met at the Delta Airport and had a very good turnout so we were able to cover the area much more thoroughly than in past

years. Two groups covered the dyke while the rest of us walked the roads, covering all the area south of the Highway. We stopped for lunch at the Airport to summarise the morning's sightings and reshuffle our teams as some participants had to leave. We split into two groups for the afternoon and completed the whole area before meeting to assemble all the records. We finished with a total of 67 species, our highest-ever total for that area. Highlight birds were Common Redpoll, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Long-eared Owl, Northern Shrike and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

The following day I joined George Clulow's team for the Burnaby Lake part of the Vancouver Count, and what a miserable day it was, raining all day. As a result most birds were keeping out of sight but we did have some good moments including finding a mixed flock of around 70 Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls feeding in the birch trees. We were very lucky at lunch time as we were allowed to stay inside the lobby of the Rowing Club pavilion and plan the afternoon.

After lunch we walked part of the Burnaby Lake trail on the south side of the lake before heading back to our cars. George had intended to go to count the crows at their regular roosting spot but told me later even he decided not to do so which shows how bad the conditions were.

My final count was White Rock for which I am the compiler and this year the weather cooperated. We had a dry day with sunny periods, so a good day for birding. Due to the ice storm that had swept through the valley from Abbotsford eastwards one area did not get covered but otherwise the day went very well. My own area that covers Blaine and Drayton Harbour was productive, although we ended up with 4,000 sightings and three species less than the previous year. As for the overall count, total sightings were around 6,000 lower than the previous year but total numbers of Mallard and Dunlin were down by around 19,000, so the final result was much better than we had hoped. Highlights were a Snowy Owl far inland, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Redhead and White-winged Crossbill. Another highlight was the increase in the number of feeder watchers, more than double the previous year, who made a very useful contribution.

The day, and my CBC year, ended

with the usual get-together over a light supper at the Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club where participants had the opportunity to discuss how the day went and make suggestions for future counts. One thing that I have learned is that the more participants we can get out, the better our results, so I have asked all those who took part this year to make an effort to "bring a buddy" next year. I am very fortunate also to have two colleagues who prepare very good press releases for all the local papers which definitely increased the number of counters and feeder watchers this year.



The Snowy Owl. Photo by Bob Puls.

CBC Distraction

Gary Davidson

Erin and I were standing beside the Nakusp sewage lagoons watching several goldeneye. I guess we got a little too close because most of them flushed. I continued to watch the couple that stayed and suddenly Erin said, "What is that?" I had no idea what she had seen but she said a raptor appeared to go down into the snow on the other side of the road. (We had had almost 30 cm of soft powder snow the day before.) We walked toward the area and soon saw a large bird mostly buried in the snow: a Northern Goshawk. It struggled to get up out of the snow and eventually made it. We still weren't sure exactly what had happened until a Common Goldeneye popped up out of the snow a couple of metres away from the goshawk. The goldeneye was having trouble with the

snow and was totally unable to fly off despite being apparently healthy. The goshawk managed to close the gap on the duck by flapping across the snow but every time it tried to grasp the prey it sank below the snow. This continued, the duck flapping across the snow with the hawk in pursuit. The duck eventually made a fatal mistake when it went underneath a small structure mounted above the ground. Now the duck was on solid ground and the goshawk had no trouble subduing it. As much as we would have liked to stay and watch, we had a CBC to finish! The last we saw was the goshawk partially hidden underneath the structure (below), but with its prey firmly under control.



Above: A painting ("Hooded Merganser with Scarf") by young birder Cedar Forest was appropriate to the CBC for Kids.



Below: Fifteen kids turned out for the CBC for Kids held in Delta on December 17. The half-day count tallied 46 species, including a very late Barn Swallow and a Glaucous Gull. After the count, some spotted a lifer Summer Tanager. Melissa Hafting photo.



In the Media

Viral Tanager

The story of Vancouver's Summer Tanager went viral across Canada, following a *Vancouver Sun* report on the bird on December 11. The previous day, John Gordon (Surrey) had taken a photo used in the *Sun* account and elsewhere, and spoken to the reporter. John notes that a Summer Tanager appearing in a Canadian winter was splendidly reminiscent of Stuart MacLean's "The Bird" from *The Christmas Vinyl Café*. It's well worth hearing at:

[beta.prx.org/stories/33450?
play=true](http://beta.prx.org/stories/33450?play=true)

BCFO Member Featured

The *Agassiz-Harrison Observer* ran a long story on Murray Brown in its January 24, 2018 edition. The following are amended extracts:

...A lot of birders don't pick up the hobby until later in life – post-retirement even. But Agassiz resident Murray Brown took an interest in birds when he was just a kid.

At nine years old he spotted his "spark bird," a Red-winged Blackbird that would start a lifelong obsession with winged creatures around the world.... his fascination only grew. Brown's field guide contains "a lifetime worth of ticks;" 425 birds positively identified in BC, 462 for Canada and 600 in total for North America.

...Brown himself is an active member of the online birding world and receives daily email updates to stay on top of the newest trends and discoveries. He is also a member of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO), a non-profit encouraging the study, preservation and enjoyment of BC's wild birds.

Despite the modernization of an age-old pastime, Brown hasn't stopped recording his birds by hand. Pages of ticks illustrate his dedication to bird discovery and a deep appreciation for the region's biodiversity. It's as if Brown is collecting the birds, despite the fact that all he has to show for each



PHOTOS

Left: Another photographer succeeding in getting a fine shot of the Summer Tanager was Ken Willis, one of whose shots appears to the left.

Below: The shot of Murray Brown used to accompany the feature in the Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

... But aside from the glory and adrenaline of finding a new species, the fundamental purpose of birding is conservation.

Brown recalls how, when he first moved to

Agassiz, a three-acre parcel of land next to his home housed a miniature ecosystem.

Amidst the bush, plants and grasses sat massive, broad-leaved maple trees and one hawthorn. A tiny stream next to the fence contributed to the thriving biodiversity developing right next to human life.

"Consequently those bits of habitat

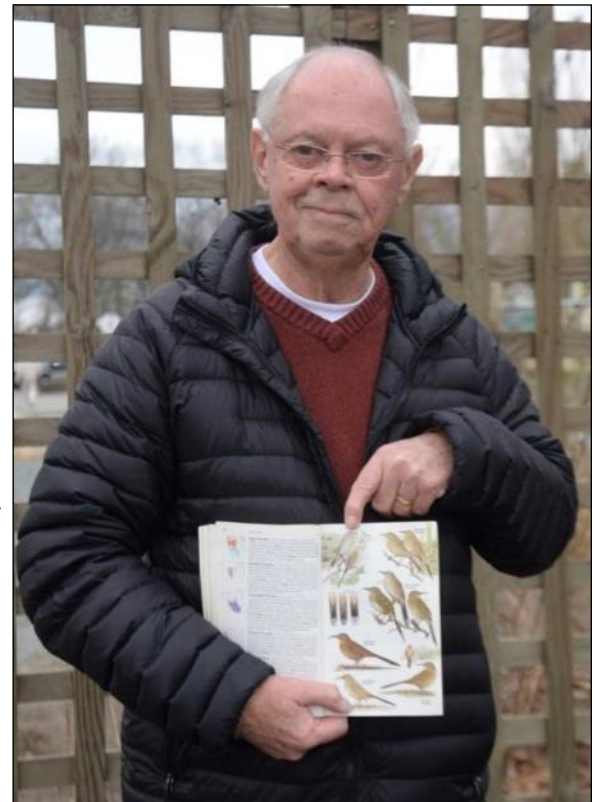
find is a penciled tick and sometimes a photo.

From Eurasian Collared-Doves and Calliope Hummingbirds to Golden-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Brown has seen (almost) all there is to see and has no plans of stopping. He said his 425 BC birds are impressive, but shy in comparison to some of the birders he's met.

"In BC, if you've seen 400 birds...that's a milestone, that's a benchmark. You can pretty much relax after that; you don't need to prove yourself anymore.... I've got 425 and even though that's worth bragging about, I meet people occasionally who have 471 or 478....

One of his favourite finds happened in spring 2011 when he wasn't looking for birds at all. While walking his cockapoo near the boat launch in Harrison, Brown saw a Sage Thrasher, a bird that is rarely, if ever, recorded outside of Sage Brush Country – Washington, Arizona or Oregon.

"It was very uncommon," Brown recalled. "I immediately went online and spread the word. Within hours there were people coming up from Vancouver with binoculars and cameras to see if I was accurate."



draw the birds. Particularly during migration I started keeping a list of the birds I saw – a yard list – you record any bird from your yard that you can identify.”

But about ten years after Brown moved next door, a multi-family complex was built over the miniature ecosystem.

The final bird noted in his yard book was a falcon recorded in January, 2017.

“It occurred to me, this is what habitat loss looks like. I’m witnessing it firsthand,” he said. “[The land] used to have coyotes running around in it. Now it houses humans, period.”

Brown says birding groups around the country hope to educate others on

habitat loss and lobby municipalities and developers to consider habitats when zoning or building.

“My mission or mandate now is to try to encourage people to appreciate what we have left because there are species disappearing very rapidly.”

Briefings

M Church

1. How Vulnerable Are Birds to Climate Change?

Birds and all other organisms are adapted to particular environmental conditions – those that provide the conditions and resources for them to thrive. As the most mobile of organisms, one supposes that birds may simply move to new areas to find those conditions as climate changes. To some degree that happens: we note range extensions and contractions in individual species, and migrants may turn up in particular places at different times of year than previously. But there may be some limit to the adaptive potential of an organism – some genetically hard-wired constraint on their propensity to alter their behaviour appropriately – such as changing their breeding schedule. A group of researchers has combined genetic analyses with global-climate predictions and population trends of the Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechial*) to gain insight into this question.

The Yellow Warbler is a suitable candidate for study. It is widely distributed in North America, occupying habitats that range from marsh and forest to urban parkland and gardens, and including a wide range in altitude in the mountains. Using DNA samples from 229 birds collected from all parts of their summer range, the investigators correlated population-level genetic variation with 25 environmental variables.

The leading correlated environmental factors were all related to precipitation, the top three being precipitation in the warmest and driest quarters of the year, and precipitation seasonality. Among the leading 16 indicators, eight were associated with precipitation and eight with temperature. This makes sense: these are factors that strongly

influence bird habitat, including vegetation (cover) and food resources.

To study the adaptive potential of the birds, the investigators examined the correlation between those top three precipitation indicators and the birds’ genetic character. They found that the strongest associations with climate parameters appeared on genes associated with migration and with exploratory or novelty-seeking behaviour. They were thereby able to construct a regional “vulnerability to change” index based on these associations and regional variations in the birds’ genotypes. They compared this index with observed changes in Yellow Warbler occurrence extracted from breeding bird surveys and were able to demonstrate some similarity in the spatial patterns. This suggests, first, that the index has predictive capacity and, second, that they may already to some extent suffering the effects of climate change.

The predictive index and the breeding bird data both show that birds are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change – in particular to changes in precipitation regime – along the East Coast and Appalachian Mountains, and in the Western Cordillera. They are particularly vulnerable in the American Southwest and in British Columbia. Perhaps this is because, in the apparently less vulnerable continental interior, birds are already adapted to more extreme conditions. The breeding bird records reveal a pattern broadly

similar to that of the predictive index, but with spotty losses across the entire continent. Presumably land use and land cover changes, not directly climate driven, also factor into the birds’ fortunes.

