

BRITISH COLUMBIA

FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST

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The **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST** is published four times a year by B.C. Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 1018, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3S 4P5. A subscription to this periodical is a benefit of membership in the society. Members will also receive a semi-annual journal, **BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS**.

Editors for the British Columbia Field Ornithologist: A. & M. Buhler

Send material for publication in any format (mail, phone, FAX, print, IBM WordPerfect files on discs, etc.) to the Editors (name, address and phone no. page 2). We especially welcome bird-finding information for the "Site Guide" series & articles about birdwatching experiences, preferably (but not necessarily) in British Columbia.

Membership in British Columbia Field Ornithologists is open to anyone interested in the study and enjoyment of wild birds in B.C. Our 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 dues: Individual memberships or library subscriptions, \$20.00; junior memberships (age under 18), \$10.00; Family memberships (2 or more persons at one address), \$25.00; U.S. and foreign memberships, \$20.00 (U.S.). Memberships are for the calendar year. For further information, or to join, write Lloyd Esralson, Membership, B.C. Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 1018, Surrey, B.C. V3S 4P5. ↵

EDITORS' NOTES AND NOTIONS

Your Editors have had an interesting spring. We were able to get to the AGM in Tofino, to the Okanagan Mountain Bird Blitz and to the BCFO/Kamloops Naturalist Owling trip in Kamloops. At Tofino we saw lots of Semipalmated Plover (seen only once before), at Kelowna we were given a good view of a Nashville Warbler (a lifer) and at Kamloops we saw a nesting Flammulated Owl (another lifer). On each trip we were reminded of why we enjoy these outings. Birders you meet are so helpful and they still get excited when you get to see a new bird. Our first thanks to Central & South OK Naturalists for making us so welcome & showing us some of their favorite birding sites. (Two of our birding partners have articles in this issue.) Thanks to the Kamloops Naturalists for making us welcome & for transporting us to the owl sites. (Report on trip by editors in this issue). Also thank you to AGM organizers and participants for an interesting and informative weekend. (See Society News). Although we did not get to the BCFO Reifel/Roberts Bank Field Trip, birders there had a good day & Allen Poynter has kindly given us a report. (See pg 16 this issue).

This issue of the newsletter is being printed and distributed from Victoria. The packaging and mailing was previously undertaken by Hue & Joanne MacKenzie in Surrey. We thank them for their good work as we now try to undertake their former duties here on the Island. Hue has given us an exciting first person account of a very memorable day he & Joanne had during last year's Christmas Bird Count. (See pg 12).

Derrick Marven has sent us the bird list from the 3rd AGM in Tofino but we ran out of space again in this issue (122 species at last count for the 3rd AGM weekend). Talking about lists and listing, check out Ruth Travers article on AviSys software starting on page 14) -- a great way to get your bird lists organized and up to date.

The next issue of this newsletter is due out in September but may not reach you before the BCFO Field Trip Weekend (Cowichan Bay/Duncan Shorebirds PLUS East Sooke Hawk Watch). Check information under News and Announcements or Upcoming Events so make plans to attend. (See V 2, # 3/4, Dec 1992 for a previous hawk watch report.)

Remember, since the next issue is due in September we need your input by the last week of August so that we can get the issue to press. There are still many empty pages for the next issue but we do hope to bring you a site guide for Lighthouse Park in West Vancouver, Elsie Nykyfork's description of birds over the seasons in her bird-garden, the 3rd AGM birdlist, part 2 of Laurie Rockwell's Basic Elements of Birding for Beginners (See pg 17 of this issue for part 1) and more. Okanagan birders have started to send in their first articles. May we soon hear from a few other areas throughout the province? Where do you bird in Prince George, or Trail, or Ganges, or Anaheim Lake? To our Washington birder-members -- how do you feel about a little cross-border "free trading" with your best birding sites?

Editors' correction for the March 1993 edition of the newsletter: We would like to thank Hilary Gordon for her part in compilation of the list of birds seen at the Revelstoke AGM. Our initial information only gave John G Woods as the compiler.

BCFO OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1992-1993

President:	Mike McGrenere	(phone 658-8624)
Vice-President:	Wayne Weber	(phone 597-7201)
Secretary:	Michael Shepard	(phone 388-4227)
Treasurer:	John Dorsey	(phone 857-1768)
Membership:	Lloyd Esralson	(phone 581-4736)
Directors:	Rick Howie	(phone 578-7542)
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UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- July 22-25, 1993 **CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION** Annual Meeting, Vernon, BC, hosted by the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club. For information, write the Secretary, North Okanagan Naturalists' Club, P.O. Box 473, Vernon, BC V1T 6M4.
- July 30-Aug 1, 1993 **WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS** Annual Meeting, Tucson, Arizona, including 2-1/2 days of field trips to top birding spots. For information, write WFO, c/o Tucson Audubon Society, 120-300 E. University, Tucson, AZ 85705.
- Aug 20-22, 1993 **WESTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOCIATION** Annual Meeting, near Sierra City, California. For information contact Geoffrey R. Guepel, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.
- Sept 10-12, 1993 **ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS** Annual Meeting, Shoals Marine Laboratory, near Portsmouth, NH. For information contact Greg Butcher, American Birding Association, PO Box 251, Etna, NY 13062 or phone (607) 254-2412.
- Sept 14-17, 1993 **WORKSHOP ON MONITORING LANDBIRD MIGRATION**, Long Point, Ontario, sponsored by Canadian Wildlife Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service. For information contact Ellen Hayakawa, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3.
- Sept 25, 1993 **BCFO FIELD TRIP TO COWICHAN BAY**. On Saturday, September 25, there will be a field trip to the Cowichan Bay estuary near Duncan to look for shorebirds and other migrants. For details about the trip or information about birding in the Duncan area, phone leader Derrick Marven (604) 748-8504.
- Sept 26, 1993 **BCFO HAWK WATCH TRIP**. On Sunday, September 26, there will be a hawk watching trip to East Sooke Regional Park. This area is now well known for its fall migration of birds of prey. For further details phone leaders David Allinson (604) 478-0457 or Mike McGrenere (604) 658-8624.
- Oct 13-16, 1993 **WESTERN STATES AND PROVINCES WATCHABLE WILDLIFE AND NON-GAME SYMPOSIUM**, Royal BC Museum, Victoria, BC. For information contact Liz Stanlake, BC Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Environment, 740 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 or phone (604) 387-9767.
- Oct 22-24, 1993 **FEDERATION OF BC NATURALISTS** Fall General Meeting to be held in Kamloops, BC. For details contact Tom Dickinson, PO Box 625, Kamloops, BC V2C 5L7.
- Oct 26-29, 1993 **WORKSHOP ON USE OF MIST NETS TO MONITOR BIRD POPULATIONS**, Tomales Bay, California. For information contact Dr C.J. Ralph, US Forest Service, 1700 Bay Drive, Arcata, CA 95521 or phone (707) 822-3691.
- Nov. 6-7, 1993 **SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL** at the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Delta, B.C. Come help celebrate the return of the wintering Snow Geese and other waterfowl. For information, phone the Sanctuary office at 946-6980.
- Dec 2-6, 1993 **AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION REGIONAL CONFERENCE**, Niagara Falls, Ontario. For information write American Birding Association, PO Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO 80934 or phone (800) 634-7736.
- Dec 17, 93 to Jan 3, 94 **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS**. A detailed listing of counts, with organizer's names and phone numbers, will appear in the December issue of the British Columbia Field Ornithologist.

