

# BC BIRDING



Newsmagazine of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

ISSN 1206-1611

BCFO.ca

Volume 35 Number 1 / March 2025



*Short-eared Owl by Gordon F. Brown – see page 26 and back cover.*

## Welcome New Members

Franci Holtslander, Nanaimo

Asher Steed, Pitt Meadows

Brent Schmor, Mission

Georgie Harrison,  
Courtenay

Markus Duhme,  
Vancouver

Blair Dudeck, Ladysmith

Tristan Semeniuk, Nanaimo

Tory Hartley-Cox, Simcoe

Yuseon Park, Vancouver

*Above: Saffron Finches are widely distributed in South America, but have been released elsewhere, including Hawaii, where they are now plentiful.*



### AGM KEY DATES

#### April 2, 2025

April 2 Registration opens online for extension trip. (Registration for the AGM already open.)

#### May 15, 2025

Deadline for nominations to the Board of Directors.

#### May 30, 2025

Deadline for AGM registration.

#### June 13–15, 2025

BCFO 35th Conference and AGM, Dawson Creek.

#### June 15–17, 2025

Post-conference extension trip.

### ZOOM PRESENTATIONS

Zoom presentations for BCFO members take place on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM, with a focus on birds and birders' travels.

#### 19 March, 2025

*Birds of Brazil* by Ron Long.

#### 16 April 2025

*Coastal Screech-owl Populations in BC* by Toby St. Clair.

For updates see:

[bcfo.ca/zoom-presentations-schedule/](https://bcfo.ca/zoom-presentations-schedule/)

# Contents

## BCFO Notices and Notes

Welcome New Members .....	2
BCFO Officers & Directors .....	4
President's Message .....	5
AGM and Conference 2025 at Dawson Creek	
Conference Information .....	6
Schedule of Events .....	7
Field Trips .....	8
Keynote Address: Avian Cultural Evolution .....	10
Afternoon Talk: Motus .....	10
Afternoon Talks: Birdbrain .....	11
Post-Conference Extension Trip .....	12
News and Notes .....	13
Young Birder Awards .....	16

## Features

Ticking Ethics – Birds and Moths .....	17
Colombia 2024: Quest for the Harpy Eagle .....	18
Penticton CBC For Kids .....	21
Antpittas! .....	22
Five Days in Uruguay .....	24
Showdown at Edison .....	26

## Regular Columns

The Palaeo-Ornithologist: Possible Ancient Hominin-Avian Interaction ..	27
Bird Photographers' Corner: Post-Production Magic 2 .....	28
Gone Fishing – What Did You Just Say? .....	30
Poetry Corner .....	31

## Listers' Corner ..... 32

*Right: Birds Canada staff accompanied by Indigenous staff members braving the freezing cold and blustery winds to survey the waters of Boundary Bay during the 2024 Fraser Estuary Key Biodiversity Area Bird Count. See page 15.  
Photo by Gina Peters.*





**Publisher**

*BC Birding* is published four times a year by the British Columbia Field Ornithologists, PO Box 96135, 4590 Fraser St, Vancouver, BC V5V 4G0. A subscription to this quarterly (online version) is a benefit of membership in the society. A hard-copy full-colour version will be posted to members for a \$16 annual premium.

**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: \$30

Junior Membership (<19, Canada): Free

**Newsmagazine Submissions**

To submit material to this publication, contact the Editor by email ([clive\\_keen@hotmail.com](mailto:clive_keen@hotmail.com)).

Topics may include birding experiences, observations about bird behaviour, project reports, site guides, birding equipment, birding technique, specialist birding (e.g. sea-watching or hawkwatching), bird photography, trip reports, reflections on birding, and other subjects of broad interest to BC birders. Brief items are always welcome, but average submissions tend to be in the 400–800 word range. For longer submissions the maximum length is 1,500 words. Since this is a newsmagazine rather than an academic journal, formal reference lists etc tend to be inappropriate.

Articles should be in plain text, either as the content of an email, or as an attachment (preferably Word). *Photographs should be sent as separate attachments, not embedded in text.* Be sure to name the photographer and suggest a caption.

Deadlines (i.e. final dates for submission) are as follows:

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

**Advertising Rates**

Full page: \$125 per issue. Contact the editor for other options.

# BCFO Officers & Directors

**Directors**

*President:* Nathan Hentze, Victoria, 250-882-4581,

[president@bcfo.ca](mailto:president@bcfo.ca)

*Vice-President:* Charles Helm, Tumbler Ridge, 250-242-3984,

[helm.c.w@gmail.com](mailto:helm.c.w@gmail.com)

*Secretary:* Annette Bailey, 778-871-6229, [secretary@bcfo.ca](mailto:secretary@bcfo.ca)

*Treasurer:* Ian Burgess, Vancouver, 604-889-4472,

[ianburgess.bcfo@gmail.com](mailto:ianburgess.bcfo@gmail.com)

Megan Buers, Kelowna, 250-469-0810,

[meganbuers@gmail.com](mailto:meganbuers@gmail.com)

Krista Kaptein, Courtenay, 250-338-9962,

[websiteadmin@bcfo.ca](mailto:websiteadmin@bcfo.ca)

Mark Phinney, Dawson Creek, 250-843-2318,

[badgreenbird@gmail.com](mailto:badgreenbird@gmail.com)

Rachel Darvill, Golden, 250-348-2371,

[racheldarvill@gmail.com](mailto:racheldarvill@gmail.com)

Kaitlyn York, Maple Ridge, 250-843-2318,

[kaitlyork.bcfo@gmail.com](mailto:kaitlyork.bcfo@gmail.com)

**Responsibilities**

*2025 AGM Planning Team:* Mark Phinney, Charles Helm, Ian Burgess, Nathan Hentze, Krista Kaptein

*Archivist:* Les Gyug

*BC Birding (Newsmagazine) Editor:* Clive Keen; print distribution: Kaitlyn York

*British Columbia Birds (Journal) Editor:* Nathan Hentze,

*Production Editor & BC Birds Website:* Daryl Henderson

*Membership Secretary:* Krista Kaptein

*Two-day Trips:* Paul Foth

*Website:* Krista Kaptein, Verena Shaw

*Zoom Presentation Coordinator:* Kaitlyn York and Megan Buers

*Christmas Bird Count Compiler:* Verena Shaw

**Committees**

*BC Bird Records Committee:* Joachim Bertrands, Chair (Victoria), Blair Dudeck, Jeremy Gatten (Saanichton), Ian Cruickshank (Victoria), Liron Gertsman (Vancouver), Michael Force (Kelowna), Mark Phinney (Dawson Creek).

*Steve Cannings Award Committee:* Gary Davidson (Chair), Charles Helm, Clive Keen.

*Education and Conservation Committee:* Stephen Partington, Art Martell, Charles Helm (Chair), Nathan Hentze, Marian Porter.

*Young Birders Awards Committee Chair:* Nathan Hentze, Rachel Darvill.

# President's Message

*Nathan Hentze, Victoria*

These are uncertain and anxious times in society. And in such times, it is important to have community, in whatever way that looks for you. I hope that BCFO contributes meaningfully to your birding community, and through our programs and events brings some happiness. I know that for many, the act of birding on its own can be therapeutic. But what about the birds themselves? Do they take any solace from their actions or surroundings?

I don't know the answer to that, but during a brief period in my past I was spending a fair bit of time on the tops of mountains doing wildlife surveys. Part of that included running radar throughout the night in an effort to determine how many, and how high, birds were flying to get an idea of the potential impact of proposed wind turbines. It was exhausting work, better done by those in their twenties as I was then, trying to stay awake through the night measuring dots on a monitor and transcribing them.

Just before sunrise, as those dots plummeted to terra firma in search of food and shelter before the next night's journey, we would turn the radar off and have a quick break before seeing what birds had dropped in, or what mammals' tracks were visible in the snow. At one site on the eastern flank of the Rocky Mountains there was a particularly awesome vantage, looking east past peaks and forest and meandering rivers, with hardly a trace that humans existed at all, and I would sit and watch the sunrise. It was a moment of detached relaxation, sandwiched between gratefulness that I hadn't succumbed to a hungry Grizzly, and hopefulness that the helicopter would eventually return to collect me.

The initial morning of that expedition, as I sat bracing for the first warm

rays of light, I heard the comical chuckling of a Willow Ptarmigan from the shrubline below. As I sat still, the ptarmigan wandered up to a prominent rock not far from my position. We both stared eastwards until the sun had cleared the horizon. Seemingly satisfied that it too had survived another night, but probably unaware of helicopters, it let out a contended "Go-back" and retreated to its willowy haunts. I didn't see any ptarmigan during the day, but again the next morning, following the same routine, I and the ptarmigan welcomed another rotation around the sun. This continued for the next couple mornings until indeed the helicopter returned.

I don't pretend that I meant anything to that ptarmigan, I'm not even sure it was aware I was there at all, and I don't claim to know its motivations. But that ptarmigan lives on in my mind, and I think about it often.

While I can't promise enlightened encounters with Galliformes or profound Phasianids (a sage grouse?), if you are searching for connection with your fellow birders, please consider your own trek east of the Rocky Mountains, and join us for the 2025 BCFO AGM and conference, this June in Dawson Creek. Details on that can be found in this issue. Or if you prefer to engage with your fellow birders without having

## Board Nominations Open

At the Dawson Creek Conference and AGM one (1) Board member is standing down after long service (the maximum allowable time on the board without break is six consecutive years). In accordance with BCFO policy, nominations are now open for election to the Board of Directors. Please consider stepping up to add your input and guidance for the future direction of BCFO. Self-nominations require endorsement from an existing BCFO member. Alternatively, if you know of a BCFO member well suited to the role, please forward their name.

Nominations must be received by the Board at least 30 days prior to the scheduled AGM, and so need to be received by May 15 at the latest. If no nominations are received, the Board will seek to find suitable candidates from the membership.

BCFO strives to be inclusive of the diversity within the provincial birding community, and all are welcome to apply. To express your interest in being nominated, or to seek additional information, please contact Nathan Hentze, BCFO President, at [president@bcfo.ca](mailto:president@bcfo.ca).

to be around them, check out the roster of upcoming Zoom presentations, and check out the BCFO YouTube channel for past presentations (only a couple added so far but more are in the works). And if you have an interest in helping out the organization by leading field trips in your area, or providing assistance with web design or social media, or other topics that interest you, please reach out.

And as always, happy birding.

*Below: Willow Ptarmigan courtesy of Mark Phinney, who will be leading trips at this year's conference and AGM.*





## BCFO 35<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE & AGM, June 13 – 15, 2025, Dawson Creek, BC

# Conference Information

### Location

The conference will be based at George Dawson Inn, 11705 8th St, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4N9.

*We acknowledge that we will be meeting and birding within the traditional territory of the Treaty 8 First Nations, the home of the Cree, Dane-Zaa, Saulteau, Sikanni and Slavey people.*

### Accommodation

40 rooms (two queen beds) have been set aside at the George Dawson Inn at a conference rate of \$129 + fees & taxes. This rate includes breakfast. This rate is for two people; there is a small upcharge for any extra people in the room.

To book a room, call 250-782-9151 Monday–Friday between 7:00 AM and 3:00 PM and speak to Diana; mention that you are attending the BCFO conference. This block of rooms is available until May 30.

There are numerous other hotels and motels in Dawson Creek: the closest to the George Dawson Inn are the Ramada, the Aurora Park Inn and the Days Inn.

### Getting to the Conference

#### Driving

Distance from Vancouver: approx 1200 km; from Kelowna: 1100 km; from Prince George: 400 km.

#### Flying & Car Rental

Fly into Fort St John and drive 75 km south; or fly into Grande Prairie and

drive 130 km northwest; or fly into Prince George and drive 400 kms north. (Check rental car rates. Some do not offer unlimited mileage.)

### Registration

You must be a paid-up BCFO Member for 2025. You can renew or join at:

[bcfo.ca/joinrenew-2](https://bcfo.ca/joinrenew-2)

#### To Register Online

Go to the AGM & Conference Registration & Payment page at:

[bcfo.ca/agm-conference-registration-payment/](https://bcfo.ca/agm-conference-registration-payment/)

To log in, use your member password, which you will have received by email when you joined or renewed.

#### To Register by Post

Send your registration information and payment to BC Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 96135, 4590 Fraser St, Vancouver, BC V5V 4G0. Cheques or money orders should be made payable to British Columbia Field Ornithologists.

*Below: Aspen woodland, one of many habitats to be explored during conference field trips. Photo by Mark Phinney.*



### Conference Fees

#### Full Conference Registration

The normal fee is \$195 per person. For Young Birders (under 19 years of age) the reduced fee is \$90. Both fees include Friday evening meet & greet, lunches, Saturday evening dinner & keynote speaker, plus all field trips and talks.

#### Social Only

The fee is \$75, which includes Friday evening meet & greet, and Saturday dinner & keynote speaker, but not field trips, lunches, afternoon presentations or AGM meeting.

#### Deadlines and Cancellations

AGM registrations & payments must be received by BCFO by May 30. Participation in the AGM is not possible without payment of applicable fee(s) by the registration deadline. Refunds will be considered for cancellation before May 30. Since costs will have been incurred, refunds cannot be given for cancellations after this date.

---

**BCFO 35<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE & AGM, June 13 – 15, 2025, Dawson Creek, BC**

---

## Schedule of Events

### Friday, June 13

**Registration, Social and Saturday Field Trip Signup: 5:00 PM until 8:00 PM** at the George Dawson Inn, Tremblay Room. Pick up your conference registration package and socialize with fellow birders. There will be appetizers and a cash bar. Sign the conference waiver form; review the BCFO Code of Ethics and make your field trip selections for Saturday morning.

### Saturday, June 14

**Breakfast:** For those staying at the George Dawson Inn, Breakfast will be available at 5:00 AM in the Tremblay Room. The hotel restaurant is open for guests and non-guests, and Tim Hortons and McDonald's are across the street. Meet in the parking lot at 5:20 for field trip departure at 5:30 sharp! Snacks & drinks will be available during the field trips to hold people over until lunch.

**Conference Field Trips:** 5:30 AM sharp departures from the George Dawson Inn parking area; return approx 11:30.

Trip #1: McQueen Slough, Comstock marsh, north of Rolla (access to some sites may be weather/road dependent)

Trip #2: Swan Lake & Road 201

Trip #3: Taylor (Big Bam & Johnson Roads)

Trip #4: Bear Mtn/Radar Lake / Pasture Road (exact route will depend on road conditions)

Trip #5: Brassey Creek & Arras

**Lunch:** 12:00 to 1:00 PM in the Tremblay Room .

**Afternoon Speakers:** 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Amie MacDonald & Kianna Leung (Bird Studies Canada) *Tracking birds and bats in northern BC with the MOTUS wildlife tracking system* followed by Sandra Milligan (North Island College) *Birdbrain?!*

**Annual General Meeting:** 3:00 PM. Signup sheets for the Sunday-morning field trips will be available just after the AGM.