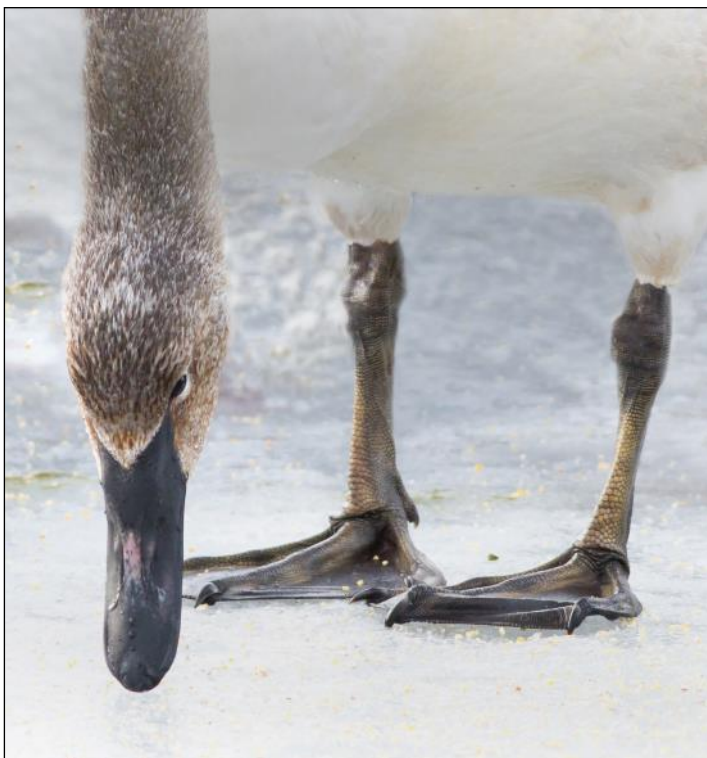
To improve predictions of likely changes, both regionally and through time, of animal populations in the decades ahead, analyses of this sort – incorporating measures of animal behavioural adaptability – will need much further development.

References

Bay, RA, Harrigan, RJ, Underwood, V Li, Gibbs, HL, Smith, TB and Ruegg, K, 2018. “Genomic signals of selection predict climate-driven population declines in a migratory bird.” *Science* 359: 83–86.

Fitzpatrick, MJ and Edelsparre, AH, 2018. “Commentary: the genomics of

Below: A different view of a Trumpeter Swan, by Rick Howie (Kamloops).



2. Instant Bird

Darwin's finches of the Galapagos Islands are the most famous example of speciation by natural selection. Natural selection takes many generations and a long time to be accomplished. But now, biologists have documented an example of essentially instantaneous speciation involving – of course – Darwin's finches.

In 1981, a male Large Cactus Finch (*Geospiza conirostris*) arrived on Daphne Major, a decidedly minor Galapagos islet lying just off Santa Cruz Island. How or why this happened is not clear. The bird originated on Española, more than 100 km away. Perhaps it was storm-blown. Lacking a conspecific mate on Daphne Major, it shackled up with a Medium Ground Finch (*G. fortis*). The pair produced hybrid offspring who, with one exception, have subsequently bred only with each other and with their descendants. All this was observed and recorded by Rosemary and Peter Grant – ecologists who have made distinguished careers out of studying Darwin's finches – and their collaborators.

The genetic basis of this hybridization event was such that it would have been possible for the offspring to mate with the parent species (technically, it was a "homoploid" speciation event). Such interbreeding would cause succeeding generations to collapse back into one or other of the parent species. So, for the new species to persist, it was necessary for the offspring to experience effective reproductive isolation from the parent species. How does one achieve that on a 0.34 km² islet that is teeming with *G. fortis*?

It turns out that body size, bill size and male song are key factors in the finches' mate selection ritual. The hybrid birds are characteristically intermediate in size between the large *G. conirostris* and the smaller *G. fortis* (since that made them stand out amongst the local finches, they have become known as "Big Birds"). They also possess the large bill of the ancestral father and they have learned his song (the pattern in all of Darwin's finches). So the Big Birds have no trouble remaining faithful to their lineage when choosing mates. This, of course, has resulted in a highly inbred population, but it has nevertheless remained a highly fit one, as demonstrated by their breeding success.

And what about competitive survival

amongst all those ground finches? Well, the larger bill of the Big Birds enables them to crack larger, tougher seed cases than the ground finches, so that their diet is different than that of the ground finches; they occupy a different ecological niche, a key factor in times of environmental stress (such as commonly occurring droughts).

At last count (2012) there were 23 Big Birds, including 8 breeding pairs. By any standard, they remain a critically endangered population. They could be extinct now. But even if so they will remain prominent in biological history. They represent the only proven case of successful homoploid speciation amongst vertebrate animals. Other cases involve *Heliconius* butterflies and three species of *Helianthus* sunflowers. Most successful hybrid speciations entail a genetic variation whereby the offspring are reproductively isolated from the founding parents and, of course, many hybridizations are sterile. This opens an interesting question in evolution; if homoploid hybridization is more common than heretofore expected, the evolution of species might proceed much more rapidly than currently understood.

References

Lamichhany, S, Fan, H, Webster, MT, Andersson, L Grant, BR and Grant, PR, 2018. "Rapid hybrid speciation in Darwin's finches." *Science* 359: 224-227.

Wagner, CE, 2018. Commentary: *Improbable Big Birds*. Ibid. 157-159.

3. More Instant Birds

The Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) is a specialist of northern hemisphere coniferous forests, peculiarly adapted via its distinctive bill to extract its principal food – the seeds of coniferous trees – from their cones. The birds are irregular migrants or irruptive in behaviour, travelling in large flocks and settling wherever they find abundant seed sources. They breed when they find assured seed supplies at almost any time between December or January and October.

Students of these birds have identified distinctive characteristics and habits among different populations of crossbills. An individual population appears to specialize for its seeds on a particular conifer species and the birds accordingly vary in physical character-

istics and behaviour. For example, birds living in fir/hemlock forests have a relatively easy time extracting seeds from the soft cones of the firs; accordingly, their bills are of moderate size and strength. In contrast, birds relying on the pine forests farther south, cones of which are tight and strong, have larger and heavier mandibles and are, overall, larger, more robust birds. In addition, the birds' beak length appears to be adapted to the length required to extract seeds from their favourite cone. It has been noted that these different populations also have distinctive flight and alarm calls and that they do not generally interbreed, even when they form combined flocks (though mixed pairs have been found). Altogether, the various populations constitute decidedly distinct phenotypes. (A "phenotype" is defined on the basis of the bird's physical character and its behaviour.) These distinctive phenotypes have been categorized as "types," nine of which are recognized in North America. The many different "types" found in Europe have been assigned subspecific status but no such decision has been made here.

So a nagging question arises: are these "types" in fact also distinct genotypes (i.e., are they distinct, genetically), and so different species?

Enter Craig Benkman, an ecologist at the University of Wyoming who is probably the leading contemporary authority on the crossbills. He has identified and studied an isolated population of crossbills on the South Hills and Albion Mountains of southern Idaho. Exceptionally, this population is resident and appears to be specialized to extract seeds from the large cones of the Ponderosa Pines of these hills. Since the forest is also isolated, the birds have no incentive to travel. After much work, Benkman has demonstrated by genetic analysis that these birds clearly are a distinct species. Speciation in this case is probably the consequence of the reproductive isolation of this unusual, sedentary population. Accordingly, it was proposed that the birds be named, formally, *Loxia sinesciurus**, and, commonly, "Cassia Crossbill" (after the county where they are found). This created a truly instant bird by human decision. The situation makes more urgent the question of status of the other eight "types."

The newly-minted Cassia Crossbill is already in trouble. There being only a

few thousand of them, they are a highly endangered species. Benkman speculates that they may be a very recent product of natural selection, evolved only within the last six thousand years with the Idaho Ponderosa Pines, which themselves have been established in the region only since the mid-Holocene epoch. Now, with contemporary climate change, the pines are expected to be gone from the Idaho hills by 2080. Will the birds then perish or will they finally move and adapt?

(Crossbills in general are declining at a rate of about 2.5% per year in North America, the consequence of forest harvesting and the spread of introduced squirrels, that are effective competitors for the food resource.)

**Sinesciurus* means “without squirrels:” the absence of squirrels in the Idaho Ponderosa Pines is probably an important factor in the development and persistence of the Cassia Crossbills.

Reference

Neely, N, 2017. “The West’s newest bird species has a beak like a crowbar.” Access by title from Google.

4. Not So Instant Bird

Natural selection arising from random genetic variations is thought to be the main driver of the evolution of living organisms. A surprising example arises from a study of Great Tits (*Parus major*) in western Europe. Specifically, populations consisting of over 1,000 birds each were studied at a site in the United Kingdom (Wytham Wood, a long-standing field laboratory for studies of birds and general ecology supervised by Oxford University) and at two sites in The Netherlands. Whole genome analyses of birds from each population revealed significant differences amongst the populations in several genes collectively responsible for skeletal development. Closer analysis revealed that the genetic drivers of beak development differed between the British birds and the continental ones. As the result, British birds should have longer bills than their continental cousins. Further, amongst the British birds a definite fitness advantage was detected for those with the longest bills; no such advantage was detected among continental birds.

Using museum samples of British and continental birds, the researchers found that British birds indeed have longer bills (by 0.40 ± 0.06 mm; this tiny difference is, nevertheless, statistically highly significant! These are small animals). What is more astonishing is that in measurements made on 2,489 live Wytham birds over a 25-year period, it was found that their beaks are, on average, currently lengthening at the measurable rate of 0.004 ± 0.001 mm/year, that is, 0.1 mm in a quarter century, also highly significant.

What can be driving this dichotomy between continental and British birds, and the current rate of change in British birds for which there is no comparable evidence on the continent? It turns out that the British are avid bird feeders. It is estimated that more than half of all British gardens have a bird feeder. UK expenditure on bird seed is twice that spent in the whole of continental Europe! And Great Tits are enthusiastic customers at bird feeders.

The Wytham Wood birds are radio-tracked, and there are supplemental feeders in WW. In an analysis of the WW birds, it was found that those that habitually visited the feeders were the longer-billed individuals and that these birds expressed a higher genetic propensity for long bill development. The availability of bird feeders represents an environmental feature that confers evolutionary advantage on those birds able to exploit them efficiently. A long bill promotes such “feeder efficiency,” presumably, a longer bill enables the bird to reach into

the feeder and grab the grub more assuredly. As the result, longer-billed birds are more fit, presumably as the result of better winter nourishment, and so more reproductively successful, which perpetuates the trend of natural selection.

Reference

Bosse, M and 14 others. 2017. “Recent natural selection causes adaptive evolution of an avian polygenetic trait.” *Science* 358: 365-369.

Below: A dream bird for many: Hawk Owl, photographed by Rick Howie (Kamloops).



Book Reviews

World Big Years

Chris Siddle

The Biggest Twitch: Around the World in 4,000 Birds by Alan Davies and Ruth Miller. 2010. Christopher Helm, Softcover. Price highly variable at Amazon.ca.

Birding Without Borders: An Obsession, a Quest, and the Biggest Year in the World by Noah Strycker. 2017. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$36.

In 1953 Roger Tory Peterson, author of the best-selling *A Field Guide to the Birds*, took his friend, James Fisher, editor of the famous Collins New Naturalist series of books about the nature of Great Britain and world expert on the Fulmar, on a 100-day, 50,000-kilometre odyssey around North America. Peterson's goal was to show Fisher some of the continent's birds, mammals, plants, and geology, from the seabird colonies at St. Mary's, Newfoundland, to the great "goose factories" in western Alaska. They turned their field notes into *Wild America* (Houghton Mifflin, 1955), which became a much-loved classic among North American bird-watchers, as they were then called. Part of *Wild America's* appeal lies in Peterson's introduction of what later became known as the Big Year. While the actual finding and seeing as many bird species as possible in a calendar year in North America north of the Mexican border received little space in the book, Peterson clearly enjoyed the competitive nature of the listing game. As early as the third sentence of his preface Peterson mentions that he and Fisher broke the previous Big Year record, held for 13 years by Guy Emerson. But it's in the third-to-final chapter that Peterson details how the record was broken:

We would reach Anchorage in an hour, so we dug out our notebooks and brought the bird list up to date. Vaux's Swift ...had been our last new bird Number 497. Our running total now equaled Guy Emerson's rec-

ord. We had, in just over ten weeks, seen as many species north of the Mexican border as anybody had ever previously seen in a year....