SOCIETY NEWS

**BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
1 MAY 1993**

The Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists was held at the Weigh West Marina in Tofino on May 1, 1993, convening at 2:30 pm.

1. **Introduction**

The president, Mike McGrenere, welcomed the members and mentioned the excellent attendance at this year's meeting with 67+ participants.

2. **Acceptance of Minutes of the 1992 Annual General Meeting**

Mike McGrenere mentioned that the minutes of the 1992 AGM were published in Volume 2, No. 3/4, December 1992 issue of the British Columbia Field Ornithologist. Wayne Weber moved the acceptance of the minutes, Lloyd Esralson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

3. **Financial Report**

Acting treasurer Wayne Weber reported that the bank balance of March 21 was \$4735.26. Most of the membership renewals for 1993 had not been received so this amount would increase with receipt of renewals. Mike McGrenere indicated that an audit of the BCFO financial transactions would be done towards the end of 1993.

4. **Membership Report**

Vice-president Wayne Weber reported that the 1992 membership total was 296. The 1993 membership renewal form would be included with the Journal mailing.

5. **Report on the Newsletter (British Columbia Field Ornithologist)**

Marilyn Buhler (co-editor) reported. She asked for volunteer submissions, including information on best and worst birding spots. She thanked the authors for the published articles, and expressed appreciation to Hue and Jo Ann MacKenzie for their effort in packaging and mailing the newsletter.

Both Mike McGrenere and Wayne Weber thanked the Buhlers for their excellent work as editors of the newsletter. Mike McGrenere indicated that the newsletter would now be printed in and distributed from Victoria.

6. **Report on the Journal**

Wayne Weber reported that the production of the Journal was involving a far greater effort than first anticipated. He had a draft copy of the articles and bird sightings in the first issue for members to review. Wayne briefly outlined the type of articles that could go into the journal and indicated that he could offer some assistance to prospective authors.

7. **Field Trip Report**

Mike McGrenere summarized the two BCFO joint fieldtrips since the last AGM. There was a suggestion to hold two-day trips so people travelling from a distance could take advantage of the entire weekend. Raptor watching at East Sooke Regional Park and shorebirds at Cowichan Bay were suggested as one weekend trip.* There was good support from the members in attendance that we continue to organize field trips as a BCFO function.

8. **BCFO Records Committee Report**

The BCFO Records Committee published a copy of the goal and objectives, rules and procedures and review list in Volume 3, No. 1, March 1993 issue of the newsletter. A copy of the Rare Bird Report Form was included as an insert and members were encouraged to make their own additional copies of the Form.

9. **Election of Directors for 1993**

Andy Buhler took over as Chair and announced that eight (8) members had indicated a willingness to serve as directors for 1993/94. Nominees declared and elected by acclamation. They are John Dorsey, Lloyd Esralson, Rick Howie, Mike McGrenere, Marian Porter, Michael Shepard, Alan Wisely and Wayne Weber.

SOCIETY NEWS Continued

10. President's Report

Mike McGrenere thanked Doug Kragh for all his efforts as the first president of the BCFO. Tom Hanrahan was also thanked for his excellent work as secretary of the organization. Both Doug and Tom participated in the initial meetings which led to the foundation of the BCFO. Retiring director Gary Kaiser was also thanked for his contribution.

Mike McGrenere indicated that one of the major objectives of 1993/94 was to involve more of the BCFO members in the function of the organization.

11. Adjournment

The business meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Other Recognitions

Mike McGrenere thanked Alan Wisely, Michael Shepard and Wayne Weber for their part in organizing the Tofino weekend. Mike Shepard thanked Mike McGrenere for his role. Members showed their appreciation to speaker, Wayne Campbell, both for his presentation and for his labor on the Birds of British Columbia.

EDS NOTE: * See News and Announcements & Upcoming Events for BCFO Field Trips. ◀

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 1993 AGM, TOFINO, BC

by Marilyn V. Buhler

The weekend began for many with birding enroute to Tofino on Friday April 30, 1993. For your editors this involved a stop at Cowichan Bay, Somenos Marsh in Duncan, Coombs (there's a fabric shop there) and the JV Clyne Sanctuary in Port Alberni. We add a clarification for the site guide of this area printed in the last issue: ... you cross a gray bridge over the river (2.9 km) and then turn left at the next street (Mission Rd.). Proceed along the paved road staying next to the river. ...

The official program started with registration and a social get-together on Friday evening. Early (very early) the next morning we gathered in a heavy rain storm to decide whether or not to brave the waves for the half-day boat trip. Eleven hardy souls donned survival suits and rain ponchos at 7 am and set off with nearly as much water over, as under, them. (See Mike McGrenere's note on the boat trip following this article). The 10 am trip was cancelled. Those of us not so hardy enjoyed a very wet, but productive, field trip to various sites along the Long Beach coast. It was amazing how well one could see the orange on an Orange Crowned Warbler when the bird is soaking wet. After a bowl of hot soup to restore our circulation, we began the afternoon (indoors) portion of the program. (Our next issue will have a full listing of the sightings made over the AGM weekend).

All those present were made welcome by BCFO President Mike McGrenere who then turned the meeting over to Vice-president, Wayne Weber, organizer of the illustrated talks.

The first speaker was Dr Alan Burger of the University of Victoria. His interesting presentation was entitled "Diving and Feeding in Seabirds: New Insights into an Old Problem." In it he discussed some of the problems involved in studying sea birds as opposed to land birds and how some of these problems have been overcome.

The next speaker was Sharon Duchesne a graduate student from the University of Victoria. Sharon gave a presentation entitled "Commuting Flights and Nesting Behaviour of the Marbled Murrelet." She outlined some of what is currently known about Marbled Murrelets and talked about further studies she is planning on these alcids. (Including possible vocalization studies.)

Sharon's presentation was followed by the BCFO business meeting. (See minutes of the Third Annual General Meeting of the BCFO on pages 4-5 of this issue).

A portion of the business meeting involved election of officers for the Board of Directors of BCFO for 1993. All those nominated were elected by acclamation. Their names and areas of responsibility are shown on page 2 of this issue.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 1993 AGM TOFINO, BC Continued

A humorous event that would only have occurred at an ornithologists' meeting was when the last call for nominations from the floor was given it was answered by a flock of White-fronted geese coming over the building -- you can guess who or what had everyone's attention. Geese from that flock are now Members at Large for 1993.