**Social with Cash Bar:** 5:30 to 6:30 PM.

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

**Steve Cannings Award Presentation:** 7:30 PM.

**Keynote Speaker:** 7:45. Dr Ken Otter, UNBC – *Drivers of Cultural Evolution in White-throated Sparrow Song – Lessons from Citizen Science Initiatives.*

### Sunday, June 15

**Breakfast:** As above.

**Morning Field Trips:** As above, departing at 5:30 AM from the George Dawson Inn parking area.

**Lunch:** 12:00 to 1:00 PM. Tally-up of bird species on summary charts.

**Farewell**



---

**BCFO 35<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE & AGM, June 13 – 15, 2025, Dawson Creek, BC**


---

## Field Trips

### Note

For all field trips, check the weather forecast and dress appropriately. If rain is recent or expected, waterproof boots will be helpful. Mosquitoes may be present in vicious blood-thirsty clouds, completely absent, or somewhere in between depending on seasonal moisture. Temperatures could range from near freezing to +30. Welcome to the Boreal Forest!

---

### Trip #1. McQueen's Slough, Comstock/Lakeview, north of Rolla

(Some sites will depend on road conditions.)

McQueen's Slough is approximately 15 minutes drive from the hotel. Walking is on flat terrain out and back on local trails (1.5 km max). There will be a brief demonstration of the onsite MOTUS tower by Birds Canada staff prior to departing McQueen's Slough.

Comstock/ Lakeview is viewed from an elevated distance / parking area

(roads permitting; no walking). A spotting scope is recommended; the trip leader will have at least one. Side trip north of Rolla (Doe River area) to search for Upland Sandpiper (roadside). Both wetlands are quite dry due to prolonged drought. Hopefully the water level will have recovered somewhat by June. Probable birds include: Eared & Horned Grebes, Trumpeter Swan, various ducks including Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Pintail, Redhead, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck & others, Harrier, Merlin, Sora, American Coot, Upland Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Wilson's Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Black Tern, House Wren, Marsh Wren, Yellow Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Common Grackle and more.

---

### Trip #2. Swan Lake and Road 201

Swan Lake is approximately 25 minutes drive from the hotel. A scan of the

north end of the lake from the boat launch area may turn up some waterbirds; easy walking around the immediate area to find forest birds. Then drive to Road 201 and walk a gravelled road for more forest birds. Easy walking as far or as little as desired: a few hundred metres at most. Scope will be helpful for Swan Lake. Probable birds include: Common Loon, Common Goldeneye, Red-necked Grebe, Bald Eagle, Franklin's Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, other oddities on the lake, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Tennessee Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow (red), Baltimore Oriole.

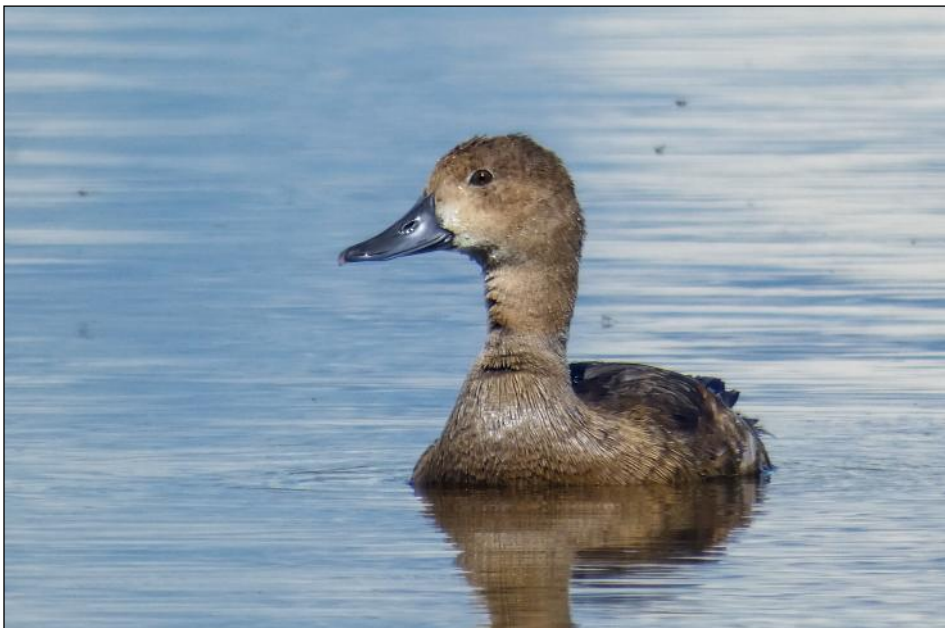
---

### Trip #3: Taylor (Big Bam & Johnson Roads)

The south Taylor Hill parking lot is an approximately 30-minute drive from the hotel. This will be a driving trip with periodic stops at birdy locations in river-bottom forest. Pre-conference scouting will search for Sharp-tailed Grouse, Upland Sandpiper and Ruby-throated Hummingbird; if the birds are present, additional roadside stops will be added.

Other probable birds include: Ruffed Grouse, Calliope Hummingbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Red-eyed Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Canada Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Purple Finch.

*Below: Redheads are "probable" at McQueen Slough. Mark Phinney photo.*





---

**BCFO 35<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE & AGM, June 13 – 15, 2025, Dawson Creek, BC**


---

### **Trip #4. Bear Mountain / Radar Lake, Pasture Road**

The exact route will depend on current road conditions; approximately 15–20 minute drive from the hotel. Mostly roadside birding in aspen and mixedwood forest; possibly some more open habitats – maybe some very short walking distances. Moisture level will determine whether or not some species are likely to be found. Probable species include: Horned Grebe, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Sora, Ruffed Grouse, Solitary Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Canada Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Clay-colored Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, Purple Finch. A VERY close-up view of the Bear Mountain Wind Farm (the first in BC) is possible depending on road conditions and priorities.

---

### **Trip #5. Brassey Creek & Arras**

The famed Brassey Creek area isn't what it used to be (bird-wise), but still holds a good variety of NE BC birds. This will be a driving trip with roadside stops. Short forays into the forest (<50m) may be required to see some species. Forest type will be aspen and mixed spruce aspen and pine-aspen forest, and alder and willow brush. This trip includes a stop at the trip leader's yard and bird-feeder setup on our way back to town. Probable (and possible) birds include: Ruffed Grouse, Wilson's



*Sharp-tailed Grouse are possible on Trip #3. Mark Phinney photo.*

Snipe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Tennessee Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Mourning Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Common Grackle, Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak.

and as a long-time resident of Dawson Creek, he knows the people and the area very well.

#### **Inge-Jean Hansen or Brian Paterson**

Inge-Jean and Brian are local wildlife biologists with lots of bird experience.

#### **Joan Kerr & Jeanne Smith**

Both are experienced birders, BC Bird Atlas participants and Christmas Bird Count participants from Beaverlodge, Alberta. Joan travels extensively in northeast BC every year to increase her annual bird list!

#### **Andrew Tyrrell**

Andrew is a professional Forester and experienced birder based in Fort St John, and has previously led birding field trips.

#### **Mark Phinney**

Mark is a wildlife biologist and BCFO director, based in Arras. He is a longstanding birder with considerable experience in leading birding trips.

---

### **Field Trip Leaders**

#### **Al Mottishaw**

Al is a member of the Timberline Trail and Nature Club and regional Board Member of the BC Hydro Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (Peace Region). He has only been birding for a few years but has quickly become familiar with most of the local species,

## Keynote Address: Avian Cultural Evolution

*Ken Otter*

### Drivers of Cultural Evolution in White-throated Sparrow Song – lessons from citizen-science initiatives

Starting over 25 years ago, my colleagues and I began tracking the emergence and spread of novel song variants in the White-throated Sparrow. However, our understanding of how broadly and quickly song can spread between far-flung populations only started to emerge in the past decade with the proliferation of citizen science sound databases and other continental-scale ornithological initiatives. As people began to share their local recordings to sound libraries, it created a database equivalent to the effort of thousands of field assistants contributing recordings at a continental scale. Coupling this with advancements in tracking technology, such as Geolocators and MOTUS networks, we have been able to identify the emergence and

patterns of spread of new song variants, and link these to birds learning these songs from tutors during periods of the year when populations overlap. I will be sharing how these new approaches to ornithology have helped us decipher cultural evolution of song in White-throated Sparrows, but also where emerging technologies might take us from here.

### About the Speaker

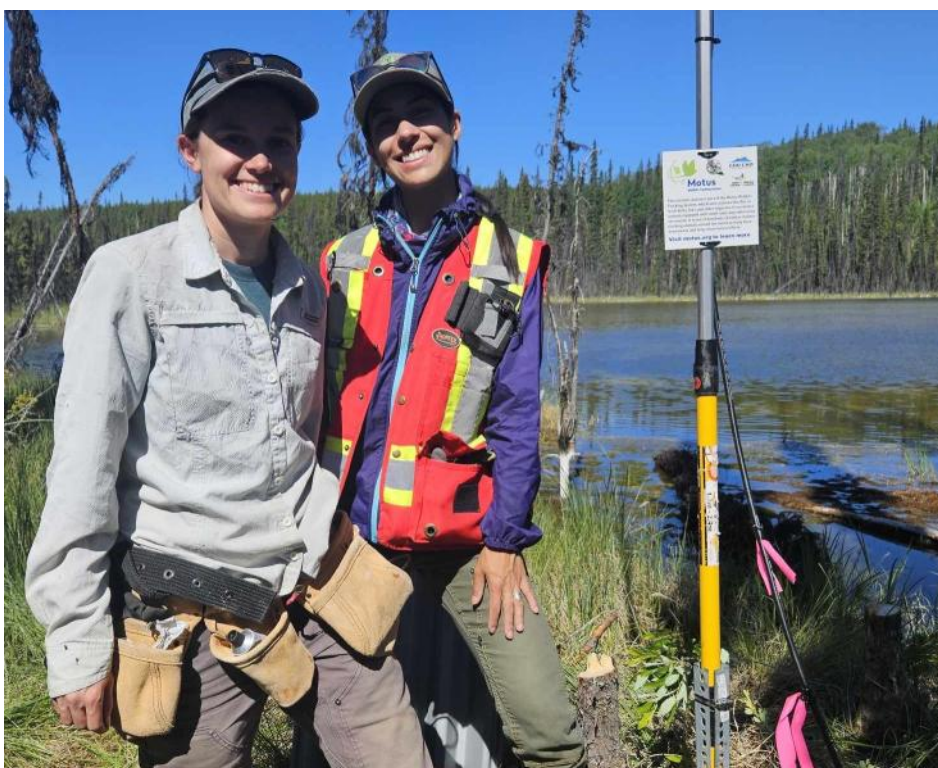
Dr Ken Otter completed a BSc in Zoology at UBC in 1990, then worked at the Vancouver Aquarium for 1.5 years as a Naturalist before returning to do a MSc and PhD in avian behavioural ecology (mainly on communication and mating strategies in chickadees) at Queen's University between 1991–1996.

After a year of teaching in the U.S. (Kansas), he was offered an NSERC Postdoctoral Fellowship to continue working on communication and mating tactics at the Universities of Nottingham and Copenhagen, which is what he was working on before being



Above: White-throated sparrow.  
Photo by Krista Kaptein.

offered the faculty position at UNBC in 1999. He has been at UNBC ever since, and his research has largely focused on the impact of anthropogenic disturbance in various forms on bird communication, behaviour and movement. This has ranged from using chickadees as a subject group to study the impacts of forest harvesting and urbanization on forest birds, to assessing the impact of wind development on bird migration. Somewhere in the middle of all of this, we noticed that the White-throated Sparrows in central BC were singing a song variant that we had never heard before, and it led to a 25-year sideline project of tracking the cultural evolution of White-throated Sparrow song across North America.



## Afternoon Talk: Motus

*Amie MacDonald  
& Kianna Leung*

**Tracking birds and bats in northern British Columbia and beyond with the Motus Wildlife Tracking System**

The Motus Wildlife Tracking System is an international collaborative research

*Left: Amie MacDonald  
and Kianna Leung at a Motus station.*



network that uses automated radio telemetry to track birds, bats, and insects. Since 2021, collaborating organizations and individuals have established a network of over 20 Motus receiver stations in northeastern and northcentral BC, and we have used Motus to track the migration routes of White-throated Sparrows and Bank Swallows, gaining insights into the ecology of these birds breeding in the region. Collaborators have also begun to track the local movements of bats, and birds tagged as far away as Costa Rica by independent Motus projects have been detected on Motus stations in northern BC.

Motus continues to grow worldwide and in northern BC – we are beginning a new initiative using Motus to monitor Bank Swallows' use of wetlands as foraging and roosting habitat during the breeding season, and we aim to continue supporting researchers and projects using the Motus array in northern BC.

## The Speakers

Amie MacDonald is the British Columbia Motus Coordinator with Birds Canada. She is working to support the development of the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, and to help researchers and conservationists successfully use Motus across the province. She also works on projects studying population demography of endangered Red Knots and movement ecology of shorebirds in the Fraser River Estuary.

Kianna Leung is the British Columbia Motus Technician with Birds Canada. Since 2022, she has worked alongside Amie to help further expand the Motus Wildlife Tracking System in Western Canada and has assisted with the development and implementation of Motus-based research and conservation projects across northern BC.

# Afternoon Talk: Birdbrain

*Sandra Milligan*

## How “birdbrain” evolved from an insult

Discover the fascinating journey of how the term “bird brain” evolved from an insult to a testament of remarkable intelligence, revealing the surprising cognitive prowess of our feathered friends. Sandra will delve into the history of our understanding of avian neuroanatomy, illustrating the shift from viewing birds as mere automatons to recognizing their diverse forms of intelligence. Focusing on corvids, she will share captivating videos and stories that highlight the remarkable evolutionary journey of these intelligent creatures, inviting us to celebrate their extraordinary abilities. The aim of this talk is to inspire us all to observe birds more closely, try to understand their language, and perhaps even engage in a conversation.

## The Speaker

Sandra Milligan has been a university biology instructor at North Island College in Campbell River for over two decades. With graduate degrees in Neuroscience, she has evolved into a generalist, naturalist, and lifelong learner. As an environmental advocate and educator, Sandra has been honoured with the Local Environmental Hero

Award, the Canada 150 Land Trust Honour Roll, and the Campbell River Stewardship Special Recognition award. She delights in sharing her passion for the natural world with the public, regularly hosting Public Walks and Talks on a variety of topics such as intertidal tours, heart dissections, plant reproduction, and making birding more accessible. Recently, her interests have focused on bird behaviour and language. Sandra's exploration of new neuroscience research reveals the remarkable complexity and intelligence of “bird brains” confirming what many of us have long suspected: that birds are smart, caring problem-solvers that rival the highest primates with their abilities.

*Below: Sandra Milligan.*





## Post-Conference Extension Trip

### Go North! June 15–17, 2025

#### Registration

Registration is online only, opening at 9:00 AM on April 2. It is limited to 15 participants on a first-come first-served basis. A waitlist will be kept after the first 15 places have been filled.

Participants must be members of BCFO and must have registered and paid for the AGM & Conference.

#### Cost

The cost for the Extension Trip is \$150 per person, which does not include meals and accommodation. The cost includes a contribution to the BCFO Conservation & Education Fund.

#### Transport

Carpooling will be necessary. Roads (especially to Pink Mountain) will be scouted prior to the trip and registrants will receive updates on the state of the roads and available vehicles. Vehicles with good clearance and AWD or 4WD are recommended.

If participants prove not to have sufficient suitable vehicles, there is an option to rent in Fort St John. This would add to the cost and will be discussed in advance with registrants.

### Trip Overview

#### Sunday, June 15

Participants will leave Dawson Creek after the conference at 2:00 PM and head first to Clayhurst and then to Boundary Lake. Upland Sandpiper, Palm Warbler and waterbirds will be among the targets. We then head to Fort St John, stopping at Fish Creek if there is time. Motel in Fort St John.