The crucial bird – Number 498 – came shortly after we reached Anchorage. Flying overhead near the airport was a Short-billed Gull [Mew Gull]. We sent Guy Emerson a telegram informing him that he had lost his throne as champ of the bird-listers." (*Wild America*, pp. 368-9)

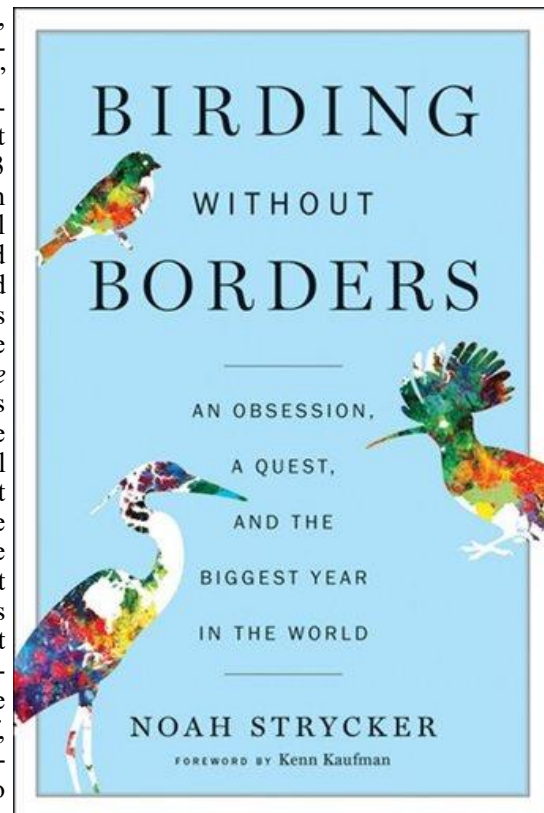
You will notice that Peterson doesn't call this competitive listing a Big Year. That's because the term wasn't in common usage among birders until sometime in the 1970s when American birders, some of them founders of the American Birding Association, gave a name to the attempt to see as many species of birds in North America north of the Mexican border as possible within a calendar year.

Two publications brought Big Years to public attention. The first and arguably still most influential among serious birders was *The Kingbird Highway: The Story of a Natural Obsession That Got a Little Out of Hand* by Kenn Kaufman (Houghton Mifflin, 1997). Kaufman called *Wild America* "the bible of [his] teen years." So it's little wonder that as a teen-aged high-school dropout he felt inspired to do a BY. He spent 1973 hitchhiking his way across North America in search of a big annual bird list. Along the way he learned that Floyd Murdoch, a middle-aged birder, with more money but less free time, was in pursuit of the same record. *Harper's Magazine* picked up the hippie David versus establishment Goliath story. The intriguing thing is not Kenn's total (Floyd won by three species) but how he outgrew the game over the course of the year. His attitude toward birds matured. Kenn went on to develop an influential series of field guides, including the first North American bird guide published for Spanish speakers (he paid for the translation himself, reasoning that people won't conserve creatures that they have no

names for). Now everything he does, he does to conserve nature. Hundreds of young birders have read and re-read Kaufman's book, finding inspiration not only for their listing obsession but more importantly for the humble but eloquent love of nature infused throughout Kaufman's narrative.

The idea of the Big Year, North American style, gained an increased public exposure in 2004 when *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession* was published. The author, Mark Obmasick, an award-winning journalist, told the true tale of three men competing to set the North American Big Year record in 1997. The book was fairly popular and was turned into a movie starring Owen Wilson, Steve Martin and Jack Black. Although the movie did not do particularly well in cinemas, the drawing power of its three A-List comic actors ensured that *The Big Year* was widely viewed outside of theatres. Otherwise completely conventional as a comedy with a happy ending, *The Big Year* introduced a wide audience to the Big Year concept. "Big Year" edged closer to entering the public lexicon.

The notion of extending the BY beyond continental boundaries to cover the world had been around for decades. In 1974 G Stuart Keith, a British ornithologist, published an article "Birding



Planet Earth: A World Overview” in the ABA’s magazine, *Birding*. As Kenn Kaufman later wrote, “For many young birders, that article changed everything ... and made it clear that birding the planet was not only feasible but irresistible.”

With cheap airfares, and the proliferation of field guides to many of the world’s countries, World Big Years (WBV) began to seem less of a pipe dream and more of a realistic possibility for adventurous birders in the 21st century. WBVs received a major injection of interest with the publications of two recent books, the first by two British birders and the second by an American.

In 2007 Alan Davies and Ruth Miller sold their home in England, quit their jobs, and bought airline tickets to do a WBV in 2008. They visited over twenty countries and totaled a new record of 4,341 species, out of a possible total of about 10,500. They depended heavily upon a tour company and its bird guides for planning, and occasionally returned to England to touch home base. They co-wrote the story of their year in *The Biggest Twitch: Around the World in 4,000 Birds*.

Casual in tone and fun to read, *The Biggest Twitch* is a tale of mishaps and inadvertent adventure in which Davies and Miller almost always keep calm, except for occasional outbursts and brief lamentations, and carry on birding. Guiding them is their birding guru and man with the big ideas, Iain Campbell, president of Tropical Birding, a large UK-based tour company. By the end of New Year’s Eve Allan and Ruth had set a new record of 4,341 bird species in one year, had spent 366 days in Ruth’s words “in each other’s pockets,” and “had compressed about ten years of married life into just one ... but amazingly [they] were still best friends.” If you can find a copy of *The Biggest Twitch*, you’re in for a good read.

The circle of world listers is still not a large one so it’s not surprising that Miller and Davies became friends with a young American ornithologist, Noah Strycker, a published author who had already described his fieldwork with penguins in Antarctica in *Among Penguins* (2011) and introduced basic bird biology in his second book, *The Thing With Feathers* (2015). Noah was next in line to set a new world record. Unlike Miller and Davies, Noah did all of his

own planning and returned home only once, as part of his itinerary anyway. He did not rely on guiding companies for help. Instead, he set up an online network of volunteer guides. He scanned dozens of field guides into digital format for his laptop, and created a stripped down, minimal pack, the contents of which are listed and shown in an appendix, from the contents of his first aid kit to the type of compact telescope he carried (Leica TeleviD 65 mm).

Birding Without Borders has a slightly humorous tone, though without the stranger-in-a-strange-land vibe of *The Biggest Twitch*. Let’s face it, a completely serious book about what is meant to be an enjoyable activity would be a disastrous mismatch. Noah is just more serious than Allan and Ruth, who were not shy about relating their misadventures which include fear of heights, seasickness, frequent travellers’ illness, occasional lack of crucial travel documents, guides’ failures to show up, and compulsory tango lessons. Strycker was better prepared for the vicissitudes facing a global traveler and handles rough roads, high altitudes and tropical downpours with little apparent upset. Fortunately Noah is a highly appreciative traveller and one who pauses to inform his reader of interesting background information. So while the reader laughs along with Allan and Ruth, he stands in admiration of Noah’s quiet resolve and superb foresight. *Birding Without Borders* is expressed in a style just as interesting but faster paced than the comparatively relaxed and good-natured style of *The Biggest Twitch*. Strycker’s clear style is the product of an experienced author, a person who can be immersed in science and yet retain the ability to clearly explain science to the layperson.

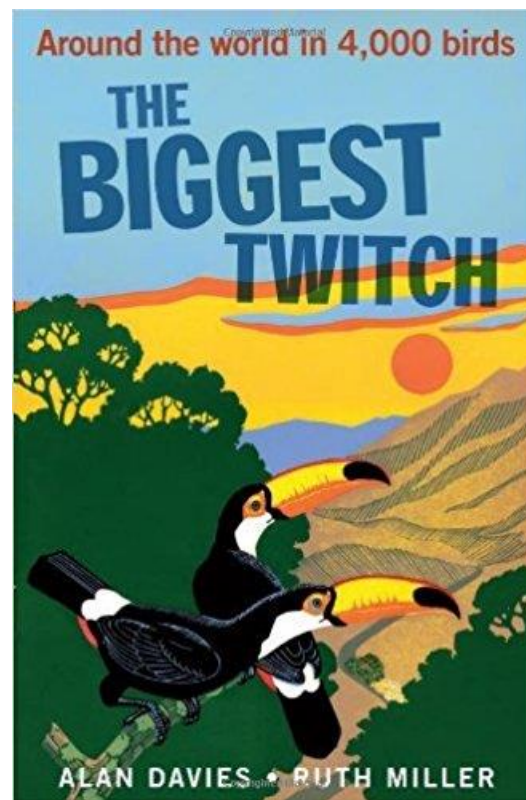
Strycker’s WBV narrative begins at midnight, January 1, 2015, in Antarctic waters where as naturalist aboard a comfy cruise ship for well-heeled travellers he waits to spot Bird Number 1. Finally after two hours of birdless darkness, Noah spots a Pintado, a striking black-and-white petrel, flying through the murk. His year ends with 6,042 species in India where he and Indian friends see a Silver-breasted Broadbill as Noah’s final new bird, and notably also, after dusk, an Oriental

Bay-Owl, a species he had seen previously elsewhere but a bird that’s very rare in India. He had beaten Davies and Miller’s record by an additional 1,701 species and, like them, had maintained an online website detailing his daily adventures.

Birding Without Borders is a pleasure to read. Listers will love it though the author emphasizes the story of his pursuit without bogging down his narrative with lists. (An appendix gives Noah’s complete world list.) The book will also appeal to readers who like travel literature. Judging him from his story I would conclude that Strycker is a bright young man of impressive energy, and quiet fortitude, and one quick to express his gratitude to the legion of birders who helped him set his record. As a writer he has a master’s grasp of which details to include to create a lively account without bogging down to a mere list. *The Biggest Twitch* will long be an essential part of the sporting aspects of birding and an essential volume in the literature of Big Years. Highly recommended.

Postscript

Arjan Dwarshuis, a young Dutch birder, broke Strycker’s record in 2016. Read about Dwarshuis’ WBV in “My Biggest Year: A Record-breaking Journey” in the ABA’s *Birding Guide to Listing and Taxonomy*, October 2017.



Featured Species

Adrian Dorst, a member from Tofino, recently finished writing *The Birds of Vancouver Island's West Coast*, shortly to be published by UBC Press. The book covers 360 species in its 550 pages, and permission has been granted by UBC Press to include the following example in this publication. If ongoing permission is received, this will be a regular feature in *BC Birding*.

MARBLED GODWIT — *LIMOSA FEDOA*

STATUS: A fairly common spring migrant. Rare transient in summer and fall.

Marbled Godwits are exclusive to North America and have three widely separated breeding populations. While the bulk of the population breeds on the Great Plains of Canada and the northernmost of the American states, a smaller, disjunct population breeds along the southwestern shore of James Bay in Ontario. A third population nests remotely on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula, nearly 3,000 km (1,864 mi) northwest of its closest neighbours on the Great Plains. The birds we see in our area are from that population. The subspecies winters from southern Washington to Panama.

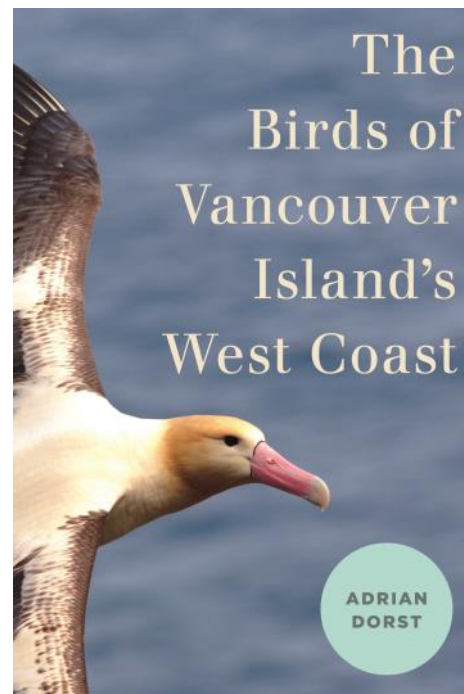
Although Marbled Godwits were first recorded as occurring in Alaska in 1881, when three birds were shot, breeding was not verified until June 1982, a full century later. Although no nests were found at that time, from 700 to 1,000 birds were observed feeding in Ugashik Bay near suitable habitat during the June breeding season. Further study has revealed that the Alaskan birds are larger than birds elsewhere, but with shorter measurements in tarsi, wing, and bill, and that they winter from southern Washington to the San Francisco Bay area of California. They were subsequently given the subspecies designation of *L. f. beringiae*. While the name may be new, it is believed that this population was already well established in the region now called Beringia during the last ice age, which ended some 12,000 years ago. The population

estimate for this subspecies in 2012 was 2,000 birds, while the estimate for the total population ranges from 140,000 to 200,000.

Marbled Godwits are seen more often on Vancouver Island's west coast than anywhere else in British Columbia. In 1978, *Birds of Pacific Rim National Park* listed 20 sightings of the Marbled Godwit, recorded from May to October. There was only a single sighting in May, with most occurrences in July and August. Its status was listed as "a very rare migrant."