A short coffee break preceded the remaining illustrated talks. We were given a visual treat by Adrian Dorst entitled "Clayoquot on the Wild Side". This slide and music presentation held the audience spellbound with its sometimes stark beauty. This was in sharp contrast to Adrian's other slides showing current clearcut logging in the area. A second presentation by Adrian was entitled "Shorebird Migration in the Tofino Area". This migration is quite a spectacle with close to 40 species recorded over the years. Adrian told us of counting 17,000 Western Sandpipers on one rocky islet.

The final presentation of the day covered a species occasionally seen by coastal birders. Entitled "Golden Eagle Migration in the Rocky Mountain Front Ranges of Alberta", this talk by Peter Sherrington from Cochrane, Alberta included field data only days old. It seem that observers have discovered a large migration of Golden Eagles through the mountains of western North America. This migration takes place along continuous chains of mountains such as the Fisher, Fairholm and Palliser Ranges going north in the Spring. It was also found that the southward migration in the Fall occurred along the same route. This was an exciting note to conclude the illustrated talks.

The annual banquet was held later in the evening followed by an eagerly awaited talk by Wayne Campbell who spoke about the Birds of British Columbia Project. Wayne outlined the efforts that had gone into the first two volumes of this publication. He spoke on how the information contained in the books is used by a wide variety of individuals and organizations. He encouraged all birders to continue to make, and contribute, observations and field notes as it is this input which makes the whole endeavour possible and meaningful.

Sunday arrived with sunshine, a rainbow, and numerous large flocks of White-fronted Geese flying over. Members enjoyed morning field trips and the pelagic trip was a "go". It was a great ending to a weekend of renewing friendships and making new ones. We also got some good birding even if the weather didn't always cooperate. ◀

ELEVEN HARDY BIRDERS ... or ... IT WASN'T EXACTLY A PICNIC

By M. F. (Mike) McGrenere
1178 Sunnygrove Terrace
Victoria, BC V8Y 2V9

Only one of the four boat trips planned for Clayoquot Sound/Vargas Island managed to make it onto the water on Saturday. At 6:30 am, a steady rain was falling and Sharon, the boat company organizer, said the seas were rough so the boat trip would not be going to Cleland Island. Eleven hardy birders decided to brave the elements and try their luck in the 20 foot Boston whaler. Cruiser suits were provided for the trip and five year old Graham McGrenere, in the smallest adult-sized cruiser suit, looked like a combination of the Michelin Man and the Pilsbury Dough Boy.

The boat trip went through part of Clayoquot Sound to the north side of Vargas Island then out onto the ocean on the protected side of Blunden Island. In Clayoquot Sound, Marbled Murrelets in breeding plumage were observed close to the boat & approx. 200 Brant were seen in shallow water near Vargas Island. Black Turnstones, Surfbirds and Black Oystercatchers were observed feeding on rocky islets. Near Blunden Island a bird, believed to be a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, was observed flying past the boat. The wind, rain and rough seas made identification difficult. After 2 hours, with 20 knot winds and the speed of the boat making the rain feel like sleet, all were happy to be back on shore for a warm drink. No one was seasick on the trip. However, when one of the birders was asked about the trip, her terse comment was ... "It wasn't exactly a picnic". A total of 23 species were seen from the boat. ◀

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS FIELD TRIPS

- Sept 25, 1993** On Saturday, September 25, there will be a field trip to the Cowichan Bay estuary near Duncan to look for shorebirds and other migrants. Meet at 1:00 pm at the parking lot along Cowichan Bay Dock Road, approximately 200 meters to the east of the intersection with Tzouhalem Road. For details about the trip or information about birding in the Duncan area, phone leader Derrick Marven (604) 748-8504.
- Sept 26, 1993** On Sunday, September 26, there will be a hawk watching trip to East Sooke Regional Park. This area is now well known for its fall migration of birds of prey. Meet at the Aylard Farm parking lot in East Sooke Park at 10:00 am. There is a 20-30 minute walk through the park to the lookout (see report of last year's trip pages 15-17 in the December 1992 issue of the newsletter). For those leaving from Victoria, meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride off the Trans Canada Highway and Helmcken Road at 9:15 am where car pooling can be arranged. Bring a lunch. The trip will conclude by 3:00 pm. For details phone leaders David Allinson (604) 478-0457 or Mike McGrenere (604) 658-8624.

LOON WATCHERS SOUGHT NATION-WIDE: The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (CLLS), a project organized by the Long Point Bird Observatory, is seeking to find answers to concerns about the future of the loon in Canada. The CLLS is a long term monitoring program designed to determine the effects of acid rain and other human disturbance on the reproductive success of Common Loons on lakes across Canada. The Survey requires assistance from people who can visit lakes at least three times during the summer, first to watch for resident adults, then to note newly hatched chicks and finally to record the number of chicks surviving the summer. Volunteer surveyors are needed to help CLLS discover what aspects of loon activity may be distinctive to BC. Birders wishing further information, or to become volunteer surveyors should send their name, mailing address and location of lake(s) they wish to survey to: Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Long Point Bird Observatory, PO Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont NOE 1M0. (519) 586-3531. (R. Watts, Times Columnist. Original edited for space limitations.)

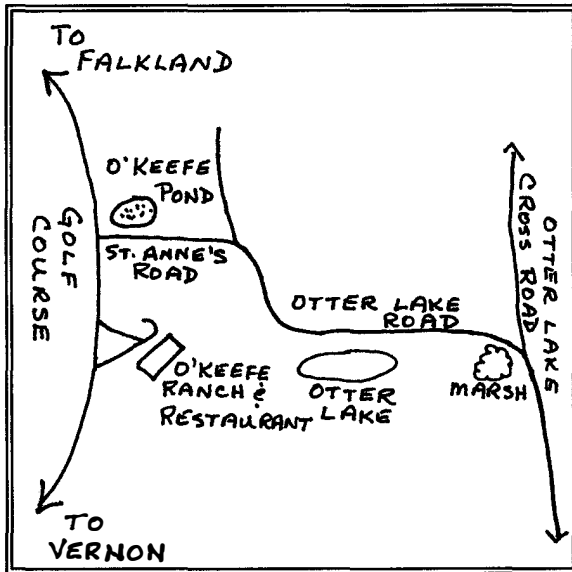
PACIFIC FLYWAY PROJECT: SHOREBIRDS -- In 1988, the Point Reyes Bird Observatory initiated the Pacific Flyway Project to determine the status and prospects of shorebirds in wetlands of the Pacific Flyway in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Baja California. Relying mostly on volunteers, to date we have conducted censuses of shorebirds in coastal wetlands stretching from Arctic Alaska to Baja California, and as far inland as Idaho, Great Salt Lake, and eastern New Mexico. To extend the project further, we need additional volunteers to conduct censuses at important wetlands (holding at least 1000 shorebirds) in British Columbia, other than the Fraser Delta/Boundary Bay or Tofino areas, or persons to organize other volunteer censusers. We would also like to hear from persons who are willing to share past census data to add to a flyway-wide database that may possibly reveal trends in shorebird numbers over time. For more information, contact: Pacific Flyway Project, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970, U.S.A. (phone, (415) 868-1221; FAX, (415) 868-1946).