#### Monday, June 16

Early in the morning we bird around Charlie Lake and Beatton Park for a

couple of hours, looking for Canada, Bay-breasted and Cape May Warblers, Winter Wren and others. We then head north to Pink Mountain, a two-to-three-hour drive each way, seeking Rock Ptarmigan and more.

NOTE: Pink Mountain is at 1700 metres elevation, so dress accordingly. We will bird for a few hours, then return, perhaps stopping at a couple of spots north of Fort St John depending on time & weather.

Dinner in Fort St John; night in same motel.

#### Tuesday, June 17

This morning we will search for any birds we've missed around Fort St John. There may be a trip to the sewage lagoons if permission is granted.

Participants can depart on their own time. Currently, Air Canada and WestJet each have several flights per day leaving Fort St John airport.

*Below: Dusky Grouse photographed by trip leader Mark Phinney.*

#### Trip Leader

The trip leader is Mark Phinney, a wildlife biologist and BCFO director, based in Arras. Mark is a longstanding birder with considerable experience in leading birding trips.

### Self-guided Alternative

For those seeking an alternative to this post-conference trip – particularly those in search of ptarmigan – a DIY trip to the Tumbler Ridge area is recommended. White-tailed Ptarmigan are the most often seen, though all three ptarmigan species are possible. A trip would require a vehicle with some clearance, and will involve some hiking (briefly strenuous) to reach the flat alpine zone. For those interested, maps or instructions can be provided at the conference.



# News & Notes

## BCFO Board Deliberations

*Nathan Hentze, President*

The most recent board meeting was held via Zoom on February 6, 2025. Below are highlights of discussions at that meeting.

### BC Birding

The Directors were reminded of the importance of their role in reviewing draft issues of the newsmagazine. Clive agreed to extend the review period from several days to a week under the condition that more directors provide feedback.

### Zoom Presentations

Most of the slots for Zoom presentations are filled for the remainder of 2025. A couple presentations have been uploaded to the BCFO YouTube channel, and more will be processed soon as time and capacity allows.

### Education and Conservation Committee

The committee continues to review applicants as they come in. No outstanding requests remain, and any interested individuals or groups are encouraged to review the application requirements.

### 2025 Conference/AGM

A significant amount of time was spent discussing the upcoming conference/AGM at Dawson Creek and post-conference fieldtrips. The board also discussed options for the 2026 AGM. Further details on the 2025 AGM and conference are presented on the website and in this newsmagazine.

### Territorial Acknowledgement

The Board is currently reviewing wording of a draft territorial acknowledgment.

### Nominations for Director

One vacancy on the BCFO Board of Directors will open following the June AGM. Nominations for director will be posted in the newsmagazine and on the website in accordance with BCFO policy.

## Barbara Begg

**9 August, 1936 – 25 January, 2025**

Barbara Begg (Sidney) was a longstanding and active member of BCFO, joining the organization in 1993 and maintaining her membership ever since. Following are two of the memorial messages sent to the Victoria birding listserv.

*Ann Nightingale, Saanichton*

Barbara Begg has been a fixture in the local birding community since the 1950s. I met her early in my birding career and was inspired by her knowledge and her energy.

Barbara led Christmas Bird Count zones, served on records committees, welcomed new birders with enthusiasm and was the epitome of a self-reliant woman. In recent years, before his passing, she was often in the company of David Stirling, another "pioneer" in the Victoria birding scene and beyond.

From the *Birds of the World* Eurasian Skylark account: "This account is dedicated to David Stirling and Barbara R. Begg, members of the Victoria Natural History Society, who have monitored populations of Sky Larks on southern Vancouver Island since the late 1950s and have introduced countless New World birders to this Old World species."

Barbara was known around the continent as the "Skylark lady" until the confluence of the decline of the species in our area and issues with her vision prevented her from continuing to be the main contact for visitors seeking this species for their life lists. Most just head to Hawaii now as they are more

reliable there. She managed the Rare Bird Alert quick response team for many years, fielding and making calls to get others on their targets long before WhatsApp and other direct messaging tools existed. She participated in pretty much every kind of birding survey, from the Breeding Bird Atlas and annual surveys, Coastal Bird surveys and others. She wrote articles for Nature Victoria's (VNHS) Naturalist magazine and was one of the most knowledgeable people around about the status of birds in our area.

She hasn't been as active in recent years (hey, she was 88!), but I still considered her a go-to resource for information you really couldn't get elsewhere. She will be missed.

*Val George, Victoria*

Barbara's passing is very sad news. When I moved to Victoria about 15 years ago my nemesis bird for my BC checklist was Harris's Sparrow – not a very rare species, but I'd never managed to catch up with one in over 40 years birding in the province. Barbara reported one that had been coming to her feeder for a few days, so I went out to try for it. Nobody else was there so I was standing on the road watching her feeder when Barbara came out and told me the bird was coming to the feeder a few times each day. So she invited me in to sit in the comfort of her living room while I watched for the bird's appearance.

Over the course of the next hour or so she fed me coffee and cookies and regaled me with many stories of her birding episodes on Vancouver Island. The sparrow eventually appeared and I left not only getting my nemesis bird but with far more knowledge of the birding I could look forward to in my new birding area. I think this little story epitomizes Barbara's relationship with the birding community – always more than willing to share her vast knowledge of birds and to do so in a very friendly way. May she rest in peace after a very fulfilled life.



## BC Bird Alerts

Since the deadline for the December edition of this magazine, the following alerts were issued:

- BLACK PHOEBE, Langley, Jan 9–Feb 2
- BRAMBLING, Richmond, Jan 3–7
- GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE, Victoria, Dec 30–Jan 14
- TUFTED DUCK, Duncan, Dec 18–24; Jan 12–25
- SUMMER TANAGER, Delta, Dec 15–18
- WHOOPER SWAN, Abbotsford, Dec 6–24; Jan 10–25
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, Squamish, Dec 3–11
- BLACK PHOEBE, Cape Scott, Nov 26
- PAINTED BUNTING, Revelstoke, Nov 16–23
- BRAMBLING, Duncan, Nov 17th

See [bcbirdalert.blogspot.com](http://bcbirdalert.blogspot.com)

## Wisdom Blooms Eternal

Media around the world have been reporting with great delight that Wisdom the Laysan Albatross **IS BACK** at her usual nesting spot on Midway Atoll.

Wisdom, at 74 the oldest-known wild bird in the world, was first banded on Midway Atoll in 1956 by Chandler Robbins, who the older among us will treasure as the author of *The Golden Guide* (i.e. *Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification*). Wisdom was a nesting adult when he banded her, and since Laysan Albatrosses are known not to breed before the age of five, she is *at least* 74, and could be even older.

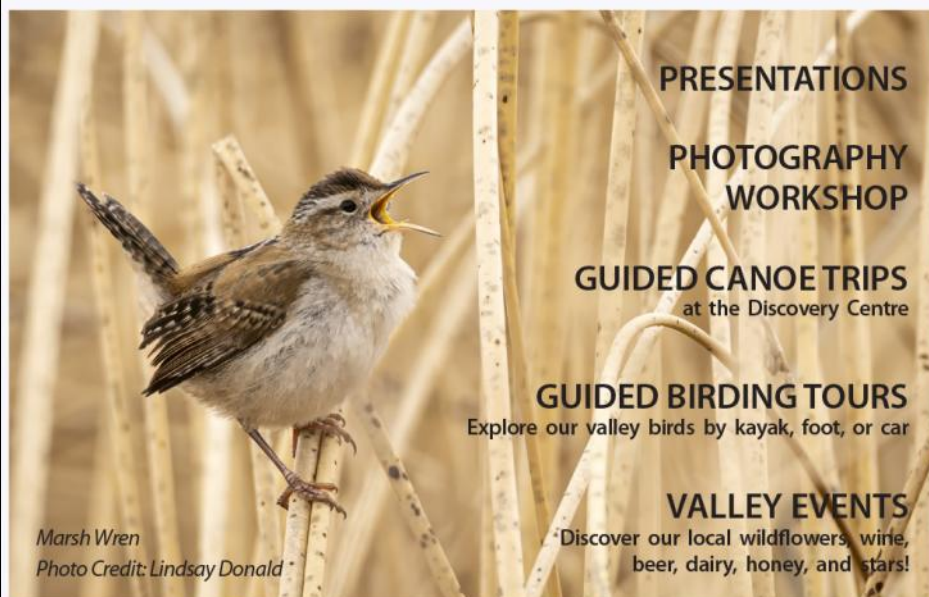
Not only did Wisdom return to Midway Atoll, but she was soon seen doing a courtship dance with a new suitor, and has since been sitting on an egg, perhaps the 60th she has produced. A grand lady indeed.

# CRESTON VALLEY BIRD FEST 2025



*Where the Birds Are ...*

**MAY 9 -12**



**Registration opens April 2nd**

**[www.crestonvalleybirds.ca](http://www.crestonvalleybirds.ca)**

## Start Them Early

Elaine Moore's report of the Nelson Christmas Bird Count included this delightful comment:

"We had our youngest birder ever this year – the two-year-old grandson of one of our participants. He was able to identify, without prompting, Canada Goose, Mallard, Common Merganser, and Bufflehead, plus a Bald Eagle as they were leaving – pretty amazing for such a little guy! Then he asked his grandmother to look up Goldeneye when they got home so he could identify them when he saw them again. He

only lasted an hour because it was cold so close to the lake, but wow!"

## Anna's Hummingbirds

A charming and informative video on Anna's Hummingbirds, following the photographic studies of Eric Pittman in Esquimalt, can now be seen at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=g02Ss3xgABc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g02Ss3xgABc)

Thoroughly recommended.



## Year of the Great Gray

BC Birders are used to irruptions of Snowy Owls. We know all about lemmings cycles. But the 2024–25 winter has been all about Great Grays rather than Snowies. Christmas Bird Counts around the province have added multiple exclamation marks next to the number of GGs spotted. In Prince George, the photographic society has been reduced to yawns when yet another Great Gray photo is shown. So, what has been going on?

Apparently voles, rather than lemmings, have been the unwilling stars of this show. They first, rather generously, allowed themselves to be eaten in large numbers. This led to a GG baby boom followed by an understandable shortage of cooperative voles. So in the winter of 2024–25, all those youngster GGs found themselves having to go without or move on. All a bit like Generation Z looking to buy a house in Vancouver.

---

## Fraser Estuary and Ladner Bird Counts

*Rémi Torrenta, Birds Canada*

In late 2024 birders flocked out in numbers for two important annual bird counts south of Vancouver.

### Fraser Estuary

The annual Fraser Estuary Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) Bird Count took place on November 24–25, 2024, during which 76 volunteer participants collectively submitted 230 bird checklists and observed 143 bird species from land and at sea. Highlights included rare species such as Red Knot, Ruff and Parasitic Jaeger. 2024 was the highest count of Dunlin since the first KBA survey in 2018, with more than 78,000 individuals detected. The eBird Report can be found at:

[ebird.org/tripreport/296696](https://ebird.org/tripreport/296696)

### Ladner CBC

The annual Ladner Christmas Bird Count took place on December 15, 2024 for its 68th year. A total of 113 people took part (highest participation since 2020), and 139 bird species were recorded on count day. The eBird report can be found at:

[ebird.org/tripreport/293457](https://ebird.org/tripreport/293457)

While the group from the BC Young Birders Program were trying to brave the high seas to count marine birds, a partly-accessible event was held at Reifel, which proves that everyone is welcome to participate in those fun counts and social gatherings.

### Thanks!

Birds Canada would like to thank all the dedicated birders of the Metro Vancouver Area, as well as count leaders/organizers and the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for their financial support. We also want to express our gratitude to the Indigenous participants.

Next year's counts are scheduled for Sunday, November 16, 2025 for the Fraser KBA Count, and Sunday, December 14, 2025 for the Ladner CBC. You can sign up for Birds Canada's eNews by visiting [birdscanada.org/enews](https://birdscanada.org/enews) to receive updates and information about such bird events and other conservation initiatives.

---

## Wings over The Rockies Nature Festival 2025

*Elizabeth M Shopland, Festival Event Planner*

The Wings over the Rockies Nature Festival, May 5–11, 2025, is based out of Invermere, BC. For 28 years, we have hosted a premier seven-day nature festival to celebrate the Upper Columbia Valley. Our mission is at the heart of everything we do: supporting and promoting conservation, education, stewardship, and sustainable eco-

nomics development in our beautiful valley. This year's festival features over 90+ incredible events, including field excursions, engaging luncheon and evening presentations, our annual photo contest and an online auction. Highlights also include a special film screening of the documentary "Wildflowers", the much-anticipated music event with multi-award-winning Canadian legend Harry Manx, and our traditional Gala Celebration—a sit-down dinner and presentation featuring keynote speaker Dr Rob Butler, renowned ornithologist, author, and artist.

### What We Do Together Matters

Last year, the non-profit Wings over the Rockies Nature Festival Society, through the Columbia Valley Foundation, created the Ross MacDonald Memorial Legacy Fund. This legacy fund provides funding for projects in the Columbia Valley that support community environmental education and/or land-based conservation such as habitat restoration, maintaining or improving ecological conditions, or species at risk protection. Each year, the success of our festival, in part, contributes to this important legacy fund.

### The 2025 Theme

This year our events will centre around the theme "Our Place in Nature". Through thought-provoking presentations, immersive field experiences, and inspiring discussions, our keynote speaker, presenters, and field leaders will guide attendees in celebrating the wonders of nature while deepening our understanding of our place within it. Together, we'll explore perspectives that connect us to our diverse cultures, rich histories, and our shared responsibility for the planet we call home.

The 2025 online Events Calendar preview will begin March 27, 10:00 AM MDT. Online ticket sales will begin April 8, 10:00 AM MDT.

[www.wingsovertherockies.org](https://www.wingsovertherockies.org)

## Young Birder Awards

The 2025 Young Birders' awards will be announced in the June edition of this magazine. Meanwhile, here are some photographs of the 2024 recipients.

Receiving his plaque to the right is Seth Benoit, and below, Adam Ross.

Seth Benoit is a 15-year-old birder living on a remote property in the Monashee Mountains north of Christian Valley in the Kootenay Boundary region. His passion for birding was apparently instilled in him by his grandmother, who claims he was saying "woodpecker" before he could talk!

Adam is also 15 years old and first came to our birding community when he ran into a Christmas Bird Count team near Panama Flats. It wasn't long before Adam was participating in bird walks, showing up at rare bird stakeouts, birding with others, and building his eBird list. The following summer, he joined as a volunteer with Rocky Point Bird Observatory and started studying birds up close and personal.



## THE BCFO YOUNG BIRDER AWARD

This award, inaugurated in 2014, is given to outstanding youth birders, aged 11 to 18, in recognition of their accomplishments, contributions, and engagement with birds and birding in the province. The award welcomes these talented young birders into the birding community. Nominations are sought annually for qualified young birders.

Each recipient of a Young Birder Award receives a plaque, a BCFO ballcap, free BCFO membership (electronic) until age 19, plus other contributed awards.

To be selected for a Young Birder Award, recipients must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be at least 11 years of age, and no more than 18 years of age as of January 1st of the year of the Award.
- Have demonstrated exceptional observational and birding skills well beyond the "novice" level.
- Have made significant contribution to activities in the birding community such as: posting to listservs, entering data to eBird, or participating in local surveys, bird counts, bird banding, and field trips.
- Be nominated by a BCFO member who has knowledge of the candidate, their birding skills, and their contributions to the birding community.