Much has changed in the intervening years. More birds than were recorded in all of the years up to 1978 may now occur in a single year. In 2012 and 2014, there were more than 30 records of individuals and flocks in each year. My personal records alone add up to more than 300 in the years since 1978. Most sightings occur in spring and involve from one to a handful of birds, but also larger flocks. There are 49 records of flocks of 10 or more birds, while the largest flock, recorded on 30 April 2013 by a former park naturalist, the late Barry Campbell, contained 48 birds. The most prolific spring was in 2001, when 165 individuals in 13 flocks were recorded. The greater number of birds seen annually since the early 1970s, particularly in spring, is probably due to more thorough monitoring in the field rather than an increase in population. Indeed, the population in North

Marbled Godwit, still largely in breeding plumage, photographed by Adrian Dorst at Long Beach on July 23. Most south-bound birds we see in BC arrive later and are in their buffy winter dress – see the next page.



America over the past 40 years has remained stable. The main spring movement is usually brief. The earliest arrival date ever recorded was on 9 March in 2013, nearly a full month earlier than the next earliest date of 4 April in 2006. The first flocks usually begin passing through by about mid-April or shortly thereafter. Exceptions occurred in the years 2007, 2015, and 2016. A flock of 10 birds was seen on 11 April 2007, 15



on 9 April 2015, and 22 on 7 April 2016. The movement peaks by the last week of April or the first week of May at the latest. An occasional flock may be seen later. In 2001, 18 birds were seen as late as 19 May, and 13 birds on 21 May. In 2005, a flock of 16 was still present on 22 May. A few stragglers may be seen until the end of the month.

June sightings were rare prior to 2012, with only four records. In that year, two nonbreeders were present at Jensen's Bay, Tofino, until 17 June. In 2013, two birds appeared on 6 June, and one was seen as late as 30 June. In 2014, nonbreeding birds again showed up in early June, this time three of them. It isn't clear whether birds were previously overlooked in June or whether birds spending the summer is a new phenomenon. I suspect it is the former.

The most reliable location for finding Marbled Godwits in spring, particularly in late April, is the mudflat beside Dead Man Islands, across from Tofino harbour. With the use of a spotting scope, birds may often be found feeding at low tide, directly in front of the island. Marbled Godwits may also be found at Jensen's Bay, at the end of Sharp Road, at Grice Bay, at Chesterman Beach, and at Long Beach, though not as reliably as at the first location.

During the southward movement, the species has been recorded from July to November. Records include 8 sightings in July in six separate years, 3 sightings in August, 14 in September, 12 in October, and 1 in November. Five of the October sightings occurred in 2006. Flock size during the southward migration is much smaller than in spring, with one to three birds being the norm. However, one July sighting involved seven birds, one September sighting eight birds, and one October



Marbled Godwit spotted in late August in California. CNK photo.

sighting five birds. In September 2014, two birds spent five days feeding on Chesterman Beach. These birds likely had had a difficult crossing as they appeared emaciated.

The breeding grounds for the Alaskan population are situated about 2,250 km (1,400 mi) northwest of Tofino (or directly west of Sitka, Alaska). The authors of a paper on this subspecies, Daniel D Gibson and Brina Kessel, speculated that godwits from this population fly a route directly across the ocean, rather than following the shore around the Gulf of Alaska. They offer as supporting evidence the fact that Marbled Godwits are only rarely seen in any coastal areas of Alaska other

than the breeding area. This is supported by the paucity of sightings on most of the BC coast as well. The relatively few sightings in our area in fall suggests that most birds bypass the island, making landfall south of us in Washington and Oregon. Fall birds seen on our coast are presumed to be birds that aimed a little too far north, or that were driven to shore by adverse weather.

Further information about the book is available at:

www.ubcpres.ca/the-birds-of-vancouver-islands-west-coast



Left: Snow Bunting at Iona Beach Regional Park photographed by Young Birder Adam Dhalla.

Right: Young Birder Willa Crowley photographed this Chestnut-mandibled Toucan in the Sarapiquí area of Costa Rica – her first trip to the tropics.



Gone Fishing

Chris Siddle

Get Away from My Berries

You probably know Townsend's Solitaire as a slightly odd thrush, a long, slim, gray bird with buff marks on its slender wings. To the uninitiated the solitaire looks more like a flycatcher than a thrush, at least a thrush of the robin or Swainson's Thrush kind. In your area it may be a spring and fall migrant, a summer resident, or a winter resident. For many birders in southwest BC Townsend's Solitaires have an interesting way of just showing up in the yard. One day the neighbourhood is normal, the next day individual solitaires are quietly flashing through backyards, adding a bit of excitement to the day. That's how I remember my first Townsend's Solitaires from my boyhood in the Central Fraser Valley. A bird that was will o' the wispish. A slightly exotic bird and an unexpected gift.

Some of you may be lucky enough to live in the Interior where solitaires are fairly common summer residents in upland forests. You may even have found a nest or two. Along some forest roads, solitaires habitually build their stick-lined cup nests in hollows between the top of the road cut and the overhanging forest edge. They will also nest in natural sites like crevices, hollows beneath boulders, and dirt banks, but cutbanks created for road construction are favoured nest sites. A pair lays 3–5 eggs, incubating them for about 12 days (Bowen, 1997). The juveniles wear a distinct spotted plumage, rather like juvenile American Robins, but in a few weeks they moult to closely resemble their grey parents.

What I find fascinating about Townsend's Solitaire is not its migrations nor its nesting habits, but the winter territoriality many individuals display. A single solitaire locates a food source in the autumn and defends it into winter to the best of its ability, but sometimes the odds are stacked too much against it, the food runs out and the bird must move on, becoming what solitaire re-

searchers have called a "floater." More about winter territories later.

Townsend's Solitaire was unknown to science until the 1830s. A young Quaker born in Philadelphia, a keen shotgun ornithologist named John Kirk Townsend became a scientific member of Jarvis Wyeth's second expedition across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast. With botanist Thomas Nuttall, Townsend collected several specimens of birds that proved new to science including in 1835 one odd slim grey songbird shot along the lower Willamette or near the mouth of the Columbia River, depending upon your source. The collector could tell it was a female by its internal details, but that's all he knew about the bird that was going to be eventually given his name. It looked like some kind of flycatcher. Eventually the specimen was sold to John James Audubon who was eager to complete his life's work, *The Birds of America*.

With no background information about the specimen, in 1838 Audubon named it "*Ptiliogonys townsendi*" which means Townsend's bird with feathered knees. He painted it in an uninspired pose where it appears on Plate 419 sandwiched between a bug-eyed Little Tawny Thrush (a Hermit Thrush subspecies) and a dingy juvenal Canada (Gray) Jay. If the fame of *The Birds of America* had depended upon Plate 419, Audubon's art would have disappeared long ago into obscurity. Fortunately for Audubon he had many dramatic and much more colourful subjects than a Townsend's Solitaire to

highlight his work.

The theory that it was a flycatching species is also reflected in the solitaire's modern Latin name, *Myadestes townsendi*, meaning Townsend's "fly or gnat eater." The genus *Myadestes* contains 13 species. With the exception of the migratory Townsend's Solitaire that breeds as far north as Alaska and the Yukon, most solitaires are neo-tropical, sedentary and slow-moving birds of mid-canopy forests. The five species found on various islands of Hawaii have been decimated by avian malaria, introduced predators and habitat destruction among other causes, with the Kamao (*Myadestes myadestinus*) and the Amaui (*M. woahensis*) declared extinct and the Olomao (*M. lanaiensis*) possibly extinct.

Townsend's Solitaire has complex migratory patterns, unlike the stay-at-home other members of *Myadestes*. It may be a resident in warm areas of its broad breeding range (Alaska south to Arizona and New Mexico), an altitudinal migrant from the mountains to the lowlands in many places, and a migrant of longer distances, completely departing in autumn from its northern-most breeding areas.

Townsend's Solitaire eats flies, butterflies, moths, beetles, ants, termites and other flying insects during the warm seasons. During the seasonal shift from summer to autumn the Townsend's Solitaire changes its diet from invertebrate prey to fruit, and it is in this shift that I find what interests me about this small grey bird.

In the autumn a Townsend's Soli-



A Townsend's Solitaire on Plate 419 of Audubon's Birds of America.

taire seeks out fruit, preferably juniper berries. In the best situation the bird locates and defends a large supply of juniper berries that will sustain it through the winter. One American study estimated that a single Townsend's Solitaire ate between 42,000 and 84,000 berries of One-seed Juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*) during a winter season. For birds living or passing through areas where junipers do not grow, the Townsend's Solitaire will eat the fruits of mountain ash, crabapple, winterberry holly, hawthorn, chokecherry, hackberry, Russian olive, currant, serviceberry, rose, sumac, and buckthorn. But juniper berries seem to be preferred above all other fruit. In some western states several species of juniper grow ensuring that should one species have a poor fruiting year, other juniper types will help sustain the bird.

A single solitaire will defend its food source against all other fruit-eating birds by being on watch for intruders. You may have noticed that winter solitaires often perch at the very top of a tall tree, alert to competitors that would "steal" its berries. A solitaire will defend its territory by threatening, chasing, supplanting, and fighting other solitaires, bluebirds, waxwings, and other berry-eaters, but according to the literature, not the American Robin. However, American Robins are not shy about attacking the smaller Townsend's Solitaire. When a territorial solitaire goes after another solitaire, it will involve a chase. Chases range from a slow, distance chase of an intruder that may be just crossing the territory to rapid chases where the owner follows the intruder as closely as possible, the birds dodging foliage and other obstacles at times so closely that their wing tips can be heard clipping the vegetation! If neither of the birds backs down, they grapple beak to beak, sometimes tumbling to the ground in a flailing of wings. Injuries can result.

If single berry-eaters appear and try to take fruit from a solitaire's winter ter-

ritory, the solitaire is usually energetic enough in its territorial defense to drive the intruder away. However, sometimes a solitaire can have a very bad day, as on 19 December 2015 when Gary Davidson and I were counting birds for the Kelowna Christmas Bird Count.

As we drove slowly along Swainson Road east of the city we saw a lone solitaire perched next to a juniper bush full of berries. The bird was a picture of alert composure. It was clearly enjoying Plan A, maintaining a visible presence atop his tree and ready to drive off all competitors. He was Lord of the Manor. A few minutes later as we came back down the road, a flock of about a hundred Bohemian Waxwings swirled down from the clouds and settled as a gobbling mass on the juniper's branches. From sleek dominance to obvious agitation, the solitaire seemed to try to turn every way at once. It watched as a week's, then a month's supply of berries disappeared down the gullets of the busy waxwings. It dashed hither and yon trying to drive off the dozens of plump waxwings. For each one it supplanted three or four others took its place. The flock as a unit was unmoveable. In a case like this, where the waxwings are likely to return again and again and finish off the wild crop, it's time for Plan B which means the solitaire can only give up and move on, looking for a new food source. Such a solitaire becomes a floater like many first-year solitaires, poaching berries

from the edges of the territories of others or searching widely for new sources of food.

The winter territoriality of Townsend's Solitaire has been studied most extensively in the southwest United States where several species of juniper grow. Three junipers grow in British Columbia: Common (*Juniperus communis*), Creeping (*J. horizontalis*), and Rocky Mountain (*J. scopulorum*). All three grow on dry, open sites, often south-facing slopes. How dependent Townsend's Solitaire is upon junipers in BC is not known. Does juniper have to be present before a solitaire will establish a winter territory? We don't know, but probably not. The bird will defend territories that include plants including hawthorns, chokecherry, and other species whose fruit lasts into winter.

Next winter when you see a Townsend's Solitaire perched high on a prominent tree top look around to see what it may be protecting. If you're lucky you may see an interaction between solitaires like a obstacle chase or grappling. For more information start with *The Birds of North America* account No. 269 by Rhys V Bowen (1997), the introduction to *Thrushes* by Peter Clement (2000) and the general introduction to the thrush family in Volume 10 of *Handbook of Birds of the World* by NJ Collar (2005).



*Townsend's Solitaire guarding berries at Goose Lake, Vernon, December 12, 2017.
Photo by Chris Siddle.*

Wintering Marbled Murrelets

Daryl S Henderson

The Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) is a diminutive seabird, a member of the Alcidae family. Unlike most other alcids, which nest in colonies on sea cliffs and rocky islands, Marbled Murrelets typically nest as solitary pairs in stands of coastal old-growth forest, upon moss-covered limbs of select large trees (De Santo and Nelson, 1995). Loss of old-growth forest habitat due to logging has led to significant population declines of this species, and is the principal reason it is listed as Threatened in both Canada and the United States. (See Gary Kaiser's book *The Marbled Murrelet: Little Lord of British Columbia's Fiords* for a highly readable account of Marbled Murrelet biology and conservation efforts; also, Maria Mudd Ruth's excellent *Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet*.)