B.C. NEST RECORD PROGRAM: There is still time to participate in this valuable project, intended to gather as much information as possible on all species of birds nesting in B.C., especially on nesting success and breeding distribution. For further details, see the announcement in the March issue of the B.C. Field Ornithologist. Participants are asked to send in their completed nest record cards for 1993 by October 1, if at all possible, to: Margaret Harris, PO Box 10, Penticton, B.C. V2A 6J9 (phone 492-8958). ◀

VERNON AREA HOTSPOTS

by Elsie Nykyfork
RR #4, Site 11, Comp C-29
Vernon, BC V1T 6L7

While housebound with the snow around Christmas time, Elsie Nykyfork reflected upon some of her favorite birding sites in and around the Vernon area. [EDS.]



O'KEEFE POND

Many people in BC will have visited the historic O'Keefe Ranch, situated just out of Vernon on Highway 97A as you travel toward Falkland. However, all birders may not know that there is a birding "must visit" site located just outside the ranch property on the corner of Highway 97A & St. Anne's Road.

The site, O'Keefe Pond, can be a very active pond in Spring and Summer. It is used for nesting and resting by the Ruddy Duck, Redhead, American Coot, & others. Over the birding season you will get most of the ducks, including Canvasback, all mergansers, Wilson's Phalarope, and various geese. In the fields around the pond I have seen Long-billed Curlew, Swainson's Hawks and Red-tailed Hawks. Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds use the pond edges for nesting.

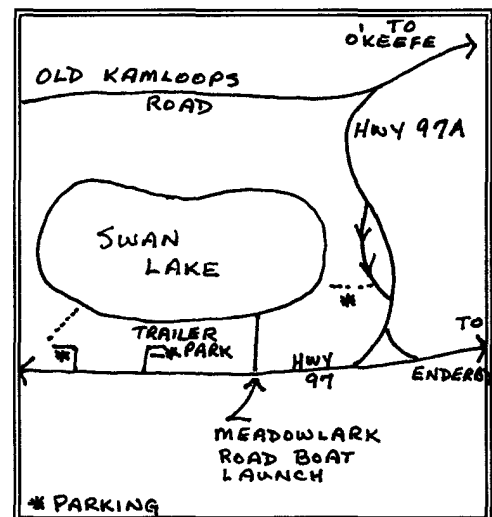
After viewing the pond, continue along St. Anne's Road (birding all the way) until you come to Otter Lake Road. Turn right and continue to bird along Otter Lake. You will pass a colony of Bank Swallows on your left. A little further along, on the right side of the road, there is a grove of trees with a large, well-used, pull-off. See if you can find the tree with the Raccoon's nest. (Clue -- large hole, high in the tree, start of the grove) Keep going to Otter Lake Crossroad. Turn right and you will see a small (private) marsh in a farmer's yard. There are Soras in here, as well as ducks, mergansers, wrens, blackbirds and the usual collection of marsh birds. Return the same route and check out the other side of the road. Look for the Bald Eagle's nest on the other side of Otter Lake and scan the grasslands for Long-billed Curlew.

Have a coffee break at O'Keefe Restaurant, they are accustomed to groups of birders. Phone me if you want company (549-8415).

SWAN LAKE

Swan Lake is north of Vernon, bordered by Highway 97, Highway 97A and the Old Kamloops Road. It is the best year-round birding lake in the Vernon area. You can get into the lake, at the north end, by parking in the small industrial area, on Highway 97A, walking across the long grass and using your scope. Several pairs of Red-necked Grebe nest here. The bushes and reeds are very productive.

Continue up to Highway 97, turn right, past the Swan Lake Fruit Stand, until you see Meadow Lark Road. A small boat launching road, on the right, takes you down to the lake for another look with your scope. Continue on to Silver Star Tent and Trailer Park. The owner-manager allows birders



VERNON AREA HOTSPOTS Continued

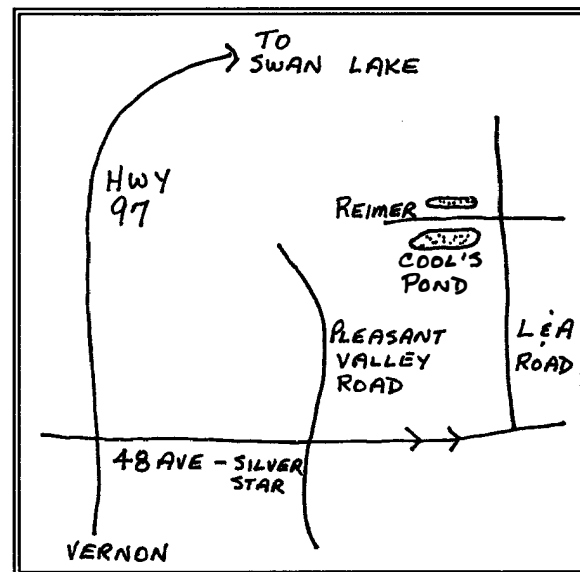
to park in his lot and walk down to the lake. Please stop at the office and tell him you are there. On the north boundary of the Trailer Park is a bird preserve, and you are free to use it any time. We had a Great Egret here for over two weeks in 1991. The Clark's Grebe has been seen in 1991 and 1992. Hundreds of Hooded Mergansers, Canvasback, Common Mergansers, Pintail, etc. assemble here in their season. Great Blue Heron feed here and they have a 26 nest rookery in the cottonwood trees behind the McDonalds Restaurant.

Further along Highway 97, by the overpass, there is another small road (no name), drive along here to a stream. Park and go in on the left side of the stream and you can get right out on the point from here. Have gumboots handy in the Spring!

COOL'S POND

Cool's Pond is a small, but productive, area on the edge of Vernon, covering approx. five acres. It's situated at the corner of Reimer Road and L&A Road. Many years ago, when Reimer Road was being built, the road was put right through the pond. The result today is a larger piece of pond on one side of Reimer, and a smaller one on the other side.

In 1992 the taxpayers of Vernon voted money for land acquisition and the larger piece of property was bought. Hopefully the other piece will follow soon. The North Okanagan Naturalist Club is working with Parks. A cleanup of junk from the water and the surrounding area was done by Club members. Parks have built a small viewing platform. Trees and shrub planting are in the plans. I have four duck boxes in the trees. So now the pond is protected from developers filling it in and building houses on it.



It is a spring and summer pond and well worth visiting when you are in the area. Some birds known to use the pond include Virginia Rail, Sora, Marsh Wren, Song Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Mallard, Blue- & Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Bufflehead, American Widgeon, Coot, Redhead, Cinnamon Teal and Killdeer. Some of these birds nest in the reeds. American Kestrel and Northern Flicker nested in two of the duck boxes in 1992. It is really a treat to see the young when they appear. For added interest there is a resident muskrat plus several turtles in the pond.