If you know of a potential candidate for this award, contact any of the BCFO Directors – see page 4 for addresses.





# Ticking Ethics – Birds and Moths

*Ben Keen, Bowen Island*

*This essay was written for Ben's mothing blog, but will be of equal interest to birders – Editor.*

Something well-known to the birder is the conundrum of ticking ethics. When are you allowed to count having seen a bird?

It's not as cut and dried as some might think. Often you get poor views of a bird; it's in bad light; the bird is flying away from you; it's too far away; the bird's being a jerk and hiding behind leaves. Or maybe you don't even see the bird; you only hear it. When these things happen, many birders are thrown into a tizzy about whether or not they can tick the bird, i.e. add it to their list. And when it's a bird you've never seen before, it's particularly agonizing because the decision takes on more significance.

In northern Ghana earlier this year I'd been out looking for Four-banded Sandgrouse, and finally, very late into dusk when visibility was bordering on non-existent, I flushed a group of them. Right size, right sounds, right habitat, right everything. Right in front of me. The guide had been hearing them for twenty minutes. So did I tick it? Nope. But if I'd been with someone who had, I'd have totally understood. I'm almost positive it was the bird, but I needed a better view, pre-knowledge of their voice, something more to get over that moral hurdle of adding to my life list.

Everyone's ethics are their own. There are no rules here other than the ones you make up for yourself. Sounds cheesy, but it's true. I remember chatting with one of the worst birders I'd ever come across who was struggling to ID a Spotted Towhee when it hopped right in front of us, and who then casually mentioned that his life list was somewhere north of 3,500. I've been out with "professional" birders on tours who happily mark a bird down

when the guide thinks they may have heard a far-off call of a Southern Rarified Yellow-bellied Whatsit. No other evidence required. I've also encountered birders who refuse to tick a bird unless they get a photograph, or see both genders, or get a signed autograph and a retinal scan.

Anything goes.

## But Back to Moths

It struck me that my ethics for ticking bird species differed greatly from moths: I'm far more lenient when it comes to moths. Why? Am I lowering my standards in my old age?

It's tough to answer, but I think it's this.

First, with a bird I feel that when I'm unable to identify it, the problem lies with me. I didn't do enough research, I'm not familiar with the other possibilities in the region, and so on. With moths it's more that the problem lies with the lack of availability of knowledge and data. I'm finding moths never spotted before in the province – there are too few people out there looking. In some respects, it feels like moth information is in its infancy, so

misidentification is just part of the game.

Secondly, it's a question of proof. With moths, I photograph anything I'm interested in. I've never counted a species I haven't photographed. With birds I only photograph a tiny subset of what I see – it's a much more in-the-moment activity. When I'm corrected on one of my moth identifications or find a better match on my own, the images will speak for themselves. Moth identification is something you work through. With birding you're working with glimpses/impressions which fade the moment the bird is gone. You need confidence to make that leap of faith and add it to your list.

So for me, when it comes to ticking, mothing and birding are very different realms. Different realm, different ethics.

---

*Below: Moth lights at dawn are seriously conflicting for people who are both birding and mothing.*

*(Strong-billed Woodcreeper – see page 28.)*





# Colombia 2024: Quest for the Harpy Eagle

*Marian Porter, Salt Spring Island*

Falling asleep to the familiar and comforting sound of a Pauraque in the small village of La Argentina brought memories of many tropical nights I have experienced over the last thirty years. I was finally about to see a rare and rather mythical eagle, the Harpy, due to the discovery of a nest site that was relatively accessible in the Meta department of Colombia. A trip with the American Birding Association the previous year instilled my desire to return, this time with a Colombian company, Icaro Birding Tours, which offered a personalized experience allowing access to the nest site for as long as I wanted to stay.

The anticipation of finally reaching my goal after a warm and fitful night with an early start at a trailhead in the Parque Nacional Sierra de La Macarena was the beginning of a remarkable day I will remember for many years to come. It would be the culmination of thirty years of adventures in areas I had hoped to see one of the world's most remarkable birds and largest eagle in its range.

My tropical adventures started in the early 1990s in Costa Rica, heading into less-inhabited areas such as Corcovado National Park. The only way into the park from my location was by surfing through the ocean waves in a small motorboat into the crocodile-inhabited estuary of the Rio Claro River with thankfully one of the best boat captains of the coast. Scarlet Macaws, Great Curassows, a panicked herd of White-lipped Peccaries and agitated White-throated Capuchins throwing branches at human intruders made for great adventure but a Harpy Eagle could not be found. The Harpy is now considered nearly extinct in the country, with no sightings between 2017 and 2022, until one appeared in the northern area of Boca Tapada, presumably from Nicaragua.

Eager to get to more remote areas of larger countries, Ecuador became my next tropical destination of choice, rich in bird species and with an extensive Amazon lowland region that held many possibilities. The Cuyabeno Reserve in the north-eastern part of the country was a wonderful introduction to the flooded forest, where pink river dolphins swam close to the boat and travelling down the Aguarico River to the Peruvian border revealed clay licks on the riverbank filled with parrots.

The next trip to Ecuador was to Kapawi Ecolodge on the Pastaza River in the south eastern region of the Amazon basin. The lodge was on a lake which gave great bird-watching opportunities and close encounters with resident Giant Otters. The next Ecuadorian adventure was a small lodge on the Shiripuno River in the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve. Night expeditions by boat with a Waorani guide found a Spectacled Owl on the shore after we floated downriver in total darkness. Another night excursion revealed roosting Nocturnal Curassows and Common, Great and Rufous Potoo while narrowly avoiding a tree snake dangling above the trail.

The owner of Shirupuno Lodge had an agreement with the Waorani people not to hunt

in the region and a trail far beyond inhabited villages was a promising location for a Harpy Eagle. Specialties such as Pavonine Quetzal and Gray-winged Trumpeter were seen, but a second trip further down the trail was abandoned when evidence of uncontacted indigenous people were found, and we could not intrude on their territory.

The Harpy Eagle has been known to nest in Belize, where it is critically endangered due to habitat loss and hunting. Trips to Belize always included a stay at the Belize Zoo where a captive

---

*"The Harpy juvenile was quickly located on the branch of a large tree nearby in full sunlight, a spectacularly large female." Photo by Colin Coe.*



C Coe

-bred female named Da Queen permanently resides with a male named Panama after returning repeatedly when released into the wild. The zoo had a Harpy Eagle restoration program where 15 eagles were released in the Rio Bravo area of north Belize from 2003 to 2009. It was part of a larger program to restore the Harpy in Panama and Belize with captive bred eaglets from Peregrine Fund Panama, releasing a total of 49 for both countries from 1998 to 2009. By the end of the life of the radio transmitters in 2011 63% had died, 31% were missing and 6% were back in captivity. Shooting (44%) was the primary cause of death, according to the paper in *The Journal of Raptor Research* (Watson et alia, March 2016). Belize Zoo staff informed me the high mortality ended the restoration program. The report identified preventing human persecution and protecting forest habitat as the most urgent conservation needs for the Harpy Eagle.

An irresistible opportunity suddenly arose with the discovery of a nest in the Meta department of Colombia. Two chicks successfully hatched in early April 2024, a first record for more than a single egg in the country. The relatively accessible nest location was 1.3 km down a trail in Parque Nacional Sierra de La Macarena close to a viewing hide and a trip was finalized with Icaro Birding in September to view the young while the adults were still feeding them.

The first few days in Bogota were nerve-wracking as my husband Colin and I were unable to leave due to a truck-driver strike after a sudden increase in the price of diesel, and all main roads and highways were blocked until the Colombian government "backtracked" the decision to withdraw their subsidies. We were able to fly to Puerto Inirida and after an unforgettable trip in the lowlands and the Orinoco River, we flew back to Villavicencio and headed to the long-awaited encounter with a Harpy in the Parque Nacional Sierra de La Macarena. Viola-ceous Jays, Lineated Woodpecker, and



*"We could then focus our attention on the nearby Collared Puffbirds...."*

*Photo by Colin Coe.*

Chestnut-fronted Macaws as well as the inevitable Roadside Hawk greeted us at the trailhead of what became a very steep trail leading down to the nest site near the bottom of the valley. I wondered what it would be like climbing out in the mid-day heat. The local bird guide and farmer who discovered the nest and were working to develop the area for birding ecotourism were of great assistance on the route.

We were finally at the site where a large nest could be seen directly across from the hide ... empty! The Harpy juvenile was quickly located on the branch of a large tree nearby in full sunlight, a spectacularly large female. The second chick had died probably as a result of sibling rivalry ensuring the survival of the strongest nestling. The adult male was still feeding her but was not seen and had probably come very early that morning as she was calm and not calling for food. Colin had one of the best photography sessions of a lifetime. The Harpy was one of the most beautiful creatures I have ever seen, regal but with some fluffiness left in

her plumage and a continually moving crown as though she did not yet have full control over it. A lively expression of curious intensity was both fascinating and unsettling. She climbed awkwardly to outer branches, breaking off the tip of one and bringing it back to the nest and mantling it as though she had just captured prey. This play behaviour presumably staved off some of the boredom of waiting for her next meal and would help prepare her for life as an adult. A flock of Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlets circled furiously around her at high speed, but there was very little response to their harassment.

To everyone's delight the Harpy stayed in view until the mid-day heat drove her higher into the dense canopy to escape the sun. We could then focus our attention on the nearby Collared Puffbirds, Purple-throated Fruitcrows, Striolated and Blue-crowned Manakins, and a White-cheeked Antbird. Bird activity had increased for the hike back in the afternoon, enabling us to find Paradise Tanagers, Blue Dacnis, Blue-



crowned and White-bearded Manakin, Gilded Barbet and White-fronted Nunbird.

We left La Argentina, a collection of very modest buildings where residents made a difficult living on the small farm plots they were allowed to maintain within the park without increasing their acreage by cutting down the forest. The region has had a difficult history with Macarena and the surrounding municipalities colonized in the mid-twentieth century by thousands of peasants expelled from Andean regions. The FARC was an insurgent movement that gripped the region with guerrillas in constant conflict with other armed groups and residents could not move freely without a mobility permit issued by FARC. Deforesta-

tion, ranching and illicit crops damaged the environment.

The Serrania de La Macarena was the first national nature reserve established by law in 1948 and became a national park in 1971. A realignment of the reserve occurred and a new environmental division was adopted that includes the Special Management Area of La Macarena and Tinigua National Natural Parks. The protected area created by the Decree 1989 covered an area of over 600,000 hectares in southern Meta containing over 500 species of birds and other wildlife.

After the signing of the 2016 Peace Agreement there has been a slow process of reorganization with community-based tourism developing that is supported by a growing bird community. The uncertain future of the Harpy Eagle

in this area and many others depends on a local economy benefited by wildlife and birding tours with infrastructure encouraging tourists to remain in the area. I was in more remote areas this year compared with the ABA trip but I was still surprised at seeing so few other birding tours during my latest trip to Colombia. The beautiful and mountainous park the Harpy breeds in is protected, but the survival of the species needs to be a priority of the people who live there, and in the hearts of the next generation with hope of enriching their lives with new possibilities.

#### Next Trip

I am planning my next trip to Colombia in 2025. If you are interested in birding Colombia, please email me at:

[marianmporter@gmail.com](mailto:marianmporter@gmail.com).

---

## Speedy Encounter

*John Gordon, Surrey*

A Gentoo Penguin porpoises in Neko Harbour, Antarctic Peninsula, Nov 7, 2024. This particular image was taken from a moving zodiac. Gentoos use this technique (porpoising) to navigate, breathe or escape predators. The Gentoo is the fastest-swimming penguin and can reach speeds of 36 kms per hour. This behaviour is somewhat tricky to photograph as there's no warning when a bird might surface. A camera with a high frame rate is needed to capture this type of action. (Nikon Z8 Nikon 500mm F5.6 and a shutter speed of 1/5000, ISO 1000.)



# Penticton CBC For Kids

*Alex and Bobbi Bodden, Penticton*

The first Penticton Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids), a program arising out of the traditional CBC and coordinated by Birds Canada, was held at the Penticton Art Gallery on December 29 on a cloudy, but relatively warm and wind-free day. This enjoyable event was supported by donations from The Penticton Sunrise Rotary Club and the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club Society (SONC).

There was a total of 58 people in attendance, including eight volunteer leaders and helpers. We also had the expertise of José Bergeron who helped with the organization and came with her daughter from Kelowna to assist with the event. (Check out [backwoods mama.com](http://backwoods mama.com) to learn about her passion.) The participants were equally split between children and parents (and some grandparents) and was a truly family event.

After a brief introduction and outline of the route the participants were broken into three separate groups with a leader who had good birding knowledge. The turnout was larger than expected, so each group started out at a different point along a predetermined 1.6 km route to avoid congestion. The route offered a variety of habitats and went from Penticton Creek, along the waterfront and marina into the Esplanade trails and back and took about 90 minutes to complete.

Pre-made laminated visual guides and tally lists were handed out and there were some pictures of expected birds put out as trail markers along the route. Some of the younger participants only did part of the route and some craft supplies were available in the space in the art gallery to keep them entertained until the rest of the group returned. Hot chocolate from Tim Hortons and cookies from Stillfood Bistro were available to enjoy as well.

This particular area is well known to

naturalists and birders as a great area for observing birds and is an eBird hotspot ([ebird.org/hotspot/L285629](http://ebird.org/hotspot/L285629)). There is a potential to see upwards of 100 species at this site in the winter, but practically speaking, it is usually much less and a total of 31 species were observed on this occasion. Many of the waterfowl usually present were not around this year, perhaps due to the warm weather and large amounts of open water available for them.

The intent of this type of event is, of course, to introduce youths and parents to the wonderful things in nature that are available in our backyards and to foster an interest in nature as a whole. The feedback from the participants during the count up indicated that everyone had a great time. Highlights included a Ring-necked Pheasant that took flight, a Great Blue Heron roosted in a tree and an American Dipper seen foraging along the edge of the lake. California Quails with their bobbing topknots are always a hit with young people.

Organizing a CBC4Kids can be as simple as getting a few families together, organizing school groups or taking

on a larger community event. From lessons learned at our event it is clear that it does not have to be complicated and participants enjoy seeing even the most common of species. Not surprisingly, keeping the groups to a smaller size is best, but is dependent upon how many leaders you may have. Having an alternative activity for those who could not do the whole route proved to be important and something as simple as colouring pages and crayons filled the bill in our case.

We were fortunate to have some financial support to cover off room rental, printing and laminating costs as well as the refreshments, but home-made cookies and drinks at someone's home would do just as well. Printable resources are also available at the Birds Canada Christmas Bird Count for Kids website:

[www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count-for-kids](http://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count-for-kids)

Why not give one a try next year and help to create the conservation leaders of the future.

*Alex Bodden leading one of the groups, pointing out Black-capped Chickadees.*

*Photo by José Bergeron.*





# Antpittas!

*Clive Keen, Prince George*

One of the many reasons I had planned to go to Ecuador was to finally see antpittas. These can be extremely reclusive, and I'd signally failed to find a single one on my numerous travels to hot climes. But there was a possibil-



ity, on the October 2024 Avocet Tours trip, of seeing numerous antpitta species, and over two weeks we in fact saw an incredible eight of them. I even managed to get decent photographs of each, courtesy of serious help from local farmers.