If you've had the privilege of encountering a Marbled Murrelet in your birding travels, then almost certainly you spied it on ocean water — sightings of murrelets on freshwater are exceedingly rare. Here, I report my New Year's Day and subsequent sightings of Marbled Murrelets on Sproat Lake, a 22-km long, multi-armed lake 15 km west of Port Alberni on Vancouver Island. I also review historical sightings of this species on other lakes in British Columbia.

Sproat Lake

January 1st, 2018 was a windless, spotless, sunny day in Port Alberni, perfect for kayaking. Annette Bailey and I took our kayaks to Sproat Lake to paddle and look for ducks that had been reported there two days earlier during Port Alberni's Christmas Bird Count. The lake was glass-smooth and nearly empty of other boats. Within minutes of setting off from Sproat Lake Provincial Park in the early afternoon, we spied in the distance two black-and-white specks swimming and diving in the middle of Klehkoot Arm. Wondering what species of bird they might be (Horned Grebe?), we paddled closer and peered through our binoculars. Amazingly, they were Marbled Murrelets! Finding this species on Sproat Lake was not a complete sur-

prise, because long-time local birder Sandy McRuer had told us he'd seen Marbled Murrelets here in the past. But how long ago that was, Annette and I weren't sure.

The murrelets we encountered that day never let us approach closer than about 25 metres; they would move away either by swimming on the surface or by diving and then resurfacing farther along. The two birds stayed close together (never separating by more than 2–3 metres) and swam and dove in unison. While we were watching this pair, we spotted a second pair of murrelets some 100 metres away. They, too, remained closely apposed. Throughout our ~90 minutes of observation, none of the birds took to the air.

Unfortunately, we hadn't brought a camera. So, on January 10 (the next day with decent weather) I set out again by kayak to look for the birds and take photos — both pairs were still on the lake! Subsequently, I made several more early-afternoon visits to Klehkoot Arm to scope the birds from shore, and I saw them on each of those occasions: January 22, 24, and 30; February 4. Other local birders reported seeing the murrelets on dates in between. Evidently, these Marbled Murrelets were using Sproat Lake as a winter home.

Apart from the treed provincial park on its east side, Klehkoot Arm is ringed by lakeside homes and commercial properties. Annette Bailey and I wondered whether Marbled Murrelets might also be present at less-impacted areas of Sproat Lake. We were especially curious about Taylor Arm — its fjord-like topography and steep slopes of coniferous forest would seem to offer better murrelet habitat. Indeed, on

February 4, scoping, we observed six pairs of Marbled Murrelets at the west end of Taylor Arm; we also counted three more pairs on Klehkoot Arm during a brief stop on our way back to Port Alberni — a total of 18 murrelets seen on Sproat Lake in one afternoon!

Other Winter Lakes

What does the scientific literature say about Marbled Murrelets on lakes in winter? Carter and Sealy (1986) reviewed historical and contemporary records (from 1922 to 1984) of observations of Marbled Murrelets on lakes throughout the species' range in North America (Alaska to central California). They compiled 57 records for BC lakes, of which only 12 were sightings in winter months (November, December and January; there were no records of sightings in February). Five of these 12 were sightings on Cowichan Lake on southern Vancouver Island — 28 Nov 1923, 7 Jan 1924, 24 Dec 1924, 27 Dec 1925, and 27 Dec 1926. The December observations were made on Christmas Bird Counts, which recorded 8, 24 and 30 Marbled Murrelets, respectively. For only one other Vancouver Island lake is there a winter record of Marbled Murrelets: Henderson Lake (southwest of Port Alberni), on which "many" Marbled Murrelets were seen on 10 Nov 1922.

The remaining six winter records are for three lakes which today would be unthinkable as places to spot Marbled Murrelets — Cultus Lake (south of Chilliwack), Harrison Lake (northeast of Chilliwack), and Alouette Lake (northeast of Maple Ridge). The Cultus

Marbled Murrelet in winter plumage. Creative Commons photo.



Lake murrelets were observed in winter of 1932–1933 (“many” birds) and on 28 Dec 1936 (six birds). The Harrison Lake murrelets were observed on 3 Dec 1926 (six birds), 13 Dec 1980 (one bird) and 3 Jan 1981 (two birds). A single Marbled Murrelet on Alouette Lake was observed on 30 Nov 1981. (More recently, in 2002, radar surveillance to detect Marbled Murrelets in areas near Chilliwack indicated the presence of very small numbers in breeding season [Manley and Cullen, 2003].) As noted by Carter and Sealy (1986), the Cultus and Harrison sightings are among the farthest inland records for Marbled Murrelets. Furthermore, they speculated that the use of lakes in winter may be related to activities such as courtship, pair-bond maintenance, and nest prospecting. We presume the Sproat Lake pairs to be breeding pairs because of their conspicuous togetherness, but they might be simply “fishing buddies” (Kaiser, 2012).

A search of eBird (conducted 27 Jan 2018) turned up only one other record of Marbled Murrelets on a BC lake during November to February, and that

sighting was also for Sproat Lake! Sandy McRuer reported two Marbled Murrelets in Klehkoot Arm on 11 Nov 2016 (13½ months prior to our first January 2018 sighting).

It is possible that Marbled Murrelets are annual visitors to Sproat Lake in winter, but have gone undetected until this and the previous one. Access to the lake by Marbled Murrelets could be via Alberni Inlet, an ~40-km fjord stretching from Barkley Sound (where the species is common in winter) to Port Alberni. The birds might fly up the entire length of the inlet before tilting westward to the lake, or they might follow the marine corridor partway and then take an inland route to Sproat. The murrelets’ apparent extended presence on Sproat Lake this winter suggests that food is plentiful and conditions hospitable. In winter, boat traffic and other human activities are usually very light. Next winter, however, scoping of the lake will be stepped up, as we will be keeping a watchful eye out for the presence of this captivating little seabird.

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Oddments

Prospering Costa’s

A Costa’s Hummingbird in BC is rare enough, but a Costa’s prospering in Powell River in January is even more so. For those that find it hard to believe, there’s a video at:

www.youtube.com/embed/LqNTnhvdel?rel==0

Rampaging Turkeys

If you need Wild Turkeys for your BC list, head to Edgewater, south of Golden, where some 100 turkeys can be found wandering the streets. They are apparently making such a nuisance of themselves that a don’t-feed bylaw may be introduced.

Drone Killers

The January 31, 2018 edition of *Netletter*, an avian-based magazine, carries a story about Golden Eagles

being trained by the French Military to hunt drones.

The four juvenile raptors, named d’Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis, have been honing their attack skills since mid-2016, using talons protected

by mittens of leather and Kevlar. Once completed training, they’ll be deployed at airports and special events like political summits. Another group of four, also bred in captivity, are next to be trained.

Pierre Cenerelli (North Vancouver) writes: Although Piper Spit at Burnaby Lake Provincial Park can be quite challenging when people are feeding the ducks, some bird species completely ignore the food being offered. This was certainly the case for the Long-billed Dowitchers, which numbered at least 50 individuals at one point. To my great pleasure, much of the flock insisted on resting on a small mound of mud not far from the walkway, allowing me to get some good close-ups.



The Reflective Birder

Clive Keen

Profundity from a Snail Kite

You'll no doubt have heard that, in spite of all the fears about their imminent demise, Snail Kites in Florida are now prospering. To recap: the snails that were the birds' usual fare are being displaced by an invasive snail five times bigger. That might seem scrumptious news for any snail eater, but not for your old-fashioned Snail Kites: their bills just aren't big enough to deal with the monsters. In a sea of plenty they go hungry. To the apparent amazement of scientists, though, the Florida Snail Kites have evolved, in a mere two generations, and a new larger-billed brood is happily tucking in to their super-sized escargot.

To understand why this rapid evolution amazed some scientists, you have to remember the textbook explanation of how evolution works. If a member of a species has a favourable trait, the story goes, it will tend to live longer, and thus its genes are more likely to be passed on. The same will be true with the offspring. After enough generations, therefore, those genes could come to predominate. How many generations? Evolutionists are used to talking about a process occurring over millions of years. Two generations? Don't be silly. Even with epigenetics on fire, that is far too fast.

But, for anyone who has not read *The Beak of the Finch*, there is an incredibly important amendment to the tale, showing that two generations is not so outlandish after all. This wonderful book by Jonathon Wheeler, which fully deserves its Pulitzer Prize, follows the research of Peter and Rosemary Grant, who have spent decades studying the birds on an isolated Galapagos island. Among their many findings was one which will surely rewrite the textbooks and ought to give great delight to the naturalist community.

An explanation for extremely rapid evolution is easily presented through an example. Imagine you are a female Snail Kite, about to start nesting, wor-

ried about her and her offspring's future: the food supply has gone seriously wrong. But one particular Kite seems to be revelling in it, because his bill is unusually large. Faced with possible starvation for you and your future kids, who do you choose to share your nest with? No contest. Males with the wrong bills will remain celibate, as the Grants' studies poignantly show. Males with the right bills, on the other hand, will swamp the gene pool of the next generation, either as husbands or cuckolders. This supercharges the pace of evolution.

It is such an obvious strategy from the gene's point of view that evolution will have long since mastered the trick, adding built-in choosiness to the females of species. But scientists have for long been uncomfortable with the idea of animal life making choices, so this explanation has not had wide currency. Only recently I came across an ornithologist who seemed to imply that a bird in his study had made a choice, and in embarrassment "corrected" himself, saying that of course he wasn't imputing any mental act to the bird – that it was "just reacting to hormones." That's what scientists worried about their reputation still do. Not having to worry about the scorn of my peers, I can, by contrast, happily attribute a mental life to the animal world, because it is perfectly obvious to the less-tutored that it is both real and rich. And I can gain some insights as a result. Thinking about the inner life of other species can also give insights into our own species.

Learning from the Snail Kites, for instance, I can see that it would be extremely odd if human females did not show preference, in the mating game, for males with genes likely to benefit their offspring. *Of course* human females will show preference for prospering males. It's not some moral fault that we should be embarrassed about and deride, but a sound, built-in, biological imperative, surely shared with all higher animals.

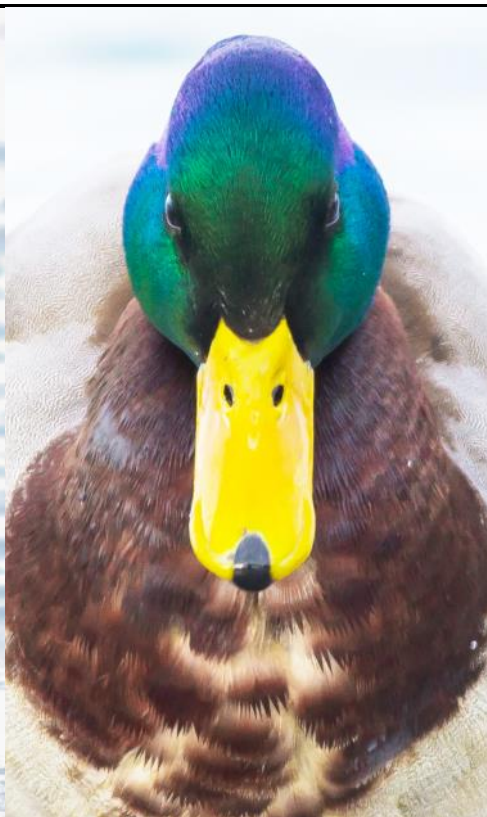
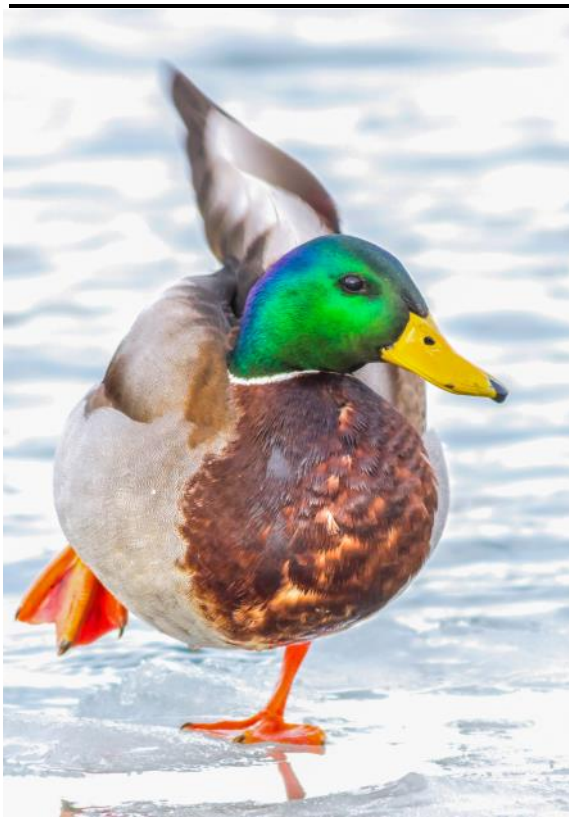
And there's another very interesting line of thought based on compari-

son of humans with animal life. Having spent many years studying educational statistics, I became aware of something consistent and conspicuous about humans: females tend towards normality while males tend towards abnormality. In statistician's jargon, standard deviation among human males is much greater than among females. It's a stark, rock solid, fact. And that is extremely wise of evolution. Combining female choosiness with widely deviating males gives a double boost to rapid evolution. If males were relatively homogeneous, the trick wouldn't work if rapid change should ever become necessary – which it inevitably does, sooner or later.