COMMONAGE BIRDING AREA

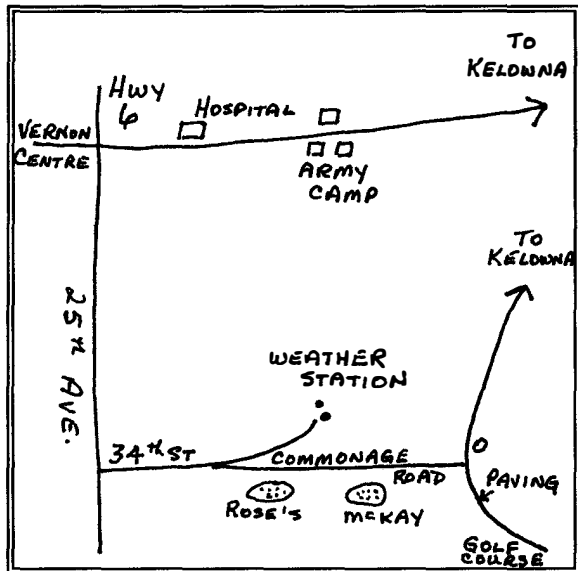
Entering Vernon, from Kelowna on Highway 97, pass the Army Camp and Vernon Hospital. Turn left, at the light, at the bottom of the hill (25th Avenue, across from Polson Park). This is the junction of Highway 97 and Highway 6. Continue on 25th Avenue to the next light (34th Street). Turn left again, go past the houses and a couple of churches, to where Commonage Road starts. You will be on the north side of the Army Camp.

Look up on your left and you will see the Vernon Weather Station buildings on the hill. Drive up, this is a good hawk area. Dozens of Yellow-bellied Marmots live in the banks around the buildings. When coming back down to the Commonage Road watch for Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks. The Gray Partridge is often seen along the road here. At the bottom of the road, across the hayfield, is a hay shed and cattle feeding station where we have seen Short-eared Owl, Snow Bunting and Horned Lark in season.

VERNON AREA HOTSPOTS Continued

Continue along Commonage Road, watching for hawks as you go, until you come to the first of a chain of lakes. This one is Rose's Pond. The little backwater on the right is where I have four duck boxes. The area teems with activity and if you slip under the fence here, and go around the back of the lake, you will get good birding in the bushes as well as seeing what may be on the end of the lake. (NOTE: Lots of ticks in May & June.) Stop to scope the lake as it is used by all the duck species for feeding, resting and nesting. Barrow's Goldeneye nest here regularly.

Continue on to McKay's Sewerage Reservoir where you can use your scope and see what you get. If you want a better view of the end of the lake, retrace your steps to the metal gate on the left side of the road. The chain is loose and you can slip through the gate and climb the hill to the top of the dam. Good birding all along the top, with a picnic table and bench provided if you wish to use them.



Continue along the Commonage Road, birding the bushes on either side, until you reach the pavement. At the left of the junction you can see a small lake, on private property. Take a quick look, I have seen Eurasian Widgeon here. Go back to the junction and continue on. (The paving was done to connect Predator Ridge Golf Course to Kelowna.) The Golf Course has several small lakes on it, you can scope from the road. I have 35 Bluebird boxes in this area. The box closest to the Golf Course entrance gate had two broods of Western Bluebirds in 1992. It's good for small birds all along this stretch of road. There is a restaurant in the Golf Course Lounge

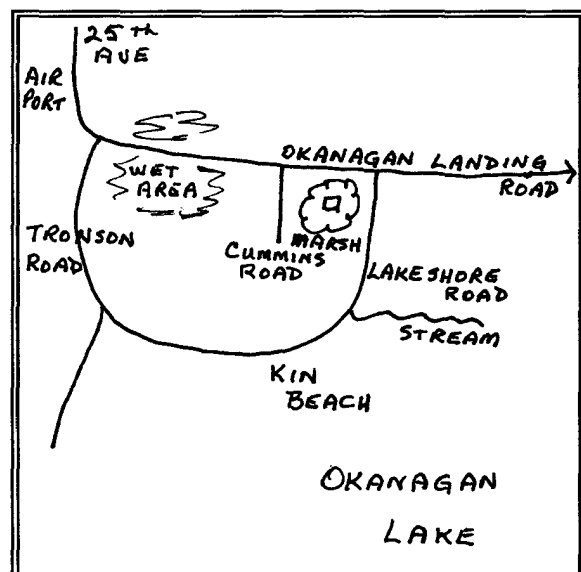
that is open to the public. Park in the lot and walk over. Excellent view from the porch while you take a coffee break.

(You can turn back at this point or if you continue on you will pass another small lake and eventually come out at Winfield. It is quite a distance on gravel road. If you turn back to 25th Avenue you can turn left and follow directions for the Okanagan Landing Site following.)

KIN BEACH & OKANAGAN LANDING ROAD

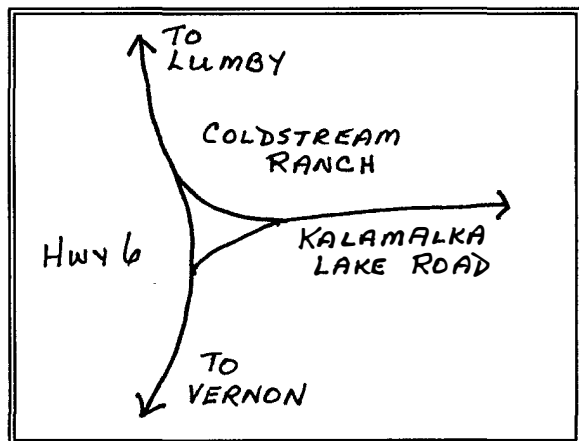
Entering Vernon, from Kelowna on Highway 97, you pass the Army Camp and Vernon Hospital. Turn left, at the light, at the bottom of the hill (25th Avenue, across from Polson Park). This is the junction of Highway 97 and Highway 6. Continue straight along 25th Avenue and it will become Okanagan Landing Road.

The area around the airport, on both sides of the road, floods in spring. Many ducks, gulls, Common Snipe, etc. can be found resting and feeding in these wet areas. Continue along to Lakeshore Road. This corner has a small marsh area with a B.C. Telephone building on it. The Sora nests here. Mourning Dove, American Goldfinch, Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier, Western Tanager and many more species can be found here in season.



VERNON AREA HOTSPOTS Continued

Turn right along Lakeshore Rd to Kin Beach. Where the stream comes in, the Belted Kingfisher often shows up. Many species of gulls and shorebirds, in season, like this area. The waters of the bay and this whole Vernon Arm of Okanagan Lake are excellent birding. Bald and Golden Eagles, Osprey and hawks frequent the area. I saw a Great Horned Owl in the trees at Kin Beach. In the fall of 1992 a female Black Scoter was sighted here. Tundra and Mute Swan, five species of grebe, four species of loon, White-fronted Goose and Ross's Goose all have made their appearance in this area. Of course this area, and both sides of the Vernon Arm of Okanagan Lake, is the famous Okanagan Landing birding area. In the first one or two weeks of May you can see the spectacular sight of 500 to 1000 Western Grebe resting here on their migration north for nesting. A few stay and nest on the Westside Arm of the Lake.

**COLDSTREAM RANCH**

This is a large, working, historic ranch with the main feed lot at Highway 6 and Kalamalka Lake Road. Park at the Ranch and ask permission to walk into the small pond and feed lot.