The most famous location for antpitta spotting in Ecuador must be the Refugio Paz de las Aves. Some 20 years ago farmer Angel Paz embraced ecotourism, and protected woodlands which included the Giant Antpitta, shown left, the Yellow-breasted Antpitta, below, the Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, above, and the Moustached Antpitta, bottom left. He then fed them with worms regularly, making it possible to attract them in the presence of visitors who have the patience to wait quietly.

Angel Paz's example inspired others, and as a result there are several locations where antpitta spotting is almost guaranteed.





The first location we visited had been Reserva Zuro Loma, where we encountered the Chestnut-naped Antpitta, shown right, the Equatorial Antpitta, below, and the Tawny Antpitta, bottom right.



The final antpitta we saw was brought into view by a very persistent staff member of Wildsumaco Lodge. I must admit that I'd have packed up and gone for a glass of wine long since (the Chilean wine is good in Ecuador, the beer less so), but the staff member persevered, and after a muscle-cramping wait we were eventually rewarded with views of an exceedingly timid Ochre-breasted Antpitta – above.

Antpittas are intriguing birds, always looking to me as though they are holding their hands clasped behind their back, King Charles III style. Most are secretive, and are usually hidden in dense undergrowth, which is why they are rarely seen, let alone photographed. Without the conservation work of local farmers and their patience in habituating birds to human presence, most species of antpitta would be the stuff of legend.



# Five Days in Uruguay

*John Gordon, Surrey*

In Oct 2024 I spent five days birding in Uruguay. Two days on my own and three days with local guiding company Birding With Me. My guide was Mauricio Silvera, a student biologist and excellent birder.

We birded the coastal lagoons of Maldonado and Rocha on Saturday 19th, Villa Serrana and Eastern Hills on Sunday 20th and West Montevideo and San José Wetlands on Monday 21st.

I decided to arrive in Uruguay five days earlier before embarking on a group tour to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula with G Adventures. I really didn't want to miss the ship as had happened to some in the past. Arriving early allowed time to shake off jet lag and be rested before the twenty-day voyage. More Antarctica exploits in a later article.

I checked into the excellent budget-priced Palacio Hotel. Close to tourist attractions, it was perfectly situated for a few days break. The family-run hotel with its Art Deco features and stained glass was an added bonus.

Opening the wooden shutter doors to my oversized private terrace I had my first lifer, an Eared Dove. High above the screeching of a Harris's Hawk drew my attention. There was a plentiful supply of pigeons and doves for them to feast on. Moments later, a second lifer, a Kelp Gull, flew past. Before supper a quick walk to the beach turned-up three more lifers, a Neotropical Cormorant, a Southern Lapwing and a White-rumped Swallow.

Joining me to bird was Daniel Bastaga, who some Vancouver birders may know. He now lives in Hungary. It was fortuitous having a fellow birder join me as it halved the guiding fee for both of us. Neither Daniel or myself had

birded South America so we were happy enough to see and photograph as many birds as possible.

Day One was spent north-east of Montevideo discovering plains, marshlands, estuaries and coastline. Many places were drier than normal which made it harder to find certain wetland species, but Mauricio, like any good guide, found other locations and other species. I am as happy going on a birding tour and getting a dozen or so good photographs rather than a photo-designated tour where less ground and fewer species are encountered. Photographing at feeders is fun for a while but I for one prefer the natural setting as well as the chance to scope birds from a long distance. There is something to be said about watching birds behaving naturally.

The last birds we saw were at Colonia Wilson, an area of greenhouses, farmland and park. We had thirty-two species including Short-eared Owl. The very last birds, a pair of Burrowing Owls, were happily nesting and seemingly doing well beside a road in the middle of a small village. A great way to

end our three days birding with Mauricio. (Continued next page.)



*Above: A Burrowing Owl with a frog, one of a pair nesting beside the road in a rural village on the outskirts of Montevideo.*

*Below: the elusive Many-coloured Rush Tyrant. All photos by author.*



*© John Gordon Photography*





*Left:* This male Spectacled Tyrant is a flycatcher found near marshes and wet pastures. *Above:* Red-crested Cardinals usually feed in pairs and small groups, mainly on the ground where they forage for seeds and small arthropods.

*Below:* Although common in Uruguay, the colours and two different postures of these Southern Lapwings drew my attention while I was walking the docklands of Montevideo, an area where tourists are warned to be vigilant. Sometimes when travelling, carrying around an expensive lens and camera is not always possible or advisable. That's when carrying a small secondary camera – in this case a Sony RXIV 24-600 zoom bridge camera – proved useful, allowing this photo.



*Above:* A fruit-and-insect eater, the Rufous-capped Antshrike is an all-year-round resident of Uruguay.

More on the trip can be found at:  
[thecanadianwarbler.blogspot.com](http://thecanadianwarbler.blogspot.com)



# Showdown at Edison

Gordon F. Brown, Sechelt

Located just south of Bellingham, WA, is the tiny coastal hamlet of Edison, lying in a flat tidal zone of dike-protected agricultural land reclaimed long ago. Its metropolitan core centres on a T intersection, and stretches for half a block in all directions. There are three or four restaurants (at least one is likely to be closed at any given moment), one of which serves lamb burgers, and an excellent brew pub which produces the wonderful Salish IPA. However, these are not the things for which this wee burg is famous.

If one takes a very short drive (two km) southwest of town, on any day of the week from December to February, one is likely to come upon a certain fifty-metre stretch of highway, the margins of which are lined with tripods, monopods, and people raising optical devices they can barely carry (these folk can often be seen standing beside fence posts and leaning on the hoods of cars). All attention is primarily focused on a plot of undeveloped land perhaps three acres in size. On the average weekday a couple of cars may be parked, having released three or four people with cameras and/or binoculars, but on a good Saturday



afternoon the strip looks more like Conney Island.

There are many Bald Eagles in the area, lots of Great Blue Herons, thousands of Northern Pintails, a few Ring-necked Pheasants, a Red-tailed Hawk, and even some Western Meadowlarks (in December!), but they're all secondary to the main event: the battle between Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers. In three visits this winter we've at least learned the basics of this annual ritual, and it all stems from the fact that the owls and hawks hunt in a similar manner and on the same prey.

We've been taught that, in any conflict, the bad guys are the ones wearing black hats; in this scenario, it's the hawks who are the heavies. They harass the owls, and do whatever they can to induce them to give up captured prey. The owls would rather not, but

the hawks can be quite persuasive bullies.

Now we have to introduce the story's progressive component. In December the already level playing field, really is, but as the winter progresses things begin to change. Because there are always twitchers and photographers present in varying numbers, the owls come to understand that they have nothing to fear from the people, and begin to gravitate toward them. The hawks are more sceptical and do not approach as closely. By February, for their own safety, the owls are effectively interacting with the humans. A photographer I met told me that last year he was leaning against the road sign on the opposite side of the narrow, two-lane blacktop, when an owl came and perched on top, just above his head. He also said a lady had parked her car on that side, walked across the road to join the throng, looked back and found an owl perched on the sill of her open driver's window.

So far, we've only witnessed a portion of this scenario, but on January 15 did see owls flying back and forth across the road essentially between the people. We'll go back in February a couple of times to catch the finale ... and maybe even another lamb burger with an IPA.

*Photos, including front and back covers, by author.*



# The Palaeo-Ornithologist

## Possible Ancient Hominin-Avian Interaction

Charles Helm, Tumbler Ridge

I write this dispatch from South Africa, where I am involved in the annual field season of the Cape South Coast Ichnology Project. Palaeo-ichnology is the study of fossil tracks and traces. We have previously identified and published on a variety of Pleistocene fossil avian tracks, ranging from about 400,000 years to 75,000 years in age. The tracks occur in aeolianites (cemented dune deposits). We have also identified the greatest known concentration of track sites of our ancestors, including the oldest known *Homo sapiens* footprint, dated to around 153,000 years. What we have not found until now is any evidence of an association between hominin tracks and avian tracks.

That changed last week, when we discovered a new hominin track site. Our interpretation is that five young humans walked up a slope. Close by are the tracks of a large bird (possibly a crane), heading in a parallel direction to the human tracks. There is possible evidence of the humans interacting with the avian tracks. It is not possible to know with certainty what came first (the human tracks or the bird tracks), but the likelihood is that the bird tracks came first and that the humans were following them, in other words, "tracking them".

We need to do a literature search to see if there are other examples that are this ancient of humans and birds interacting. At the very least I think we can claim that it is probably one of the oldest suspected examples

### THE STEVE CANNINGS AWARD

#### NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Steve Cannings Award has been presented by BCFO since 2007 to honour the memory of Steve Cannings, an outstanding amateur ornithologist, naturalist, photographer, and conservationist. The Steve Cannings Award recognizes someone who has made significant contributions over a long period of time in one or more of the following areas:

1. Research on bird biology or ecology, or detailed documentation of the birdlife of any portion of BC
2. Conservation of birds or of bird habitats in BC
3. Public education about birds in BC
4. Distinguished service to BC birding.

Presentation of the award is usually made at the annual BCFO conference. This year the AGM is Saturday June 14, 2025, so the deadline for nominations is May 15, 2025.

Nominations are sought from any BCFO member. Nominations must include a statement outlining why you consider the nominee to be worthy of the award. The awards committee may follow up for more details if necessary. Priority in bestowing the award may be given to nominees who are BCFO members; however, membership is not a requirement for receipt of the award.

Nominations should be sent to Gary Davidson, Chair of the Steve Cannings Award Committee, either by mail to P.O. Box 294, Nakusp, BC, V0G 1R0, or by email to [gsd37@yahoo.ca](mailto:gsd37@yahoo.ca).

### HISTORY

The committee was chaired by Wayne Weber until his passing in June 2022. The current committee consists of Gary Davidson (chair), Clive Keen and Charles Helm. A list of past recipients follows. The gap in the awards between 2020 and

2024 George Clulow	2012 Glenn Ryder
2023 Wayne Weber (posthumous)	2011 Ralph Ritcey
2019 Neil Dawe	2010 Jeremy Tatum
2018 Rick Howie	2009 Madeline Schouten
2017 Art Martell	2008 David Stirling
2016 Chris Siddle	2007 Ian McTaggart-Cowan (1st award)
2015 Alan Burger	
2014 Martin McNicholl	
2013 Fred Zwickel	

of such interaction. We now have a substantial task ahead of us, to properly document this newly-discovered site and author a research article on it. This will involve generating 3D photogrammetry images of the whole surface, a tough task given the narrow confines of the area

which make unreasonable demands on our ageing bodies. We will also need to accurately date the site, although the likelihood is that it is more than 100,000 years old.

Hopefully a future edition of *BC Birding* will feature this discovery in more detail.



# Bird Photographers' Corner

*Clive Keen, Prince George*

## Post-Production Magic 2

The September 2024 Bird Photographers' Corner included a request for before-and-after examples, showing how post-production can turn sow's ears into silk purses. By way of further encouragement, here's another example of how an apparent failure can be turned into something well worth keeping. Read first *Before*, to the right.

### After

It did seem a hopeless task, but increasing exposure, contrast, whites, highlights, clarity and vibrance, while dialing back blacks, added just enough life to restore hope. Adjusting levels and brightness with the subject selected



**Before:** The Strong-billed Woodcreeper photograph above was taken at dawn beside a moth light in Ecuador (the December 2024 edition tells the story). Almost everything about the photo cried "delete!" It was taken at 20,000 ISO, so is exceedingly noisy. There was very little light and all of it was flat, so the image is lifeless. The focus, particularly around the foot and tail, is much too soft. The composition is dreadful: it doesn't even seem effectively croppable, because the bird is almost at the top of the frame, and more background above the bird is essential for balance. Hopeless?



then improved things further. Next, cropping away the fuzzy leg and tail areas partially solved the focus problem.

The crop greatly improved the composition, and this was further improved by manufacturing new background above the bird. Finally, Topaz Photo AI was used to remove noise and sharpen the subject.

### Technical Stuff

The photo was, of course, shot in RAW. Shooting JPEG would have thrown away much of the hidden information that was essential for restoration. Serious bird photographers should *never* shoot JPEG unless using very high-speed continuous bursts.

This particular restoration was carried out using Adobe Photoshop Elements 2025. Though I also use Affinity Photo 2, which has more refinements, Elements should not be spurned. It is far more powerful than Adobe advertises, as they wish to steer serious photographers to their much more lucrative, rental-only, Lightroom.

Elements allowed improvement to the lighting of the Woodcreeper photograph in two stages. First, the RAW editor allowed overall adjustments to colour balance, exposure, contrast, highlights, shadows, whites, blacks, clarity, vibrance, and saturation. After development into the main program, lighting was further adjusted selectively using Levels, Brightness/Contrast, and Shadows/Highlights, with just a little dodging and burning.

One of the best things about Elements is that it makes some adjustments very quick and easy. There is a "Select Subject" feature, for instance, which often works flawlessly and is a great time saver. There is also a guided edit allowing swift background extension, which solved the problem of not enough background above the bird's head. Affinity Photo 2.5 lacks these features, and does not readily partner with Topaz Photo AI.

Elements certainly needs to be supplemented by Topaz or similar products. Topaz has withdrawn its hitherto excel-

lent Denoise and Sharpen AI products in favour of the flagship Photo AI, but this program includes a number of upgrades to the sharpness and denoise features, so it's well worth switching. Of particular note is the "Super Focus" update, currently in beta form, which uses AI to grab yet more sharpness. It requires either paying for cloud processing or an advanced graphics card to give reasonable rendering time, but can create usable images from seriously blurred images.

### But Don't Forget

... To send in your own instructive before-and-after examples. We can all learn from them.

---

## Low-Light Bird Photography

Bird photography in low light inevitably brings ISO challenges. With birding-length lenses, there is so little room for manoeuvre. Aperture can't be widened much if at all, and shutter speed has to stay high, given the length of the lens, unless we want mush. It is left to ISO to take up the slack, and it can quickly become uncomfortably high.

The situation is worsened for bird photographs because they are nearly always cropped, often heavily. Uncropped images may cope reasonably well with high ISOs when today's denoise and sharpening programs are applied. Cropping, though, will increase the size of the noise to the point where it swamps details, and then programs such as Topaz Photo AI will resort to making up those details, leaving the photograph with an unnatural look.

The trick is, of course, to keep ISO as low as possible, but not so low that sharpness is lost. A sharp photograph at 25,600 ISO is still far better than an unsharp one at 6,400 ISO – which is why I set my automatic ISO to allow such very high levels. (See previous page for an example.)

Using tripods is one way forward, but in these days of excellent image

stabilization, the use of tripods is becoming much less common. Bird photography benefits greatly from the lack of encumbrances, and going tripod-free with automatic ISO switched on means that the camera is always ready and waiting.

It is worth remembering, though, that left to themselves, cameras set to automatic exposure will err on the side of safety, and will quickly rack up the ISO to the maximum allowed. Much of the time they are right to do so, but some of the time, the camera's automation can be overruled with significant benefit. If, for example, you are shooting from a blind, and can rest your camera on a ledge, shutter speeds can be significantly reduced, allowing ISO to drop. If there's time, too, experimenting with lower shutter speeds can produce some acceptably sharp images even at *much* lower speeds. The way forward is to take successive shots at gradually reducing ISOs, retaining the lowest ISO shot which is still sharp.

Changing ISO swiftly, though, requires knowledge of your camera and may take practice. There are various ways of doing it, some much more fiddly and time-consuming than others – and birds won't wait while you explore the menu. Much the simplest method I've found is to use the manual + auto ISO exposure mode with aperture wide open, and then steadily reduce shutter speeds from "safe" levels down to ones that full automation would certainly never offer. You can often gain two or three stops of ISO reduction, giving noticeably cleaner images.