I find it impossible to believe that evolution would not have stumbled across this double whammy. I have never, though, come across solid data confirming the higher rate of variability of males in other species. If someone could explore this, and show that males exhibit greater variability than females throughout the animal kingdom, the overall hypothesis explaining really rapid evolution would be confirmed. Choosy females would then be understood as the determinants of evolution, while deviating males would be seen as the vector. Perhaps there'd be a Nobel Prize in it. I'd be happy to receive a share. Give me a call.

A choosy-looking female Snail Kite, photographed by the author in Nayarit, Mexico.





Gallery

Left: Two more unusual shots by Rick Howie (Kamloops) – see also page 22 for Rick's ability to give a different spin on a common bird.

Below left: A Merlin photographed by Sharon Godkin (Sidney) on December 13, 2017 at Tanner Ridge, Central Saanich.

Below right: A Cooper's Hawk photographed by Penny Hall (Port Alberni) at the Somas Estuary in Port Alberni.

Note

Good bird photographs by members are always very welcome in this publication. They do not need to be part of an Avian Encounter story; just send a sentence or two to give context.



BCFO Listers' Corner 2017 Lists

Welcome to the 2017 BCFO Lister's Corner.

Tables: the number under “ % ” is the percentage of an individual's total compared to the total species in that particular area/list. “**incr**” indicates an increase from 2016. “ * ” preceding a total indicates a total wasn't submitted for 2017.

NOTE: if a total is not supplied for two consecutive years the listing will be dropped. **Red bold** indicates largest increase from the previous year. **Red italics** indicates reaching of a significant plateau.

Submissions were received from 68 members, eleven more than 2016. There were nine new members to Listers' Corner for 2017: Paul Clapham, Kathryn Clouston, John Gordon, Melissa Hafting, Susanne Hayer, Clive Keen, Eric Newton, Monica Nugent, and Ken Willis.

BC: John Hodges had the highest increase at 16 pushing him over the 300 plateau. Seven new submitters joined the list. *Tom Plath & Len Jellicoe* each added 2 moving Tom to 450 and Len to 400.

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 535					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	475	Mike Toochn	89	1	474
2	450	Tom Plath	84.1	2	448
3	447	Dale Jensen	83.6	1	446
3	447	Sharon Toochn	83.6	2	445
5	*441	Jo Ann MacKenzie	82.4		442
6	440	Wayne Weber	82.2	3	437
7	438	Roger Foxall	81.9	4	434
7	438	Dan Tyson	81.9	1	437
9	435	Carlo Giovanella	81.3	3	432
10	433	Guy Monty	80.9		433
11	430	Brian Self	80.4	4	426
12	429	Val George	80.2	3	426
12	429	Peter Candido	80.2	3	426
14	427	David Stirling	79.8	1	426
15	426	Brian Stech	79.6	1	425
15	426	Tony Greenfield	79.6	1	425

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 535					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
17	424	Murray Brown	79.3		424
18	423	Kevin Neill	79.1	3	420
19	417	Lloyd Esralson	77.9		418
19	417	Mike McGrenere	77.9	2	415
19	417	Ilya Povalyaev	77.9	5	412
22	416	Melissa Hafting	77.8	new	
23	*413	Dick Cannings	77.2		413
24	408	Larry Cowan	76.3	3	405
25	407	Thor Manson	76.1		407
25	407	John Vooy	76.1	4	403
25	407	Keith Riding	76.1		432
28	402	Bryan Gates	75.1		402
29	401	Russ Tkachuk	75		401
30	400	Len Jellicoe	74.8	2	398
31	398	Hank Vanderpol	74.4		398
32	397	Barbara Begg	74.2	3	394
32	397	Nathan Hentze	74.2		397
34	391	Chris Charlesworth	73		391
35	383	Gary Davidson	72	1	382
36	381	Rand Rudland	71	2	379
37	376	Quentin Brown	70	4	372
38	371	Don Wilson	69.3	1	370
38	371	Eric Tull	69.3	5	366
40	368	Ken Morgan	68.8		368
41	366	Laird Law	68.4		368
42	365	Bruce Whittington	68.2		367
43	361	Art Martell	67.5		361
44	359	Gwynneth Wilson	67.1	1	358
45	*356	Martin McNicholl	66.5		*356
46	350	Andy Buhler	65.4		350
46	350	Marilyn Buhler	65.4		350
46	*350	Peter Blokker	65.4		350
49	344	Monica Nugent	64	new	
50	339	John Gordon	63	new	
51	333	John Sprague	62		333
52	326	Paul Clapham	60.9	new	
53	324	Ted Goshulak	60.6		325
54	322	Dorothy Copp	60.2		322
54	322	Craig Sandvig	60.2	1	321
56	314	John Hodges	59	16	298
57	309	Janice Arndt	58	2	307
58	300	Mike Mulligan	56		301
58	300	Neill Vanhinsberg	56	12	288
60	*291	Theo Hofmann ON	54		291

BRITISH COLUMBIA - 535					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
61	279	Kathryn Clouston	52		new
61	279	Susanne Hayer	52		new
63	250	Ken Willis	47		new

Canada: Peter Candido had the largest increase with 14. Ilya Povalyaev added 4 to pass the 450 plateau and Janice Arndt topped the 400 mark.

CANADA - 688					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	547	Roger Foxall	80		548
2	*526	Jo Ann MacKenzie	76		527
3	517	Tom Plath	75		517
4	509	Mike Toochin	74		509
5	499	Eric Tull	73	1	498
6	498	Dan Tyson	72.4		498
7	494	Brian Self	71.8	1	493
8	492	David Stirling	71.5		492
8	492	Sharon Toochin	71.5	2	490
8	*492	Theo Hofmann ON	71.5		492
11	489	Dale Jensen	71	1	488
12	481	Wayne Weber	70	2	479
13	478	Russ Tkachuk	69.5		479
14	475	Kevin Neill	69	2	473
15	473	Carlo Giovanella	68.8	4	469
16	471	Mike McGrenere	68.5	3	468
16	*471	Dick Cannings	68.5		471
18	470	Peter Candido	68.3	14	456
19	469	Thor Manson	68.2		469
20	462	Murray Brown	67.2		463
21	458	Keith Riding	66.6		481
22	456	Mike Mulligan	66.3		457
23	454	Barbara Begg	66	1	453
23	454	Len Jellicoe	66	2	452
23	454	Brian Stech	66	1	453
26	453	Larry Cowan	65.8	2	451
26	453	Ilya Povalyaev	65.8	4	449
28	448	Rand Rudland	65.1	1	447
28	448	John Vooy	65.1	4	444
30	447	Art Martell	65.0		449
31	446	Chris Charlesworth	64.8		446
31	446	Hank Vanderpol	64.8		446
33	444	Nathan Hentze	64.5	1	443
33	*444	Martin McNicholl	64.5		
35	440	Lloyd Esralson	64.0		441
36	437	Tony Greenfield	63.5		437

CANADA - 688					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
37	433	Ken Morgan	63		433
38	423	Bryan Gates	61.5		*423
39	420	Gwynneth Wilson	61	1	419
40	419	Quentin Brown	60.9	4	415
40	419	John Sprague	60.9		420
42	412	Gary Davidson	59.9		412
42	412	Monica Nugent	59.9		new
42	412	Don Wilson	59.9	1	411
45	*411	Peter Blokker	59.7		411
46	402	Janice Arndt	58.4	4	398
47	399	Andy Buhler	58		399
47	399	Marilyn Buhler	58		399
49	396	John Gordon	57.6		new
50	393	Laird Law	57		395
51	387	Ted Goshulak	56		388
52	380	Dorothy Copp	55		380
53	361	John Hodges	52.5	5	356
54	358	Paul Clapham	52		new

ABA (Continental): As most are aware the American Birding Association changed the definition of the ABA Area to include Hawaii. Hence for this report **ABA (Continental)** refers to the "old" definition. **David Stirling** leads the pack leaping over the 700 mark with an increase of 44. *Sharon Toochin* passed 700 with an increase of 2 and *Laird Law* added 15 to top 550.

ABA - 1,000					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	795	Hank Vanderpol	80	5	790
2	791	Thor Manson	79	2	789
3	785	Mike Toochin	79		785
4	783	Roger Foxall	78		783
5	774	Mike Mulligan	77		775
6	740	Russ Tkachuk	74		741
7	734	David Stirling	73	44	690
8	730	Wayne Weber	73	1	729
9	723	Art Martell	72		723
10	720	John Vooy	72	2	718
11	719	Dorothy Copp	72		720
12	712	Brian Stech	71		714
13	710	Dale Jensen	71	1	709
13	*710	Jo Ann MacKenzie	71		711
15	701	Sharon Toochin	70	2	699
16	689	Eric Tull	69		689
17	684	Dan Tyson	68	5	679

ABA - 1,000					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
18	679	Chris Charlesworth	68	6	673
19	670	Brian Self	67	18	*652
20	659	Peter Candido	66	2	657
21	658	Gary Davidson	66	4	654
22	654	Melissa Hafting	65		new
23	650	Keith Riding	65		663
24	649	John Sprague	65		651
24	649	Nathan Hentze	65		649
26	646	Barbara Begg	65		647
27	640	Andy Buhler	64		640
27	640	Marilyn Buhler	64		640
29	*639	Dick Cannings	64		639
30	633	Kevin Neill	63	1	632
31	630	Gwynneth Wilson	63	2	628
32	*629	Theo Hofmann ON	63		629
33	624	Don Wilson	62		624
34	622	Carlo Giovanella	62	3	619
35	616	Mike McGrenere	62	1	615
36	614	Tony Greenfield	61		614
37	602	Len Jellicoe	60	2	600
38	600	Lloyd Esralson	60		600
39	591	Monica Nugent	59		new
40	584	Ken Morgan	58		584
41	573	Larry Cowan	57	2	571
42	570	Bryan Gates	57		570
43	562	Rand Rudland	56		562
44	559	Laird Law	56	15	544
45	555	Murray Brown	56	17	538
46	550	Val George	55	3	547
47	*526	Martin McNicholl	53		
48	523	Clive Keen	52		new
49	517	Ted Goshulak	52		517
50	439	Janice Arndt	44	3	436
51	437	Paul Clapham	44		new
52	419	Susanne Hayer	42		new
53	*413	Peter Blokker	41		413
54	408	John Hodges	41	5	403

ABA + Hawaii: This is a new listing with Hawaiian species added to the ABA total. **Mike Toochin** sits in first with 839. The plateau is 450.