The Christmas birdcount usually gets about 3000 Mallards on this pond. It's fun to try and find something else in among the Mallards. You are liable to see any number of species at the feed lot and surrounding areas. The Rusty Blackbird stayed a long time this winter of 1992. Best in winter and spring. ◀

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE:**Denise Brownlie**

Denise has birded extensively in the the Okanagan, is a concerned warden of the Sibell Maude-Roxby Bird Sanctuary on Okanagan Lake and is an active member of the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club.

Marilyn V. Buhler & Richard A. (Andy) Buhler

Marilyn & Andy started "real" birding about ten years ago as recorders on a Sechelt Christmas Bird Count. We were both Directors of the Sechelt Marsh Protection Society and are now members of Victoria Natural History Society.

Chris Charlesworth

Chris is relatively new to birding but is already an acknowledged "sound" birder in the Kelowna area. He is an active member of the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club.

Hue N. MacKenzie

Hue MacKenzie birded for many years with the Ottawa Field Naturalists and is now an active member of the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists & the Vancouver Natural History Society.

Elsie Nykyfork

A true naturalist, Elsie has compiled a plant species Herbarium for Shuswap Lake Provincial Park Nature House, monitors bluebird & duck nest boxes and has been an Ecological Reserve Warden, a volunteer park Naturalist and an FBCN Camp Director.

G. Allen Poynter

Allen Poynter, who has birded since his teens in England, has had a special interest in sea birds. He has been active with both the Vancouver & Victoria Natural History Societies and also with the Canadian Nature Federation.

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE: Continued**I. Laurie Rockwell**

Laurie Rockwell had early tutelage in birding from Jim Grant around the 100 Mile House area. He currently lives in Summerland and is an active member of the South Okanagan Naturalists.

Ruth E. Travers

Ruth keeps a close eye on the birds in the West Chilcotin area. She actively monitors seasonal & geographical occurrences of species common to her area. ◀

A MEMORABLE BIRDING EXPERIENCE

by Hue N. MacKenzie
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Saturday January 2, 1993 was Christmas Bird Count Day for the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists. The count area covers most of central and southern Surrey, Langley City and part of Langley Municipality plus a small part of Whatcom County in Washington. It is a mixture of urbanized, suburban, rural and agricultural lands with a few remnants of good natural habitat, some nicely forested second-growth, four small rivers and creeks and several kilometres of tidal shoreline. This habitat mix, which lacks mountains (highest elevation about 100 meters), makes it one of the most productive Christmas Counts in Canada. The 1992 species total was 133 while over the 22 years it has been in operation 178 species have been recorded.

Count day was cold and windy with threatening clouds and hints of the impending snowstorm which arrived the next day. Jo Ann and I were assigned to cover part of Langley Municipality and were joined by John Ireland, manager of the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Our day was going well though not spectacularly when about 2:30 pm I asked John to go back and check out a trail we had discovered in the morning. It seemed to have some potential as it gave access to the Little Campbell River. Jo Ann and I then went to another area which had produced some good birds the previous year.

It was almost 3:30 when John located us and said "I think I have just seen a Dusky Thrush! Come and see if we can relocate and verify it." We looked at the illustration in the National Geographic Birds of North America and John, who had seen this species in Japan, said "Yes, that's it!"

We rushed off to relocate the bird in a large holly tree on Fernridge Crescent. In the failing light we had difficulty seeing it adequately as it was well hidden inside the dense foliage. Using binoculars and a telescope we gradually got diagnostic views. The prominent creamy-white speculum, the scaly appearance of the breast with its indistinct crescent and the large rusty-red area in the wings were all seen well.

Dusky Thrush has been recorded infrequently in Alaska, mostly on St. Lawrence Island and in the western Aleutians. This was the first record for Canada and it has yet to be recorded from any State other than Alaska.

As many readers will know this bird remained at the same site until at least April 9, 1993. The holly tree was its principal food source and was vigorously defended against competitors. At least 1000 birders arrived to see the thrush from all over North America and even included at least two from England.

The American Birding Association acknowledged the property owners kindness in allowing so many visitors with an ABA Commendation Award which was presented by John Ireland on February 20, 1993.

One thing I will always regret about this memorable birding experience is that John was not able to join us at the count-down that evening. He would have really enjoyed the surprised, excited and possibly in some cases, incredulous expressions on the faces of our fellow birders when I announced his spectacular find. ◀

FINDING SHARP-TAILED GROUSE

by Chris Charlesworth
725 Richards Road, Kelowna, BC V1X 2X5

Just after school on April 8, 1993, Chris Siddle met me in front of my home in Kelowna. We were to drive to Vernon and meet up with Gary Davidson. From there we were to join Rick Howie at a 24 hour diner in Kamloops. We had planned to tent on the Lac du Bois grasslands in Kamloops and to locate some Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Rick met us in Kamloops as arranged and led us to an area where we left the two cars. It was about 9:30 pm and dark. We had to backpack into the area near the lek. The hike took about half an hour. Rick and Gary had been at the lek the previous year so knew roughly where to put up camp. After a short, unsuccessful search for grouse scat, we had to rely on Rick and Gary's memory. A Long-billed Curlew flew in front of our flashlights. The night air was really cold and windy. Greater Yellowlegs, American Coot, Green-winged Teal, Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, and Canada Geese and others called in the dark. A Barred Owl hooted in the distance. I had not realized that so many birds sang and called at night.

After what seemed like a very short sleep, the first grouse flew in. We could hear "drumming and popping" outside the tents. We then had to get out of the tents to see them. We had to take that chance. After all, that's what makes birding fun.

The Sharp-tailed Grouse were over a small rise and on the top of a hill. When the first grouse were in my binoculars I was very, very pleased. This bird was a life bird for me. There were eleven all together. They danced and "popped" for about two minutes, then they sighted us and flew away.

We moved the tents closer to the lek. A Lapland Longspur called overhead. Our first sighting turned out to be the only good look we had of the grouse all morning. Chris Siddle and I made a large circle around the lek and tried to steer them back towards the tents. One bird, probably a male, sat on a stone watching for danger. The two of us got on our bellies and crawled towards them. All eleven grouse flew right over us. There went that plan! Feeling defeated we went back to the tents. Rick went looking for them next. We watched him climb over several hills and then all eleven birds flew away again. That was the last fleeting glimpse we had of the grouse. However, in my mind the trip was a great success and it was a privilege to bird with three of British Columbia's best birders. ◀

**OKANAGAN MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK
FIRST ANNUAL BIRD BLITZ**

by Denise Brownlie
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At tally time Wayne Weber told the story of his team following the two dark specks approaching from the horizon. Common Ravens? Gulls? PARASITIC JAEGERs!

The Parasitic Jaegers were the surprise of the day, but eleven participating teams logged 103 species and 1848 individual birds at the First Annual Bird Blitz held May 29, 1993 at Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park. The event, coordinated by Eileen Dillabough of Kelowna, brought 54 amateur and professional birders from around the province to starting points near Kelowna and Naramata. Previous bird data for the park was piecemeal, chiefly in the form of reports from hikers, so these results will be valuable in providing a base for future counts and an eventual formal checklist of park birds.