# Gone Pishing

## What Did You Just Say?

Chris Siddle, Vernon

Are there some common bird names you're afraid to say aloud, for fear you will mispronounce them and be laughed at? American Crow, Gray Catbird, Red-winged Blackbird are easy to pronounce, but what about Xantus' Murrelet, Oleaginous Hemispingus, and Calliope Hummingbird? Here are some pronunciation tips that will help birders avoid personal unease, and potential social embarrassment.

### Bewick's Wren

Pronounced BEW-ik, like the vehicle. This bird, formerly restricted to the south-west coast in our province, is now slowly expanding its range into the Okanagan Valley and recently has been seen around Castlegar. Named for Thomas Bewick (1753–1828) who in the words of Edward Gruson "single-handedly restored the art and craft of wood engraving in England." One of his best works is *History of British Birds*.

### Bobolink

BOB-o-link. I have heard a couple of young people mispronounce this as "beau beau link". It's Bob bo link. And it keeps bob-bob-bobbing along.

### Bridled Tern

Mea culpa. For years I referred to this sea bird as Brindled Tern. Then one day Dick Cannings, MP and well known biologist and author, pointed out my mistake to me. He also informed me that I had an unfortunate habit of calling the Loggerhead Shrike as a "Logger-headed" Shrike. Tough love, but I immediately began correcting myself.

### Calliope

Ca-LIE-oh-pee. In my experience, a common mispronunciation even among some advanced birders is CAL-e-o-pe. Edward Gruson, author of *Words for Birds: A Lexicon of North American Birds with Biographical Notes*

(Quadrangle Books, 1972) states that the common name is a reference to Calliope, one of six Greek goddess muses, "a muse of eloquence". How a Calliope Hummingbird is notably eloquent is left as a mystery with no obvious solution since at best this hummingbird has a voice described as "relatively silent" except for "soft, high, slightly metallic chip notes" (*National Geographic Field Guide* 7th edition). Before I knew about the goddess of eloquence, I had imagined that the bird got its common name from a different kind of calliope, a Victorian pipe organ, with the red-purple spikes of a male Calliope Hummingbird's gorget resembling the long shiny pipes sticking out of the top of the instrument. Highly imaginative but wrong, wrong, wrong.



### Canada Goose

Always *Canada* even in the plural form. One hundred Canada Geese, never 100 Canadian Geese. Thanks to Mrs. Rimmer, my Grade 5 teacher, for setting me straight about this.

### Caracara

CARE-uh-CARE-uh. A Tupi Indian word for the species carried over into Spanish and Portuguese and thence directly into English. OK, so who are the Tupi? These were a language group of various Amerindian tribes located along the Brazilian coast. Their language was adopted by European settlers as a lingua franca throughout the region. So it's no surprise that many Tupi words, particularly for South American critters, found their way from Tupi through Por-

tuguese and Spanish to English, that great spongy language. Anhinga, capybara, cashew, coatimundi, cotinga, jabiru, jacaranda, margay, matamata, paca, pirana, tapir, tanagere, tamandua, and toucan all have Tupi origins.

### Dovekie

DOVE-key. Once I heard the common name of this tiny auk pronounced as Dough-VEK-ee which makes it sound very Eastern European. Gruson writes that dovekie originated from Scandinavian for "little dove", an allusion to the bird's small size.

### Empidonax

Em -PID-oh-nax - a group of confusingly similar looking New World flycatchers including in British Columbia Dusky, Hammond's, Least, Western, Willow and Alder flycatchers. A specifically unidentified member of this group is referred to as an Empid or an Empidonax (emphasis on its second syllable).

### Gila

HE- la. The g is pronounced as an h.

### Glaucous

GLOCK -us. I have heard this word (which means gray) twisted into glou (rhymes with how) kus.

### Goshawk

GOS as in BOSS, never "Gosh hawk" which in its soft sibulence sounds mushy and unfitting for this wonderful avian assassin. By the way, formerly one Holarctic species, the Gos has recently been split into two species: Eurasian Goshawk and American Goshawk.

### Guillemot

GILL-ah-mot. Three species around the world: Pigeon Guillemot, Black Guillemot, and Spectacled Guillemot. The group name is French in origin from Guillaume, French for "William". In English we butcher the French pronunciation shamelessly.

### Gyr Falcon

JURR-fall-kun. The origin of the common name of *Falco rusticolus*, frequently regarded as the king of all fal-

cons, is debatable. Some think that ultimate source is Old High German *gir*, meaning vulture. As a gyrfalcon fan, I prefer not to accept this theory. A Mr. Lockwood links the name to *geir*, a spear, with the implication of the bird attacking like a spear expertly thrown.

#### Jacana

Another example of a word originating from the Tupi language group. Probably it was originally pronounced as *jassana*. Southwestern birders presume it to be a Spanish word and say *hah-Kah-nuh*. Eastern birders say *jah-KAH-nuh*. Less common are *jah-KAY-nuh* and even *JACK-a naw* (based on Christopher W. Leahy's *The Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife* 2004).

#### Jaeger

German for hunter. Pronounce the *j* as a *y*. *YAY-ger*. OK, but what about the pronunciation of *Pomarine*, as in *Pomarine Jaeger*?

#### Knot

NOT. The *k* is silent, like the *k* in *knowledge*.

#### Murre

*MUR*. It rhymes with "fur", not "cure" (Leahy 2004).

#### Phainopepla

*FAY-no-PEP-la*. From Greek for "shining robe" a reference to the bird's silky waxwing-like plumage.

#### Phalarope

*FAL-a-rope*

#### Pileated

Means *crested*. *PILL-e-ate-ed* or *PIE-lee-ate-ed*

#### Ptarmigan

The *p* is silent.

#### Pyrroloxia

*Peer-o-LOX-ia*

#### Sabine's Gull

*SABB-un*. The gull was named for Sir Edward Sabine 1788-1883, English general, physicist, and astronomer, and a member of an Arctic expedition with Sir James Ross, for whom Ross's Gull was named.

#### Scaup

*SKAWP*. Greater Scaup and Lesser Scaup. I birded with a young fellow who pronounced it *scoop*, like *scout* but with a *p*. Gruson writes "[Scaup] is a dialectal variant of the word 'scalp' which... refers to shellfish" upon which it was thought to feed.

#### Scoter

*SCOAT-er*. The *o* is long like the *o* as in *oat*.

#### Skua

*SKEW-uh*.

#### Vaux's

*VOX*.

#### Whooping

Pronounced with the "w" as in *whoop*-ie. I hear people talk about *Hooping* Cranes. Whooping Cranes are known for *whoops* (calls), not *hoops*.

#### Wigeon

*WID-gen*. Pronounced with a "d" but no longer spelled with one since the AOS (then the AOU) dropped the "d" in 1973. American Wigeon. Eurasian Wigeon.

## Other Words Issues

#### Bald Eagle

Not a pronunciation issue hopefully, but never refer to the Bald Eagle as a *Bald-headed Eagle*. If you used to call them Bald-headed Eagles, hopefully it was long, long ago before you claimed to be a birder.

#### Ruffed Grouse

Never *Ruffled* Grouse.

#### Sea Gull

For obvious reasons.

#### Number vs Amount

If you're referring to something that can be counted, use *number* as in "The number of eagles nesting along the river has decreased recently". If you're referring to something usually thought to be uncountable, use *amount*. "The amount of corruption can only be decreased if we hire a number of inspectors."

## Poetry Corner

The article on birding and poetry in the December 2024 edition was intended to inspire a new column – *Hobbyists' Corner* – but instead, by popular demand, has inspired a Poetry Corner. Birds play an outsize role in poetry, so this makes sense. Here's one reader's choice. Send in yours.

### The Peace of Wild Things

Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear at what my life and my children's life may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel about me the day-blind stars  
Waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and I am free.



# BCFO Listers' Corner 2024 Lists

*Kathryn Clouston, Courtenay*

Submissions were received from nearly 60 members. Some of our long-time members have fallen away but some newcomers have joined the lists and the organization. I am getting more comfortable with massaging the data and preparing the article so it is getting easier. Thanks for supporting Lister's Corner and if you have any suggestions, let me know.

**NOTE:** If a total is not supplied for two consecutive years the listing will be dropped.

## KEY

%: Compared to total species in area list

Inc: Increase from 2023

**Blue number:** Total not submitted

**Red bold:** Largest increase from 2023

**Red italics:** A significant plateau or other significant increase

**Red text:** Something of interest.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA – 519

Liam Ragan made the most gains with 25. John Gordon and Vibeke Pedersen were second and third respectively with 11 and 9.

#	2024	Name	Name	2023	inc	%
1	490	Mike	Toochin	489	1	94.4
2	467	Sharon	Toochin	466	1	90.0
3	462	Roger	Foxall	459	3	89.0
4	458	Dale	Jensen	458	0	88.2
5	457	Tom	Plath	461	-4	88.1
6	452	Val	George	448	4	87.1
7	452	Brian	Stech	451	1	87.1
8	448	Peter	Candido	446	2	86.3
9	448	Guy	Monty	444	4	86.3
10	445	Carlo	Giovanella	444	1	85.7
11	441	Michael	Force	441	0	85.0
12	440	Kevin	Neill	439	1	84.8
13	432	Mike	McGrenere	431	1	83.2
14	431	Tony	Greenfield	431	0	83.0
15	425	Keith	Riding	425	0	81.9
16	414	Larry	Cowan	414	0	79.8
17	414	Andrew	Foxall	412	2	79.8

18	410	Len	Jellicoe	409	1	79.0
19	410	Hank	Vanderpol	408	2	79.0
20	408	Bryan	Gates	408	0	78.6
21	401	Barbara	Begg	401	0	77.3
22	397	Eric	Tull	393	4	76.5
23	392	Quentin	Brown	391	1	75.5
24	391	Doug	Kragh	391	0	75.3
25	389	Gary	Davidson	389	0	75.0
26	401	Rand	Rudland	400	1	77.3
27	386	John	Gordon	375	11	74.4
28	381	Monica	Nugent	381	0	73.4
29	376	Don	Wilson	376	0	72.4
30	375	Laird	Law	375	0	72.3
31	373	Ken	Willis	372	1	71.9
32	371	Ken	Morgan	371	0	71.5
33	369	Gwynneth	Wilson	369	0	71.1
34	366	Bruce	Whittington	366	0	70.5
35	360	Ben	Keen	360	0	69.4
36	356	Paul	Clapham	353	3	68.6
37	356	Liam	Ragan	331	25	68.6
38	351	Peter	Boon	339	12	67.6
39	351	Andy	Buhler	351	0	67.6
40	351	Marilyn	Buhler	351	0	67.6
41	343	Susan	Knoerr	New		66.1
42	342	Krista	Kaptein	332	10	65.9
43	337	Pierre	Geoffray	337	0	64.9
44	336	Kathryn	Clouston	330	6	64.7
45	335	Rosemary	Clapham	331	4	64.5
46	333	John	Sprague	333	0	64.2
47	329	Dorothy	Copp	329	0	63.4
48	329	John	Hodges	329	0	63.4
49	326	Ted	Goshulak	326	0	62.8
50	325	Paul	Foth	325	0	62.6
51	322	Vibeke	Pedersen	313	9	62.0
52	320	Janice	Arndt	317	3	61.7
53	223	Sandra	Eadie (ON)	224	-1	43.0

**CANADA - 698**

Rosemary Clapham added the most to her list this year with 51. Her husband Paul came in second with 32 and there were several of us that managed a respectable 20+ species.

#	2024	Name	Name	2023	inc	%
1	565	Roger	Foxall	562	3	80.9
2	540	Tom	Plath	541	-1	77.4
3	521	Mike	Toochin	521	0	74.6
4	514	Michael	Force	514	0	73.6
5	511	Eric	Tull	509	2	73.2
6	504	Sharon	Toochin	504	0	72.2
7	497	Dale	Jensen	497	0	71.2
8	490	Kevin	Neill	489	1	70.2
9	487	Carlo	Giovanella	486	1	69.8
10	486	Peter	Candido	484	2	69.6
11	479	Mike	McGrenere	477	2	68.6
12	477	Brian	Stech	476	1	68.3
13	476	Andrew	Foxall	474	2	68.2
14	472	Keith	Riding	470	2	67.6
15	463	Rand	Rudland	463	0	66.3
16	462	Len	Jellicoe	463	-1	66.2
17	461	Monica	Nugent	461	0	66.0
18	459	Larry	Cowan	460	-1	65.8
19	458	Hank	Vanderpol	456	2	65.6
20	457	Barbara	Begg	457	0	65.5
21	443	Doug	Kragh	443	0	63.5
22	442	Tony	Greenfield	442	0	63.3
23	437	Ken	Morgan	437	0	62.6
24	434	Quentin	Brown	433	1	62.2
25	431	Don	Wilson	431	0	61.7
26	430	Bryan	Gates	429	1	61.6
27	427	Brent	Schmor	new		61.2
28	426	Gwynneth	Wilson	426	0	61.0
29	424	John	Gordon	424	0	60.7
30	419	John	Sprague	419	0	60.0
31	418	Liam	Ragan	397	21	59.9
32	417	Sandra	Eadie	419	-2	59.7
33	415	Paul	Clapham	383	32	59.5
34	415	Gary	Davidson	416	-1	59.5
35	411	Ken	Willis	408	3	58.9

36	405	Janice	Arndt	405	0	58.0
37	401	Laird	Law	401	0	57.4
38	400	Andy	Buhler	400	0	57.3
39	400	Marilyn	Buhler	400	0	57.3
40	391	Rosemary	Clapham	340	51	56.0
41	390	Ted	Goshulak	390	0	55.9
42	388	Krista	Kaptein	376	12	55.6
43	384	Dorothy	Copp	384	0	55.0
44	377	Peter	Boon	365	12	54.0
45	377	John	Hodges	377	0	54.0
46	372	Vibeke	Pedersen	348	24	53.3
47	371	Kathryn	Clouston	346	25	53.2
48	370	Susan	Knoerr	new		53.0
49	360	Eric	Newton	359	1	51.6
50	337	Pierre	Geoffray	337	0	48.3

**ABA (Continental) - 1,095**

Paul Clapham had the biggest gain with 23 followed closely by Liam Ragan with 22.