ABA + Hawaii 1,082				
#	2017	Name	%	
1	839	Mike Toochin	77.5	
2	827	Thor Manson	76.4	

ABA + Hawaii 1,082				
#	2017	Name	%	
3	826	Roger Foxall	76.3	
4	795	Hank Vanderpol	73.5	
5	787	Mike Mulligan	72.7	
6	775	Art Martell	71.6	
7	757	Sharon Toochin	70	
8	745	John Voos	68.9	
9	743	Eric Tull	68.7	
10	740	Russ Tkachuk	68.4	
11	734	David Stirling	67.8	
12	730	Wayne Weber	67.5	
13	719	Dorothy Copp	66.5	
14	712	Brian Stech	65.8	
15	*710	Jo Ann MacKenzie	65.6	
15	710	Dale Jensen	65.6	
17	684	Dan Tyson	63.2	
18	679	Chris Charlesworth	62.8	
19	670	Gwynneth Wilson	61.9	
19	670	Brian Self	61.9	
21	659	Peter Candido	60.9	
22	658	Gary Davidson	60.8	
23	654	Melissa Hafting	60.4	
24	650	Keith Riding	60.1	
25	649	John Sprague	60	
25	649	Nathan Hentze	60	
27	646	Barbara Begg	59.7	
28	644	Carlo Giovanella	59.5	
29	642	Don Wilson	59.3	
30	640	Andy Buhler	59.1	
30	640	Marilyn Buhler	59.1	
32	*639	Dick Cannings	59.1	
33	633	Kevin Neill	58.5	
34	*629	Theo Hofmann ON	58.1	
35	620	Monica Nugent	57.3	
36	616	Mike McGrenere	56.9	
37	614	Tony Greenfield	56.7	
38	610	Larry Cowan	56.4	
39	607	Rand Rudland	56.1	
40	602	Len Jellicoe	55.6	
41	600	Ken Morgan	55.5	
41	600	Lloyd Esralson	55.5	
43	570	Bryan Gates	52.7	
44	559	Laird Law	51.7	
45	555	Murray Brown	51.3	
46	550	Val George	50.8	

ABA + Hawaii 1,082					
#	2017	Name	%		
47	541	Ted Goshulak	50		
48	*526	Martin McNicholl	48.6		
49	523	Clive Keen	48.3		
50	473	Janice Arndt	43.7		
51	458	Paul Clapham	42.3		

World: **Nathan Hentze** had the largest increase at 455 taking him past the 2500 mark. *Keith Riding* passed the lofty 7000 plateau with the addition of 352. Others passing notable plateaus were: *Peter Candido*, *Sharon Toochn*, & *Eric Tull* (4500); *Laird Law* (3500); and *Dorothy Copp* & *Brian Stech* (3000).

WORLD - 10,441					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	7,116	Keith Riding	68	352	6,764
2	5,665	Roger Foxall	54	127	5,538
3	5,370	Nigel Mathews	51	53	5,317
4	5,318	Mike Toochn	51	96	5,222
5	*5,087	Jo Ann MacKenzie	49		5,088
6	4,623	Art Martell	44.3	101	4,522
7	4,584	Peter Candido	44	245	4,339
8	4,573	Sharon Toochn	43.8	222	4,351
9	4,544	Eric Tull	43.5	52	4,492
10	4,071	David Stirling	39	5	4,066
11	3,966	Peter McIver	38	20	3,946
12	3,644	Brian Self	35	3	3,641
13	3,593	Mike Mulligan	34.4	7	3,586
14	3,506	Laird Law	34	379	3,127
15	3,425	Rand Rudland	33	267	3,158
16	3,347	Dale Jensen	32	2	3,345
17	3,269	Barbara Begg	31.3	4	3,265
18	3,231	Hank Vanderpol	31		3,231
19	*3,174	Dick Cannings	30.4		3,174
20	3,152	Dorothy Copp	30.2	256	2,896
21	3,137	Brian Stech	30.0	259	2,878
22	2,936	Val George	28.1	8	2,928
23	2,906	Gary Davidson	27.8	197	2,709
24	*2,826	Theo Hofmann ON	27.1		2,826
25	2,732	Don Wilson	26	2	2,730
26	2,527	Nathan Hentze	24	455	2,072
27	2,349	Lee Harding	22		new
28	2,269	Ken Morgan	22	12	2,257
29	2,197	Chris Charlesworth	21	3	2,194
30	2,120	Bryan Gates	20.3		*2,120

WORLD - 10,441					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
31	2,110	Andy Buhler	20.2		2,110
31	2,110	Marilyn Buhler	20.2		2,110
33	1,891	Monica Nugent	18		new
34	1,659	Paul Clapham	16		new
35	1,648	Larry Cowan	16	86	1,562
36	1,530	Tony Greenfield	15		*1,530
37	1,361	John Hodges	13	78	1,283
38	*1,287	Mike McGrenere	12		1,287
39	1,007	Kevin Neill	10	1	1,006
40	951	John Sprague	9.1	3	*948
41	926	Wayne Weber	8.9	18	908

World Families: This category continues to attract listers with another 4 joining the ranks. **Rand Rudland** managed the largest increase adding 21 which pushed him past the 200 mark.

World Families 234					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	230	Roger Foxall	98	8	222
2	222	Eric Tull	95	5	217
3	219	Mike Toochn	94	9	210
4	*217	Peter Candido	93		217
5	216	David Sterling	92	9	207
6	215	Art Martell	92	9	206
7	208	Sharon Toochn	89	8	200
8	207	Brian Self	88	4	*203
9	206	Rand Rudland	88	21	185
10	205	Laird Law	88		new
11	*190	Theo Hofmann ON	81		190
12	177	Ken Morgan	76		new
13	174	Peter McIver	74		new
14	163	Paul Clapham	70		new
15	142	Bryan Gates	61		151
16	122	Kevin Neill	52		122
17	117	Larry Cowan	50	3	114

North America: Colombia/Panama border northward. The list grew by another five to eighteen. **Laird Law** had the biggest increase at 238. *Eric Tull* added 45 to pass the 1000 plateau.

North America 2064					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	1,611	Dorothy Copp	78.1	23	1,588
2	1,607	Brian Stech	77.9	19	1,588
3	1,471	Mike Toochn	71	90	1,381

North America 2064					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
4	1,427	Keith Riding	69	40	1,387
5	1,398	Roger Foxall	68	35	1,363
6	1,300	Art Martell	63	40	1,260
7	1,209	David Stirling	59	86	1,123
8	1,155	Rand Rudland	56		1,155
9	*1,027	Theo Hofmann ON	50		1,027
10	1,018	Peter McIver	49.3		1,018
11	1,008	Eric Tull	48.8	45	963
12	965	Monica Nugent	47		new
13	965	Laird Law	47	238	727
14	911	John Hodges	44		new
15	856	Larry Cowan	41		new
16	708	John Sprague	34		new
17	707	Ted Goshulak	34		new
18	507	Janice Arndt	25	3	504

BC Winter: "Winter" - Dec/Jan/Feb to Dec. 31, 2017.
Only minor increases reported.

B.C. Winter List - Dec / Jan / Feb				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	303	Dan Tyson		303
2	296	Mike Tootchin	3	293
3	293	Tom Plath	2	291
3	293	Brian Self		*293
5	266	Wayne Weber	1	265
6	256	David Sterling	2	254
7	224	Larry Cowan	2	222
8	189	Eric Tull	3	186
9	127	Janice Arndt	3	124

ATPAT: Dan Tyson improved his total the most with 44.

All Ticks Provinces And Territories				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	3,023	Eric Tull	4	3,019
2	2,966	Roger Foxall	4	2,962
3	2,160	David Stirling	1	2,159
4	*2,020	Theo Hofmann ON		2,020
5	*1,858	Dick Cannings		1,858
6	1,736	Wayne Weber	25	1,711
7	1,701	Mike Mulligan		1,704
8	*1,578	Art Martell		1,578
9	1,482	Dan Tyson	44	1,438
10	1,461	Janice Arndt	33	1,428
11	1,271	Barabara Begg	3	1,268

All Ticks Provinces And Territories				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
12	1,258	John Sprague		1,259
13	*1,189	Gary Davidson		1,189
14	1,107	Laird Law		1,107
15	879	Brian Stech	1	878
16	809	Larry Cowan	3	806
17	758	Dorothy Copp		758

Non-Motorized Transport: Mike McGrenere tied with the largest increase of 9 with Larry Cowan. Mike remains at the top of the list and has surpassed the 300 mark !

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT				
#	2017	Name & location	incr	2016
1	305	Mike McGrenere - Victoria	9	296
2	*247	Dick Cannings - Penticton		247
3	157	Janice Arndt - Nelson	2	155
4	114	Barbara Begg - Sidney		114
5	111	Larry Cowan-Pitt Meadows	9	102

Alberta: Melissa Hafting joined the list in 5th place. Dan Tyson and Len Jellicoe enjoyed the largest increases with 11 each. This increase put Len over the 200 mark.

200 rank.

ALBERTA - 425					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	364	Mike Mulligan	86	1	363
2	361	Eric Tull	85		362
3	323	Hank Vanderpol	76	1	322
4	286	David Stirling	67		286
5	276	Melissa Hafting	65		new
6	273	Tom Plath	64		273
7	244	Wayne Weber	57.4		244
8	241	Roger Foxall	57		241
8	*241	Martin McNicholl	56.7		
10	240	Jo Ann MacKenzie	56		240
11	229	Dan Tyson	53.9	11	218
12	228	Chris Charlesworth	54		228
13	222	Bryan Gates	52		222
14	216	Gary Davidson	51		216
15	*214	Dick Cannings	50		214
16	*210	Theo Hofmann ON	49.4		210
17	209	Monica Nugent	49.2		new
18	206	Len Jellicoe	48.5	11	195
19	190	Larry Cowan	45		190

Yukon Territory: Two members joined the list. **Wayne Weber** was the only one to record an increase with 22.

YUKON TERRITORY - 328					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	*172	Dick Cannings	52		172
2	163	Tony Greenfield	50		163
3	155	Eric Tull	47		155
4	150	David Stirling	46		150
5	*145	Theo Hofmann ON	44		145
6	142	Roger Foxall	43		142
7	123	Gary Davidson	38		123
8	113	John Sprague	34.5		113
9	112	Rand Rudland	34.1		112
10	109	Wayne Weber	33	22	87
11	106	Art Martell	32		106
12	102	Brian Self	31		102
13	90	Dan Tyson	27		90
14	86	John Hodges	26.2		86
15	*84	Mike Toochn	25.6		84
16	80	Dale Jensen	24		new
17	64	Dorothy Copp	20		64
17	64	Brian Stech	20		64
19	53	Paul Clapham	16		new
20	48	Laird Law	15		48

NWT: **Janice Arndt** had the only increase adding 23. *Paul Clapham* joined the list with 70.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - 301					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	180	Eric Tull	60		180
2	176	Laird Law	58		176
3	155	Tony Greenfield	51		155
4	148	David Stirling	49		148
5	133	Rand Rudland	44		133
6	129	Janice Arndt	43	23	106
7	105	Roger Foxall	35		105
8	98	Brian Self	33		98
9	97	Barbara Begg	32		97
10	86	Mike Toochn	29		86
11	84	John Sprague	28		84
12	71	Art Martell	24		71
13	70	Paul Clapham	23		new
14	54	John Hodges	17.9		54
15	53	Gary Davidson	17.6		53
16	52	Wayne Weber	17		52
17	*40	Dick Cannings	13		40

Washington: *Melissa Hafting* joined the list in 3rd position with a total of 343. **Brian Stech & Dorothy Copp** noted the best increase at 4. *Wayne Weber* added 3 to increase his lead in 1st place.

WASHINGTON STATE - 521					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	407	Wayne Weber	78	3	404
2	*348	Jo Ann MacKenzie	67		349
3	343	Melissa Hafting	66	new	
4	327	Mike Toochn	63	2	325
5	320	Dan Tyson	61	3	317
6	296	Brian Self	57	3	293
7	286	Hank Vanderpol	55	1	285
8	*268	Dick Cannings	51		268
9	262	Roger Foxall	50	2	260
10	254	David Stirling	49		254
11	247	Brian Stech	47	4	243
12	236	Dale Jensen	45		new
13	235	Lloyd Esralson	45		235
14	232	Dorothy Copp	45	4	228
15	231	Art Martell	44		231
16	224	Larry Cowan	43	1	223
17	217	Eric Tull	42	2	215
18	190	Keith Riding	36		new

Okanagan Valley: Only minimal increases were recorded with **Don Wilson** and **Tom Plath** both adding two.