Many teams agreed that the Chipping Sparrow seemed the most common bird in the park, but 87 Chippies were in fact outnumbered by 135 Evening Grosbeaks, 101 Pine Siskins, and 99 Townsend's Warblers. Yellow-rumped Warblers, at 72, were the second most plentiful of the ten species of wood-warblers tallied. Calliope Hummingbirds were very much in evidence at 46, with 21 being counted along the three-kilometer stretch of road at the Kelowna access to the park. One team had a fine close-up of

OKANAGAN MOUNTAIN BIRD BLITZ Continued

Turkey Vultures, another was happy to make a positive I.D. of a Magnolia Warbler (rare in the Central Okanagan), and Cec Dillabough's team spent memorable moments at Wild Horse Canyon surrounded by the echoing songs of at least seven Veery.

In their efforts, birders had hiked 10 steep kilometers to Divide Lake, backpacked 15 kilometers to Buchan's Bay, climbed the Wild Horse Canyon walls, and navigated along sections of the 33 kilometers of foreshore on Okanagan Lake. At the wrap-up tally and barbecue, we heard about a cinnamon bear that chose not to pursue Kelowna hiker Rick Gee, and of a meter-long rattlesnake that slithered harmlessly away from another group. However, the record numbers of mosquitoes were not so easily intimidated. Brenda Thomson and team, camping deep in the park for an early start, were driven out of their tents and down to the lake in search of escape.

Established in 1973, Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park encompasses 10,462 hectares of essentially backcountry wilderness and spectacular marine foreshore. Because of its area and differing elevations (1200 meters between lake level and mountain summit) the park enjoys a wide variety of ecosystems and micro-climates. Good birding was expected, thanks to the varied habitat, but the results surpassed even the hopes of the organizing committee. Now if only there could be a follow-up with a sighting of the elusive White-headed Woodpecker, reported in the past by the occasional hiker in the park... ◀

AVISYS: A COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR BIRDERS

by Ruth E. Travers
Tatla Lake, BC VOL 1V0

I have been using the IBM compatible AviSys birding software program for about eight months. Although I came into it with scarcely any computer experience I found the program to be very user friendly. The manual that came with it is not difficult to understand and even has a touch of humor. The first chapter of the manual is titled "Quick Start". It gives you the basic information necessary to get into the program quickly.

AviSys is a lister's program from the word go, but it is adaptable to other purposes. My husband and I both have our life lists in AviSys. In our separate programs, we can keep provincial, state or regional lists, or any other type of list we choose. We could both keep our lists in the same AviSys program, but we didn't want our lists to be vulnerable to what the other person might do. I have also installed the program on the hard disk for the record keeping I do for the West Chilcotin.

The Master Checklist follows the AOU sequence and lists over 870 North American birds, the number of which depends on current lumpings and splittings. You can add or delete species as the need arises quite easily. In the case of the West Chilcotin records I keep, I have eliminated every species that is very unlikely to be seen here, which gives me a list of 238 species. Many of these have not been seen here yet. However, a cattle egret was sighted out here last fall and, since I had deleted it, I had to reenter it in the list. Families can also be deleted or added. If you want to keep a list of birds outside of North America, it can be added also.

All locations can be linked together. The site where a sighting is made can be linked to the nearest town or city, and then to the county or region which is then linked to the province or state where it is found. The next level is nation which is linked to the continent on which it is located. The last three levels will have been linked already when you receive the program. These categories can be adapted to your own purposes as I have done in my West Chilcotin program. The computer cannot discern that what you choose to call by the name of a mountain range or a geographical region is not a county or a state. By linking the location levels, any data can be accessed by whichever category you choose. If you want to see how many sightings of mallards you have seen at Shuswap Lake from June 15 to August 30 of 1990, you can retrieve this information, provided you have entered the data. You can also get the same information for all of British Columbia without having to enter it specifically for B.C. as long as you have Shuswap Lake and all the other locations of your sightings of mallards linked to B.C.

AVISYS: A COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR BIRDERS Continued

If you have a lengthy observation to record with a sighting, provision has been made for recording it as a field note, and a symbol will appear with the sighting record that indicates that a field note is attached.

There are many other features. There are Hot Keys which can take you to certain locations in the Master Checklist quickly. An attributes list allows you to store a lot of information about a sighting without having to write out every detail. This information is readily available, which could be helpful in research work. Key Words are also helpful in this respect.

I just received a notice from Perceptive Systems that AviSys has just been updated to Version 3.0, and it now has the 63 checklists of the Canadian provinces and the U.S. states imbedded in its data files. Up to this time the birder had to enter these checklists himself. There is much more, but this should give you a good indication of what a useful program AviSys can be to the serious birder. ⤵

**BCFO FIELD TRIP REPORT (JUNE 12, 1993)
OWLING WITH THE KAMLOOPS NATURALISTS CLUB**

Approximately twenty participants met at 8:30 pm in the parking lot of the Halston Diner on the road to Rayleigh. Rick Howie arrived a few minutes late as he had thirty enologists meeting at his home the same evening. Participants included BCFO members (Anaheim, Kamloops, Vernon, Victoria), Kamloops Naturalists and a few interested public who had seen the event advertised in the local paper. By a show of hands Rick determined that we should try for a Flammulated Owl as the target species and, if time permitted, other species in the Lac Dubois area.

With considerable enthusiasm we all took our vehicles to a site about four km from a known Flammulated Owl nest site. That trip took about 10 minutes. Rick got us all together and began to explain how recent was our knowledge about the habitat and range of the Flammulated Owl in BC when one member exclaimed "Burrowing Owl on a post just over the cars!". Flammulateds forgotten for the moment, we were all treated to the sight of three Burrowing Owls on various posts around the area. Rick then completed his discussion and asked if those with trucks or 4WD vehicles would ferry participants over the next section as the road there was ... "a little rough".

With considerable enthusiasm we all piled into four vehicles to drive the four km to a known Flammulated Owl nest site. That trip took about 60 minutes! Recent rains, deep ruts and slippery gumbo bested one truck so we all piled into three vehicles and even then one 4X4 had to be winched out of a boghole (road rut). Still spirits were high, we squeezed together and got to know each other a bit better.

Near the nest site we all quietly left the vehicles. Before going toward the nest area we tested our flashlights, our eyes and our ears. The sky had cleared and stars glittered overhead through the Douglas fir trees. A gentle "Hoot...hoot" got everyone's attention -- a male Flammulated Owl watching out for his territory. We waited and we listened as the call came closer. However, the owl was a skilled ventriloquist and kept us guessing about his exact location.

Finally, Rick took us to a gnarled old Douglas fir which had a small round hole near the top. The moment was upon us -- would anyone be home or was the hoot all we got for our efforts? The male was still calling quietly near us. Rick tapped the tree. Nothing. He imitated a call. Nothing. He tapped again. Suddenly out from the hole in the trunk peered a gorgeous little reddish-gray, brown-eyed owl. Mrs Flammulated was at home. She looked at us and we looked at her until all had had a good look then back she went into the hole. Mr flew by but did not stop to let us see him. We thanked Rick and the owls and left shortly thereafter so as not to disturb the nesting birds unduly.