#	2024	Name	Name	2023	inc	%
1	817	Hank	Vanderpol	814	3	74.6
2	808	Mike	Toochin	803	5	73.8
3	793	Roger	Foxall	789	4	72.4
4	734	Sharon	Toochin	722	12	67.0
5	731	Brian	Stech	731	0	66.8
6	724	Dorothy	Copp	724	0	66.1
7	716	Dale	Jensen	716	0	65.4
8	715	Eric	Tull	711	4	65.3
9	673	Andrew	Foxall	671	2	61.5
10	669	Peter	Candido	670	-1	61.1
11	655	Keith	Riding	657	-2	59.8
12	654	Gary	Davidson	655	-1	59.7
13	650	Don	Wilson	650	0	59.4
14	649	Tom	Plath	new		59.3
15	649	John	Sprague	649	0	59.3
16	644	Kevin	Neill	642	2	58.8
17	639	Andy	Buhler	641	-2	58.4
18	639	Marilyn	Buhler	641	-2	58.4
19	636	Monica	Nugent	635	1	58.1
20	633	Gwynneth	Wilson	633	0	57.8



21	629	Carlo	Giovanella	627	2	57.4
22	626	Barbara	Begg	626	0	57.2
23	624	Mike	McGrenere	623	1	57.0
24	615	Tony	Greenfield	615	0	56.2
25	611	Len	Jellicoe	614	-3	55.8
26	593	Sandra	Eadie (ON)	597	-4	54.2
27	589	Rand	Rudland	589	0	53.8
28	588	Ken	Morgan	588	0	53.7
29	579	Larry	Cowan	579	0	52.9
30	567	Brent	Schmor	new		51.8
31	565	Val	George	564	1	51.6
32	563	Laird	Law	563	0	51.4
33	539	Clive	Keen	539	0	49.2
34	520	Ted	Goshulak	519	1	47.5
35	473	Paul	Clapham	450	23	43.2
36	469	Doug	Kragh	468	1	42.8
37	467	Liam	Ragan	445	22	42.6
38	445	Susan	Knoerr	new		40.6
39	442	Janice	Arndt	443	-1	40.4
40	427	Krista	Kaptein	427	0	39.0
41	424	John	Hodges	424	0	38.7
42	413	Rosemary	Clapham	new		37.7
43	410	Peter	Boon	410	0	37.4

**ABA + HAWAII - 1,173**

Paul Clapham made the biggest jump with 23. Sharon Toochin came in second with 12 while *Peter Boon* entered the list just over the 500 plateau.

#	2024	Name	Name	2023	inc	%
1	861	Mike	Toochin	857	4	73.4
2	835	Roger	Foxall	832	3	71.2
3	787	Sharon	Toochin	775	12	67.1
4	765	Eric	Tull	761	4	65.2
5	762	Dale	Jensen	762	0	65.0
6	688	Andrew	Foxall	687	1	58.7
7	674	Kevin	Neill	670	4	57.5
8	673	Gwynneth	Wilson	673	0	57.4
9	665	Monica	Nugent	664	1	56.7
10	662	Gary	Davidson	new		56.4
11	657	Mike	McGrenere	656	1	56.0

12	651	Carlo	Giovanella	649	2	55.5
13	650	Don	Wilson	650	0	55.4
14	649	Tom	Plath	new		55.3
15	648	Barbara	Begg	648	0	55.2
16	620	Rand	Rudland	620	0	52.9
17	616	Larry	Cowan	616	0	52.5
18	606	Ken	Morgan	606	0	51.7
19	597	Sandra	Eadie	597	0	50.9
20	593	Val	George	592	1	50.6
21	580	Michael	Force	577	3	49.4
22	573	Laird	Law	573	0	48.8
23	569	Clive	Keen	569	0	48.5
24	535	Ted	Goshulak	534	1	45.6
25	508	Peter	Boon	new		43.3
26	495	Paul	Clapham	472	23	42.2
27	478	Doug	Kragh	477	1	40.8
28	477	Pierre	Geoffray	477	0	40.7
29	476	Janice	Arndt	477	-1	40.6
30	413	Rosemary	Clapham	new		35.2

**WORLD - 10,959**

Nigel Mathews must have had a great trip as he made gains of 710. *Ben Keen* got 307 new species to put himself over the 2500 plateau and *Susan Knoerr* joined the list with just over 2,000.

#	2024	Name	Name	2023	inc	%
1	8,235	Keith	Riding	8,128	107	75.1
2	6,718	Nigel	Mathews	6,008	710	61.3
3	6,176	Roger	Foxall	6,078	98	56.4
4	5,852	Tom	Plath	5,682	170	53.4
5	5,645	Mike	Toochin	5,565	80	51.5
6	5,276	Peter	Candido	5,052	224	48.1
7	5,207	Eric	Tull	5,051	156	47.5
8	5,121	Sharon	Toochin	5,032	89	46.7
9	4,181	Rand	Rudland	4,101	80	38.2
10	4,046	Peter	McIver	new		36.9
11	3,714	Laird	Law	3,714	0	33.9
12	3,518	Brian	Stech	3,518	0	32.1
13	3,477	Dorothy	Copp	3,477	0	31.7
14	3,414	Gary	Davidson	3,399	15	31.2

15	3,374	Dale	Jensen	3,374	0	30.8
16	3,287	Barbara	Begg	3,287	0	30.0
17	3,247	Hank	Vanderpol	3,240	7	29.6
18	3,233	Val	George	3,232	1	29.5
19	2,858	Don	Wilson	2,858	0	26.1
20	2,784	Andy	Buhler	2,739	45	25.4
21	2,784	Marilyn	Buhler	2,739	45	25.4
22	2,574	Sandra	Eadie	2,565	9	23.5
23	2,512	Ben	Keen	2,205	307	22.9
24	2,460	Michael	Force	2,451	9	22.4
25	2,435	Andrew	Foxall	2,425	10	22.2
26	2,385	Ken	Morgan	2,385	0	21.8
27	2,338	Monica	Nugent	2,301	37	21.3
28	2,236	Mike	McGrenere	2,151	85	20.4
29	2,184	Paul	Clapham	2,165	19	19.9
30	2,058	Susan	Knoerr	new		18.8
31	1,940	Rosemary	Clapham	1,906	34	17.7
32	1,844	Ken	Willis	1,568	276	16.8
33	1,745	Kathryn	Clouston	1,457	288	15.9
34	1,709	Pierre	Geoffray	1,709	0	15.6
35	1,702	John	Hodges	1,702	0	15.5
36	1,687	Ross	Waters	new		15.4
37	1,660	Larry	Cowan	1,659	1	15.1
38	1,603	Tony	Greenfield	1,603	0	14.6
39	1,457	Clive	Keen	1,144	313	13.3
40	1,339	Jim &	Cosgrove	1,339	0	12.2
41	1,203	Ted	Goshulak	1,203	0	11.0
42	1,137	Peter	Boon	1,052	85	10.4
43	1,107	Kevin	Neill	1,105	2	10.1
44	1,090	Liam	Ragan	1,048	42	9.9
45	1,073	Jo Ellen	Floer	new	new	9.8
46	1,058	Brent	Schmor	new	new	9.7
47	1,039	Vibeke	Pedersen	1,020	19	9.5
48	951	John	Sprague	951	0	8.7
49	884	Eric	Newton	875	9	8.1

**WORLD FAMILIES - 253**

The leaders in this category, Peter Candido and Roger Foxall both managed to add 7 new families. The Toochins and Tom Plath came in a close second with 6.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	239	Peter	Candido	232	7	94.5
2	238	Roger	Foxall	231	7	94.1
3	231	Eric	Tull	229	2	91.3
4	230	Keith	Riding	230	0	90.9
5	228	Mike	Toochin	222	6	90.1
6	226	Tom	Plath	220	6	89.3
7	222	Sharon	Toochin	216	6	87.7
8	220	Rand	Rudland	218	2	87.0
9	212	Laird	Law	212	0	83.8
10	202	Barbara	Begg	202	0	79.8
11	193	Peter	McIver	new		76.3
12	182	Sandra	Eadie	182	0	71.9
13	180	Ken	Morgan	180	0	71.1
14	177	Paul	Clapham	176	1	70.0
15	172	Rosemary	Clapham	171	1	68.0
16	134	Kevin	Neill	134	0	53.0
17	128	Liam	Ragan	127	1	50.6
18	126	Peter	Boon	new		49.8
19	119	Larry	Cowan	119	0	47.0

**NORTH AMERICA - 2160**

Mike McGrenere had the most gains at 116. Roger Foxall added 43 to push himself over the 1500 mark. We also added a couple of new members to this list.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	1,637	Brian	Stech	1,636	1	75.8
2	1,621	Dorothy	Copp	1,621	0	75.0
3	1581	Mike	Toochin	1518	63	73.2
4	1,542	Keith	Riding	1,437	105	71.4
5	1,529	Roger	Foxall	1,486	43	70.8
6	1,335	Tom	Plath	1,327	8	61.8
7	1,203	Sharon	Toochin	new		55.7
8	1,191	Mike	McGrenere	1,075	116	55.1
9	1,177	Rand	Rudland	1,175	2	54.5
10	1,150	Gary	Davidson	1,149	1	53.2
11	1,139	Eric	Tull	1,083	56	52.7



12	1,136	Peter	Candido	1,092	44	52.6
13	1,122	Barbara	Begg	1,122	0	51.9
14	1,107	Monica	Nugent	1,104	3	51.3
15	1033	Kathryn	Clouston	1011	22	47.8
16	996	John	Hodges	996	0	46.1
17	969	Laird	Law	969	0	44.9
18	941	Sandra	Eadie	944	-3	43.6
19	901	Vibeke	Pedersen	878	23	41.7
20	879	Pierre	Geoffray	879	0	40.7
21	868	Andrew	Foxall	868	0	40.2
22	861	Larry	Cowan	860	1	39.9
23	778	Paul	Clapham	758	20	36.0
24	741	Ted	Goshulak	714	27	34.3
25	737	Krista	Kaptein	726	11	34.1
26	710	Rosemary	Clapham	673	37	32.9
27	708	John	Sprague	708	0	32.8
28	686	Liam	Ragan	664	22	31.8
29	656	Doug	Kragh	657	-1	30.4
30	599	Ken	Morgan	599	0	27.7
31	380	Ross	Waters	new		17.6

ATPAT (All Ticks Provinces And Territories) - 5,313						
Paul Clapham added 131 for the largest increase. <i>Roger Foxall</i> added 27 to cruise over the 3,000 mark.						
#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	3,044	Eric	Tull	3,047	-3	57.3
2	3,023	<i>Roger</i>	<i>Foxall</i>	2,996	27	56.9
3	2644	Rand	Rudland	2644	0	49.7
4	2031	Tom	Plath	new		38.2
5	1,568	Janice	Arndt	1,559	9	29.5
6	1,276	Barabara	Begg	1,276	0	24.0
7	1258	John	Sprague	1258	0	23.7
8	1,257	Laird	Law	1,257	0	23.7
9	1205	Gary	Davidson	1200	5	22.7
10	1,188	Liam	Ragan	1,141	47	22.4
11	1,142	<b>Paul</b>	<b>Clapham</b>	1,011	131	21.5
12	1,017	Sandra	Eadie	1,017	0	19.1
13	1011	Larry	Cowan	1011	0	19.0
14	856	Doug	Kragh	856	0	16.1
15	727	Krista	Kaptein	new		13.7
16	554	Rosemary	Clapham	554	0	10.4
17	391	Ted	Goshulak	392	-1	7.4

AOS NORTH (AOU) - 2,226						
Sharon Toochin had the biggest gains with 136, while her husband Mike came in second with 65. <i>Rosemary Clapham</i> added 39 to put herself over the 700 threshold.						
#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	1,632	Mike	Toochin	1,567	65	73.3
2	1254	<b>Sharon</b>	<b>Toochin</b>	1118	136	56.3
3	1205	Rand	Rudland	1203	2	54.1
4	1,186	Eric	Tull	1,131	55	53.3
5	1,166	Peter	Candido	new		52.4
6	979	Laird	Law	979	0	44.0
7	941	Sandra	Eadie	944	-3	42.3
8	897	Larry	Cowan	896	1	40.3
9	799	Paul	Clapham	779	20	35.9
10	756	Ted	Goshulak	743	13	34.0
11	710	<i>Rosemary</i>	<i>Clapham</i>	671	39	31.9
12	693	Krista	Kaptein	693	0	31.1
13	615	Ken	Morgan	615	0	27.6

BC WINTER Dec / Jan / Feb					
Roger Foxall had the best gain at 8.					
#	2024	Name		2023	inc
1	317	Mike	Toochin	313	4
2	309	Tom	Plath	309	0
3	261	Carlo	Giovanella	258	3
4	258	<b>Roger</b>	<b>Foxall</b>	250	8
5	231	Larry	Cowan	231	0
6	220	Paul	Clapham	217	3
7	202	Eric	Tull	199	3
8	180	Paul	Foth	181	-1
9	143	Janice	Arndt	138	5

CANADA WINTER					
Roger Foxall also added the most, 5, for this list.					
#	2024	Name		2023	incr
1	321	Tom	Plath	321	0
2	318	Mike	Toochin	314	4

3	313	Roger	Foxall	308	5
4	261	Carlo	Giovanella	258	3
5	261	Eric	Tull	259	2

**ALBERTA - 432**

Monica Nugent had a double digit gain, 25, for the largest increase of this group.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	359	Eric	Tull	360	-1	83.5
2	323	Hank	Vanderpol	323	0	75.1
3	273	Tom	Plath	273	0	63.5
4	250	Monica	Nugent	225	25	58.1
5	247	Roger	Foxall	248	-1	57.4
6	220	Gary	Davidson	220	0	51.2
7	216	Janice	Arndt	210	6	50.2
8	190	Larry	Cowan	190	0	44.2
9	185	Tony	Greenfield	185	0	43.0
10	184	Mike	Toochin	184	0	42.8
11	181	Dale	Jensen	181	0	42.1
12	169	Vibeke	Pedersen	170	-1	39.3
13	157	Laird	Law	157	0	36.5
14	148	Andrew	Foxall	new		34.4
15	146	Barbara	Begg	146	0	34.0

**YUKON TERRITORY - 348**

Unfortunately most of the changes for this category were in the wrong direction.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	166	Tony	Greenfield	166	0	47.7
2	154	Eric	Tull	155	-1	44.3
3	142	Roger	Foxall	142	0	40.8
4	127	Barbara	Begg	127	0	36.5
5	126	Laird	Law	127	-1	36.2
6	113	John	Sprague	113	0	32.5
7	112	Rand	Rudland	112	0	32.2
8	92	Monica	Nugent	92	0	26.4
9	86	John	Hodges	86	0	24.7
10	80	Dale	Jensen	80	0	23.0
11	80	Mike	Toochin	80	0	23.0

**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - 296**

Roger Foxall must have had a good trip up north as he added 26 for the largest increase.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	189	Laird	Law	189	0	63.9
2	181	Tom	Plath	181	0	61.1
3	179	Eric	Tull	180	-1	60.5
4	154	Tony	Greenfield	155	-1	52.0
5	133	Rand	Rudland	133	0	44.9
6	131	Roger	Foxall	105	26	44.3
7	128	Janice	Arndt	129	-1	43.2
8	97	Barbara	Begg	97	0	32.8
9	86	Mike	Toochin	86	0	29.1
10	84	John	Sprague	84	0	28.4
11	77	Paul	Clapham	77	0	26.0
12	77	Rosemary	Clapham	77	0	26.0
13	61	Andrew	Foxall	new		20.6
14	54	John	Hodges	54	0	18.2
15	53	Monica	Nugent	53	0	17.9

**YUKON - NWT - NUNAVUT - 385**

Another one with losses only.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	204	Laird	Law	204	0	53
2	204	Eric	Tull	205	-1	53
3	195	Tony	Greenfield	196	-1	51
4	170	Rand	Rudland	170	0	44
5	158	John	Sprague	158	0	41
6	127	Barbara	Begg	127	0	33

**US LOWER 48 - 1003**

Mike Toochin added 6 this year.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	690	Roger	Foxall	690	0	74.0
2	684	Mike	Toochin	678	6	73.3
3	635	Eric	Tull	634	1	68.1
4	600	Gary	Davidson	new		64.3
5	511	Monica	Nugent	new		54.8
6	485	Sandra	Eadie	486	-1	52.0
7	343	Peter	Boon	new		36.8



**US MINUS HAWAII - 1,007**

Mike Toochin had the largest gains with 6.