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 332					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	316	Chris Charlesworth	95		317
2	*306	Dick Cannings	92.2		306
3	304	Gwynneth Wilson	91.6	1	303
4	294	Don Wilson	89	2	292
5	273	Mike Toochn	82.2		274
6	*272	Peter Blokker	81.9		272
7	264	Wayne Weber	80		264
8	262	Gary Davidson	79		262
9	259	Hank Vanderpol	78		259
10	256	Dan Tyson	77	1	255
11	242	David Stirling	73		242
12	234	Tom Plath	70	2	232
12	234	Tony Greenfield	70		234
12	*234	Jo Ann MacKenzie	70		234
15	229	Keith Riding	69		new
16	224	John Voos	67		225
17	219	Laird Law	66		219

OKANAGAN VALLEY - 332

#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
18	215	Lloyd Esralson	65		215
19	193	Bryan Gates	58		193
20	189	Brian Stech	57		189
21	175	Eric Tull	53		176
22	174	Larry Cowan	52.4		174
23	*172	Theo Hofmann ON	51.8		172
24	162	Dorothy Copp	49		162

Vancouver Island: Eric Tull for a second year had the largest increase at 11. Three members added their totals to this list bringing it to 20.

VANCOUVER ISLAND - 388

#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	352	David Stirling	91	1	351
2	351	Mike McGrenere	90	1	350
3	347	Barbara Begg	89	3	344
4	*341	Guy Monty	88		341
5	337	Bryan Gates	87		337
6	*332	Hank Vanderpol	86		332
7	315	Bruce Whittington	81		317
8	310	Mike Toochin	80	1	309
9	286	Ken Morgan	74		286
10	283	Tom Plath	73	3	280
11	273	Wayne Weber	70		273
12	268	Eric Tull	69	11	257
13	264	Roger Foxall	68	2	262
13	264	Dan Tyson	68	1	263
15	*252	Jo Ann MacKenzie	65		253
16	249	Kevin Neill	64		new
17	211	Larry Cowan	54	4	207
18	206	John Sprague	53		206
19	203	Keith Riding	52		new
20	197	Kathryn Clouston	51		new

Victoria: Kevin Neill's relocation to Victoria allowed him to add 42 to his total pushing him over the 200 plateau. Eric Tull added 13 to pass the 250 mark and Neill Vanhinsberg posted an increase of 25 to pass 150.

VICTORIA AREA - 362

#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	337	Mike McGrenere	93	2	335
2	335	David Stirling	93	1	334
3	332	Barbara Begg	92	3	329
4	320	Bryan Gates	88	1	319
4	*320	Hank Vanderpol	88		320

VICTORIA AREA - 362

#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
6	304	Bruce Whittington	84		306
7	266	Mike Toochin	73	5	261
8	253	Wayne Weber	69.9		253
9	252	Eric Tull	69.6	13	239
10	242	Tom Plath	67		new
11	235	Keith Riding	65		new
12	223	Kevin Neill	62	42	181
13	222	Dan Tyson	61	1	221
14	176	Larry Cowan	49	6	170
15	164	Neill Vanhinsberg	45	25	139
16	146	Monica Nugent	40		new
17	141	Lloyd Esralson	39		141
18	*137	Dick Cannings	38		137
19	130	Ted Goshulak	36		130

Vancouver: Neill Vanhinsberg added a list high of 16 pushing him past the 250 plateau. Carlo Giovanella's increase of 3 moved him past 350.

VANCOUVER AREA - 430

#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	374	Mike Toochin	87	2	372
2	358	Dan Tyson	83.3	1	357
3	*356	Jo Ann MacKenzie	82.8		357
4	355	Tom Plath	82.6		355
4	355	Brian Self	82.6	3	352
6	354	Wayne Weber	82.3	2	352
7	351	Carlo Giovanella	81.6	3	348
8	342	Roger Foxall	80	5	337
8	342	Keith Riding	80		343
10	333	Lloyd Esralson	77.4		334
11	332	Quentin Brown	77.2	2	330
12	327	Brian Stech	76.0	2	325
13	326	Larry Cowan	75.8	3	323
14	317	Ilya Povalyaev	74	4	313
15	314	John Vooy	73	2	312
16	309	Melissa Hafting	72		new
17	292	Kevin Neill	68	2	290
18	*286	Dick Cannings	67		286
19	283	Paul Clapham	66		new
20	276	John Gordon	64.2		new
20	276	Ted Goshulak	64.2	2	274
22	275	Monica Nugent	64		new
23	264	Neill Vanhinsberg	61	16	248
24	243	David Stirling	57		243
25	235	Bryan Gates	55		235

VANCOUVER AREA - 430					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
26	*234	Don Wilson	54		234
27	212	Eric Tull	49	3	209
28	200	Ken Willis	47		new

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

Fraser Valley - 318					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	253	John Vooy	80	0	253
2	243	Dan Tyson	76	4	239
3	195	Wayne Weber	61	8	187
4	159	Larry Cowan	50	4	155
5	143	John Gordon	45		new
6	*139	Ted Goshulak	44	0	139

MANNING PROVINCIAL PARK - 206					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	154	Mike McGrenere	75		154
2	145	Melissa Hafting	70		new
3	125	Wayne Weber	61		125
4	*118	Dick Cannings	57		118
5	115	Keith Riding	56		new
6	*110	Jo Ann MacKenzie	53		110
7	110	Dan Tyson	53	1	109
8	101	David Stirling	49		101
9	91	Larry Cowan	44	1	90

WEST KOOTENAY AREA - 313					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	287	Gary Davidson	92	3	284
2	275	Craig Sandvig	88	5	270
3	260	Peter McIver	83	7	253
4	254	Janice Arndt	81	3	251
5	*185	Jo Ann MacKenzie	59		185
6	182	Wayne Weber	58		182

CRESTON VALLEY AREA - 303					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	221	Craig Sandvig	73	1	220
2	215	Peter McIver	71	2	213
3	193	Gary Davidson	64		193
4	173	Janice Arndt	57		173
5	142	Wayne Weber	47		142

PEACE RIVER AREA - 272					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	245	Laird Law	90		245
2	227	Tom Plath	83		228
3	209	Tony Greenfield	77		209
4	203	Mike Toochin	75		203
5	*193	Jo Ann MacKenzie	71		193
6	184	Bryan Gates	68		184
7	179	Wayne Weber	66	8	171
8	165	Dan Tyson	61		165
9	163	David Stirling	60		163
10	157	Keith Riding	58		new
11	155	Larry Cowan	57	2	153
12	144	Lloyd Esralson	53		144
13	128	Dorothy Copp	47		128
13	128	Brian Stech	47		128

PRINCE GEORGE AREA - 297					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	275	Laird Law	93	1	274
2	274	Cathy Antoniazzi	92	3	271
3	214	Nathan Hentze	72		214
4	193	Don Wilson	65	3	190
5	168	Dan Tyson	57		168
6	*151	Peter Blokker	51		151
7	133	Gary Davidson	45		new
8	129	Larry Cowan	43		new

SUNSHINE COAST - 307					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	281	Tony Greenfield	92	1	280
2	261	Rand Rudland	85	6	255
3	257	Russ Tkachuk	84		257
4	249	John Hodges	81	8	241
5	235	Susanne Hayer	77		new
6	179	Dan Tyson	58	3	176
7	138	Wayne Weber	45		138

Haida Gwaii					
#	2017	Name		incr	2016
1	132	Mike Toochin			132
2	107	Bruce Whittington		1	106
3	97	Laird Law			97
4	78	Mike Mulligan			new
5	56	Keith Riding			new

NORTH PACIFIC PELAGIC WATERS				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	134	Mike Tootchin	3	131
2	104	Ken Morgan		104
3	85	Tom Plath		86
4	77	Bruce Whittington		77
5	70	Kevin Neill		70
6	68	David Stirling		68
7	63	Lloyd Esralson		63
8	45	Bryan Gates		45

BLACKIE SPIT (Vanc)				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	*191	Jo Ann MacKenzie		192
2	185	Wayne Weber		185
3	179	Dan Tyson	2	177
4	141	Keith Riding		new
5	121	Larry Cowan	4	117
5	121	Brian Self	6	115
7	92	Neill Vanhinsberg	4	88
8	*91	Dick Cannings		91

SEA & IONA ISLANDS (Vanc)				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	278	Mike Tootchin		278
2	275	Tom Plath		276
3	255	Keith Riding	8	247
4	241	Dan Tyson	6	235
5	238	Wayne Weber		238
6	204	Lloyd Esralson		204
7	181	Larry Cowan	1	180
8	*167	Dick Cannings		167
9	153	Neill Vanhinsberg		new

WESTHAM & REIFEL ISLANDS (Vanc)				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	226	Wayne Weber	2	224
2	221	Brian Self	8	213
3	209	Dan Tyson	2	207
4	194	Lloyd Esralson		194
5	183	Keith Riding		184
6	160	Larry Cowan	2	158
7	*148	Dick Cannings		148

Semiamhoo Peninsula (Vanc)				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	*239	Jo Ann MacKenzie		240
2	224	Carlo Giovanella	1	223
3	212	Roger Foxall	4	208
4	210	Dan Tyson	2	208

Pitt Meadows (Vanc)				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	203	Wayne Weber		203
2	196	Larry Cowan	1	195
3	157	Keith Riding		new
4	110	Neill Vanhinsberg	3	107
5	72	Ken Willis		new

KAMLOOPS AREA - 306					
#	2017	Name	%	incr	2016
1	256	Wayne Weber	84		256
2	*200	Gary Davidson	65		200
3	198	David Stirling	65		198

Salt Spring Island				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	176	Ren Ferguson	3	173
2	173	John Sprague		174
3	128	Marian Porter	2	126
4	114	Wayne Weber		114

Comox Valley				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	*247	Art Martell		247
2	242	Nathan Hentze		243
3	194	Kathryn Clouston		new

Mt. Robson PP				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	*145	Dick Cannings		145
2	142	Laird Law		142
3	120	David Stirling		120

Princeton Area				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	103	Lloyd Esralson		103
2	91	Larry Cowan		91
3	90	Bryan Gates		*90

Revelstoke				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	215	Michael Morris	4	211
2	150	Wayne Weber		150

United States (minus Hawaii)				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
1	*662	David Stirling		662
2	223	John Hodges		new

Over 1,500m				
#	2017	Name	incr	2016
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.

Vancouver Coast & Mnt.	2017	Name	+	2016
Abbotsford	215	John Vooy	3	212
Colony Farm RP	166	Larry Cowan	1	165
Derby Reach RP	*124	Ted Goshulak		124
Iona	265	Mike Tootchin		new
Maplewood CA	*211	Quentin Brown		211
Nathan Creek	75	Ted Goshulak		new
Richmond	289	Mike Tootchin		new
Trinity WU Campus	151	Ted Goshulak	1	150
Vanc. CBC Circle	303	Dan Tyson	7	296

Vancouver Island	2017	Name	+	2016
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

Kootenay/Rockies	2017	Name	+	2016
Columbia Valley	127	Bryan Gates		127
Castlegar Area	236	Craig Sandvig	15	221
Yoho NP	124	Wayne Weber		124

Northern BC	2017	Name	+	2016
Haines Triangle	88	David Stirling		88
Gwaii Haanas NP	82	Bruce Whittington	1	81

Thompson/Okanagan	2017	Name	+	2016
Nicola Watershed	254	Wayne Weber		254
North Okanagan	*253	Peter Blokker		253

Cariboo/Chilcotin	2017	Name	+	2016
Williams Lake Area	160	Bryan Gates		160

Northern Canada	2017	Name	+	2016
YK - NWT - NU	*171	Theo Hofmann ON		171

Yard Lists	2017	Name	+	2016
Saratoga Beach	153	Bryan Gates		153
Halfmoon Bay	114	Susanne Hayer		new
Oak Bay	103	Bryan Gates	1	102
Victoria	91	David Stirling		new

Bordering States	2017	Name	+	2016
Alaska	182	Wayne Weber		new
Idaho	212	Wayne Weber		new
Montana	205	Wayne Weber		new

Other	2017	Name	+	2016
ABA Birds Photographed	636	Brian Stech	20	616
World N of Arctic Circle	*138	Theo Hofmann		138
Countries birded	*63	Theo Hofmann		63
Breeding Canada species	85%	Theo Hofmann		85%

A reminder, there are other opportunities for listing areas and 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 2018. See you at the BCFO AGM and Conference in Hope this coming June. This will be a good opportunity to start or add to a Fraser Valley List.

Larry Cowan



Another take on the Boundary Bay Short-eared Owls. Photo by David Whiting.