#	2024	Name	2023	incr	%
1	777	Mike Toochin	771	6	77.2
2	663	Eric Tull	662	1	65.8
3	412	Rand Rudland	new		40.9
4	409	Larry Cowan	409	0	40.6
5	379	Ken Morgan	379	0	37.6

**WASHINGTON STATE - 532**

Roger Foxall had a modest gain of 2.

#	2024	Name	2023	inc	%
1	327	Mike Toochin	327	0	61.5
2	302	Tom Plath	302	0	56.8
3	268	Roger Foxall	266	2	50.4
4	253	Brian Stech	253	0	47.6
5	250	Doug Kragh	250	0	47.0
6	236	Dale Jensen	new		44.4
7	233	Eric Tull	233	0	43.8
8	224	Paul Foth	224	0	42.1
9	223	Larry Cowan	223	0	41.9

**ALASKA - 573**

#	2024	Name	2023	inc	%
1	318	Mike Toochin	318	0	55.5
2	216	Eric Tull	216	0	37.7
3	172	Monica Nugent	172	0	30.0
4	163	Bruce Whittington	163	0	28.4
5	66	Rand Rudland	66	0	11.5

**VANCOUVER AREA - 421**

Paul Clapham and Liam Ragan added the most with 7, two better than Rosemary Clapham.

#	2024	Name	2023	inc	%
1	390	Mike Toochin	389	1	92.6
2	367	Carlo Giovanella	368	-1	87.2
3	365	Roger Foxall	363	2	86.7
4	365	Sharon Toochin	365	0	86.7
5	361	Tom Plath	361	0	85.7

6	357	Peter Candido	353	4	84.8
7	352	Quentin Brown	351	1	83.6
8	351	Keith Riding	351	0	83.4
9	347	Brian Stech	347	0	82.4
10	335	Larry Cowan	335	0	79.6
11	324	John Gordon	322	2	77.0
12	322	Paul Clapham	315	7	76.5
13	306	Rosemary Clapham	301	5	72.7
14	302	Kevin Neill	302	0	71.7
15	293	Monica Nugent	291	2	69.6
16	284	Doug Kragh	283	1	67.5
17	278	Ted Goshulak	278	0	66.0
18	275	Ken Willis	275	0	65.3
19	234	Don Wilson	234	0	55.6
20	216	Eric Tull	214	2	51.3
21	195	John Hodges	195	0	46.3
22	171	Liam Ragan	164	7	40.6

**VANCOUVER ISLAND - 435**

Liam Ragan burned up the island for his big year adding 21 to his list. Krista Kaptein jumped into the 300 bracket with 10.

#	2024	Name	2023	inc	%
1	383	Mike McGrenere	379	4	88.0
2	374	Guy Monty	370	4	86.0
3	355	Barbara Begg	355	0	81.6
4	340	Kevin Neill	334	6	78.2
5	334	Mike Toochin	330	4	76.8
6	323	Eric Tull	316	7	74.3
7	321	Liam Ragan	292	29	73.8
8	321	Bruce Whittington	320	1	73.8
9	302	Krista Kaptein	292	10	69.4
10	290	Ken Morgan	290	0	66.7
11	286	Kathryn Clouston	273	13	65.7
12	278	Roger Foxall	273	5	63.9
13	268	Susan Knoerr	new		61.6
14	268	Vibeke Pedersen	259	9	61.6
15	265	Peter Boon	265	0	60.9
16	212	Larry Cowan	212	0	48.7
17	207	John Sprague	207	0	47.6

**VICTORIA AREA - 417**

Liam Ragan had another good year adding 19 to his list, almost twice the next highest.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	370	Mike	McGrenere	364	6	88.7
2	340	Barbara	Begg	340	0	81.5
3	320	Kevin	Neill	313	7	76.7
4	309	Bruce	Whittington	306	3	74.1
5	306	Eric	Tull	298	8	73.4
6	299	Liam	Ragan	278	21	71.7
7	285	Mike	Toochin	282	3	67.6
8	221	Monica	Nugent	218	3	52.3
9	177	Larry	Cowan	177	0	42.4
10	137	Doug	Kragh	137	0	32.9
11	136	Ted	Goshulak	136	0	32.6

**OKANAGAN VALLEY- 349**

Hank Vanderpol and Monica Nugent had gains of 2.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	314	Gwynneth	Wilson	314	0	90.0
2	300	Michael	Force	300	0	86.0
3	299	Don	Wilson	299	0	85.7
4	287	Hank	Vanderpol	285	2	82.2
5	277	Mike	Toochin	277	0	79.4
6	265	Gary	Davidson	new		75.9
7	255	Doug	Kragh	252	3	73.1
8	234	Tony	Greenfield	234	0	67.0
9	224	Laird	Law	224	0	64.2
10	196	Larry	Cowan	196	0	56.2
11	191	Monica	Nugent	189	2	54.7
12	175	Eric	Tull	175	0	50.1
13	174	Paul	Foth	174	0	49.9

**NORTH PELAGIC WATERS**

Michael Force added 3 to his list.

#	2024	Name		2023	incr
1	209	Michael	Force	206	3
2	155	Mike	Toochin	155	0
3	118	Ken	Morgan	118	0

4	88	Tom	Plath	87	1
5	79	Bruce	Whittington	79	0
6	72	Kevin	Neill	72	0

**PEACE RIVER AREA - 305**

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	244	Laird	Law	244	0	80.0
2	228	Tom	Plath	228	0	74.8
3	209	Tony	Greenfield	209	0	68.5
4	207	Mike	Toochin	207	0	67.9
5	155	Larry	Cowan	155	0	50.8
6	141	Doug	Kragh	141	0	46.2
7	130	Paul	Foth	130	0	42.6

**PRINCE GEORGE AREA - 297**

Larry Cowan added another 6 to his list for the largest gain.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	284	Laird	Law	284	0	95.6
2	193	Don	Wilson	193	0	65.0
3	171	Larry	Cowan	165	6	57.6

**WEST KOOTENAY AREA - 339**

Janice Arndt had the largest gain with 6.

#	2024	Name		2023	Incr	%
1	308	Gary	Davidson	303	5	90.9
2	273	Janice	Arndt	267	6	80.5
3	261	Peter	Mclver	new		77.0
4	91	Larry	Cowan	91	0	26.8

**CRESTON VALLEY AREA - 311**

Peter Mclver joined the list this year.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	222	Paul	Foth	222	0	71
2	221	Peter	Mclver	new		71
3	178	Janice	Arndt	178	0	



**FRASER VALLEY - 336**

John Gordon had the largest gain of 10.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	238	Paul	Foth	237	1	70.8
2	<b>233</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>Gordon</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>10</b>	69.3
3	172	Monica	Nugent	172	0	51.2
4	165	Larry	Cowan	163	2	49.1

**MANNING PROVINCIAL PARK - 227**

Tom Plath was the only one to add (7) to his list.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	157	Mike	McGrenere	157	0	69.2
2	<b>112</b>	<b>Tom</b>	<b>Plath</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>7</b>	49.3
3	98	Doug	Kragh	98	0	43.2
4	91	Larry	Cowan	91	0	40.1

**SUNSHINE COAST - 305**

Tony Greenfield and Rand Rudland added 2 to their lists.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	<b>290</b>	<b>Tony</b>	<b>Greenfield</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>2</b>	95.1
2	<b>280</b>	<b>Rand</b>	<b>Rudland</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>2</b>	91.8
3	270	John	Hodges	270	0	88.5
4	113	Larry	Cowan	113	0	37.0

**COMOX STRATHCONA - 336**

Vibeke Pedersen added 7 to her list.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	275	Krista	Kaptein	270	5	81.8
2	262	Kathryn	Clouston	256	6	78.0
3	251	Guy	Monty	251	0	74.7
4	<b>248</b>	<b>Vibeke</b>	<b>Pedersen</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>7</b>	73.8
5	175	Liam	Ragan	new		52.1

**HAIDA GWAIL - 190**

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	134	Mike	Toochin	134	0	70.5
2	110	Bruce	Whittington	110	0	57.9
3	97	Laird	Law	97	0	51.1

4	79	Krista	Kaptein	79	0	41.6
5	60	Kevin	Neill	<b>60</b>	0	31.6

**WESTHAM & REIFEL ISLANDS - 280**

Rosemary Clapham added 5 for the largest gain in this area. Her husband, Paul, close behind with 4.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	237	Mike	Toochin	236	1	84.6
2	215	Tom	Plath	215	0	76.8
3	<b>171</b>	<b>Paul</b>	<b>Clapham</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>4</b>	61.1
4	161	Larry	Cowan	161	0	57.5
5	156	Doug	Kragh	156	0	55.7
6	<b>148</b>	<b>Rosemary</b>	<b>Clapham</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>5</b>	51.1

**SEA & IONA ISLANDS - 300**

Paul Clapham had the largest gain with 5, his wife, Rosemary, close behind with 4.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	295	Mike	Toochin	293	2	98.3
2	281	Tom	Plath	280	1	93.7
3	<b>213</b>	<b>Paul</b>	<b>Clapham</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>5</b>	71.0
4	208	Doug	Kragh	208	0	69.3
5	<b>187</b>	<b>Rosemary</b>	<b>Clapham</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>4</b>	62.3
6	182	Larry	Cowan	182	0	60.7

**BLACKIE SPIT - 249**

Paul Clapham made big gains in this area with 16.

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	137	John	Gordon	New		57.8
3	124	Tom	Plath	124	0	52.3
2	123	Larry	Cowan	122	1	51.9
4	<b>121</b>	<b>Paul</b>	<b>Clapham</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>16</b>	51.1
5	110	Doug	Kragh	110	0	46.4

**SEMIAMHOO PENINSULAR (WA) - 245**

#	2024	Name		2023	inc	%
1	<b>238</b>	<b>Roger</b>	<b>Foxall</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>6</b>	97.1
2	234	Carlo	Giovanella	233	1	95.5
3	213	Mike	Toochin	new		86.9

## CITY OF PITT MEADOWS - 229

#	2024	Name	2023	inc	%
1	213	Larry Cowan	212	1	93.0
2	119	Doug Kragh	119	0	52.0

## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT

Paul Foth made the greatest gains by adding 10 to his list.

#	2024	Name	Area	Inc	2023
1	328	Mike McGrenere - Victoria		3	325
2	203	Paul Foth – 108 Mile Ranch		10	193
3	171	Janice Arndt - Nelson		0	171
4	117	Larry Cowan - Pitt Meadows		0	117
5	115	Barbara Begg - Sidney		0	115

## CANADA PHOTOGRAPHED

Liam Ragan managed to get 45 new species to pose for him this year.

#	2024	Name	2023	inc
1	409	Brian Stech	new	
2	400	Liam Ragan	355	45
3	355	Rand Rudland	355	0
4	282	Gary Davidson	new	

## WORLD PHOTOGRAPHED

Brian Stech added 198 to his album this year.

#	2024	Name	2023	inc
1	2646	Brian Stech	2448	198
2	2582	Tom Plath	new	
3	2053	Rand Rudland	1984	69
4	896	Gary Davidson	new	
5	840	Liam Ragan	691	149

## EBIRD REGIONS

Region	2024	Name	2023	inc
Cariboo	244	Paul Foth	243	1
Central	304	Gary Davidson		
	227	Paul Foth	227	0
East	230	Jo Ellen Floer	230	0

Nanaimo	319	Guy Monty	313	6
Thompson-	208	Paul Foth	206	2

## ARDAT

(All Regional Districts Added Together): Only listing totals supplied this year by members are included.

Liam Ragan had the largest gain with 220 again this year with Krista Kaptein a close second at 217. Guy Monty joined the list with well over 3000.

#	2024	Name	2023	inc	%
1	3644	Guy Monty	new		41.9
2	2992	Joshua Brown	2992	0	34.4
3	2973	Tom Plath	2973	0	34.2
4	2882	Krista Kaptein	2665	217	33.2
5	2828	Gary Davidson	2806	22	32.6
6	2618	Liam Ragan	2398	220	30.1
7	2306	Doug Kragh	new		26.5
8	2255	Larry Cowan	2144	111	26.0
9	2217	Paul Foth	2162	55	25.5
10	2141	Kathryn Clouston	new		24.6
11	2111	Eric Newton	2043	68	24.3

## Year Lists

The rest are for areas with 1 or 2 submissions grouped by BC tourism zones.

Vancouver Coast &	202	Name	202	in
ATMAT (Vanc) **	258	Carlo Giovanella	254	23
	230	Paul Clapham		
Colony Farm RP	174	Larry Cowan	174	0
Iona	284	Mike Toochin	279	0
	261	Sharon Toochin	261	-1
Nathan Creek	90	Ted Goshulak	90	0
Richmond + Sea &	310	Mike Toochin	308	3
Vancouver each	110	Carlo Giovanella		
Vancouver Photo'ed	254	Brian Stech		
Vancouver winter	244	Carlo Giovanella		
** ATMAT - All The Months Added Together				
Vancouver Island	202	Name	202	in
Saturna Isl	102	Tony Greenfield	102	0



Thompson/Okanaga	202	Name		202	in
Kamloops	121	Larry	Cowan	121	0
Princeton	129	Tom	Plath	129	0
Princeton	110	Larry	Cowan	110	0
Other	202	Name	Name	202	in
ABA(c) Photo'd	662	Brian	Stech	662	1
Africa	140	Tom	Plath	140	0
	110	Peter	Candido	102	71
	407	Monica	Nugent		
Australia	607	Gary	Davidson		
BC / Alaska	553	Monica	Nugent		
	549	Mike	Toochin	549	0
BC Photo'd	394	Brian	Stech		
Brydon Lagoon	137	John	Gordon		
Canada Audio	257	Liam	Ragan		
Cariboo Checklist	244	Paul	Foth		
Mexico	543	Kathry	Clouston		
	503	Monica	Nugent	501	
Other Photo'd	346	Peter	Candido		
Over 1,500m	113	Mike	McGrener	113	0
Salt Spring	174	John	Sprague	174	0
2015 Vancouver Isl		Ann	Nightingal	269	
2024 Vancouver Isl	286	Liam	Ragan		
World Audio	388	Liam	Ragan		

Note that there are other opportunities for your listings with categories not encompassed by BCFO Listers' Corner. These include the American Birding Association and Canadian Listers' Corner, which can be found at:

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



## On the Way Back From Antarctica ...

*John Gordon, Surrey*

I had a few days planned to bird in and around Ushuaia following my visit to Antarctica. I spent a day hiking the Tierra Del Fuego National Park, an archipelago at the southernmost tip of South America. There was spectacular scenery and complete silence – a rare commodity these days – plus some good birding. The target bird was the Magellanic Woodpecker, successfully accomplished, and thus shown here.



# Wings over the Rockies

NATURE FESTIVAL

MAY 5-11, 2025

OUR  
PLACE  
IN **NATURE**



**Film Screening**  
& Director's Presentation  
*Wildflowers*  
Thursday, May 8, 2025



**Music Concert**  
Multi-award Winning  
*Harry Manx*  
Friday, May 9, 2025



**Gala Dinner**  
Keynote Speaker  
*Dr. Rob Butler*  
Saturday, May 10, 2025

PHOTO: PRIYA AND ARCHIE PHOTOGRAPHY

- Online Auction
- Photo Contest
- Events Calendar  
available March 27
- Online Ticket Sales  
begin April 8 at 10am MDT



[www.wingsovertherockies.org](http://www.wingsovertherockies.org)