The trip down was muddy but uneventful. By 1:30 am several of us were having mugs of hot chocolate and conversation back at the Diner. Both Marilyn & I would like to thank Rick Howie for his time & expertise, the Kamloops Naturalists who kindly chauffeured us to the owls, and all the participants who made us feel very welcome on the trip. We must do it again sometime, it really was a hoot! ⤵

**BCFO FIELD TRIP REPORT (APRIL 17, 1993)
REIFEL BIRD SANCTUARY & ROBERTS BANK JETTY, DELTA**

by G. Allen Poynter
1238 Beach Grove Road
Delta, BC V4L 1N6

Twelve birders met at 9:00 am at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary to join leaders Allen Poynter and John Ireland, with everyone agreeing it was nice to see that the weather forecast was wrong again.

Shorebirds were not seen in large numbers, other than the Dunlin flocks offshore performing their aerial acrobatics. We were slightly early for the big flocks of shorebirds, and the tide was low for most of our visit.

Four Turkey Vultures flying over the open fields of the old R.C.A.F. radio station were the highlight of the day, and the largest group on record for the Sanctuary. A late juvenile Northern Shrike was in the same area as a bonus.

For the veteran birders as well as the novices, the opportunity to observe a female Rufous Hummingbird on the nest at close range was appreciated.

A walk back up the treed entrance road gave us the chance to see five species of warblers, including Black-throated Gray and Townsend's, as well as the usual forest and bush birds before walking the dykes to view the tail end of the Snow Goose migration out on the marsh.

For several years now, the Black-crowned Night-Herons have been an exciting species to look for along Fuller Slough, and the two birds remaining were in place for this trip. A total of 77 species were observed on the very educational three-hour walk, and the Robert's Bank portion of the day was scrapped due to lack of time, low tide, and few shorebirds. However, Allen Poynter did visit the jetty on his own, to view the migrant Brant in the bay to the south. An estimated 3500 Brant were here (8600 a few days earlier), together with several other species in this location. The total species count for the two areas was 86 species in only four hours, making it a very successful outing. ◀

BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST SITE GUIDES

TITLE	AUTHOR	VOLUME(%) & DATE
Duck Lake, Creston, BC	Gary S. Davidson	1(2) July 1991
Blackie Spit, Surrey, BC	Jo Ann & Hue MacKenzie	1(2) July 1991
Mckinney Road, Oliver, BC	Richard J. Cannings	1(3) Oct 1991
Cowichan Bay & Duncan, BC	Keith Taylor	1(4) Feb 1992
Monck Provincial Park & Vicinity, BC	Wayne C. Weber	1(4) Feb 1992
Princeton "Outback", BC	R.J. Herzig, M. Schouten	2(1) & 2(2) 1992
Hecate Strait, BC	D.V. (Val) George	2(3/4) Dec 1992
Island View Beach, Saanich, BC	Bruce Whittington	2(3/4) Dec 1992
Lower Sunshine Coast, BC	A.G. (Tony) Greenfield	2(3/4) Dec 1992
Shoemaker Bay, Port Alberni, BC	Sandy McRuer	3(1) Mar 1993
Vernon Area Hotspots, Vernon, BC	Elsie Nykyfork	3(2) June 1993

GUIDELINES FOR SITE GUIDES

Site Guides should be about 2-3 pages in length. They should include a map (hand-drawn is fine) with distances to viewing areas clearly indicated from the starting point. Landmarks and terrain should be noted, along with the birds seen in season. Any unusual or special species should be given and a local contact person is always helpful information. Hazards and closed areas should also be indicated so that we may all experience safe birding. Items of historical or geological interest along the route should also be noted. Many birders are interested in a broad range of natural history areas and it is nice to be able to stimulate the grey cells while patiently & quietly awaiting the (possible!?) appearance of an elusive lifebird. ◀

**BASIC ELEMENTS OF BIRDING
FOR BEGINNERS -- Part 1 of 2 Parts**

I. Laurie Rockwell
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These are some of my own observations on how beginners learn the life-long process of identifying birds. I will throw in a few "how to" hints that I have and do find useful. Finally, (In Part 2 which will follow in the September Issue) I will address "what to" and P.E.P., the practice, ethics and patience of birding.

Natural Aptitude

I am convinced that natural aptitude is a key factor in the transition from neophyte to experienced birder. Just as sculptors, photographers, musicians, and artists bring a predisposition to their craft, so too do birders. The best birders are naturally predisposed to assimilating auditory, visual, perceptual and written information. Like artists, good birders are able to create an image of a bird from a synthesis of information (gestalt). Some birders are able to do this faster than others and, just like a mini-computer, they can even give you a "printout"! Other birders never get beyond the basic steps before they give up. Natural aptitude may explain how some young birders make a seemingly miraculous transition from neophyte to experienced birder in a very short time. It is probably best to start birding as young as possible, before the mind gets cluttered with all the rhetoric of "you can't", "you always", "that's not the way to do it".

Let's examine some aspects of natural aptitude. It is often apparent that some of us are visually oriented to learning, some are aurally oriented, some require "hands on", and so forth. Generally we combine a variety of learning techniques but usually one dominates. If we are lucky we combine all, or most, of these aptitudes in a gestalt of learning.

When we "see" a bird, some of us will notice only certain aspects. These aspects may be the colour, the shape, the size or the song. Others will see all of these aspects plus the environment (habitat), the relationship of the bird to its environment (ground, shrub, water, flying, feeding), if there is a nest, if there is more than one bird and so on.

One birder may hear a bird's song or call, but no more. Another birder may internalize the sound, comparing notes to a musical scale or "it sounds like _____" or whatever frame of reference an audio-oriented person uses. Thus, we tone-deaf people (at least so far as learning musical scales and notes is concerned) must establish own way of recognizing the sound. Even our hearing ability will greatly determine how and what we hear. For most people, binoculars compensate for visual deficiencies, but only a hearing aid can improve one's quality of hearing. A caution -- use the field guide descriptions of bird songs and calls only for additional reference; wherever possible use your own phonetic interpretation. For example, most of the time the Ruby-Crowned Kinglet says (to me) "you're great, you're great, you're great", despite the textbook description.

Over time better birders learn to synthesize all of this information into a sort of Polaroid snapshot. They instantly combine visual, auditory, seasonal, environmental, meteorological, biological, geographic and behavioral data in their minds' computer to produce a "picture" of the bird. Over time, the instant recall brings forth a bank of data to be compared with a current sighting. This data is available either in the field or later at home where the mental "picture" can be compared with books and other reference material. This is similar to the artist who sees the picture in the field, but who reproduces it at home. Briefly then, the experienced birder produces an instant snapshot of all the data while the less experienced birder still struggles with a projector tray of numerous separate data.

A comment about photographic memory -- it may be an advantage, but it is of little use if it cannot be related to anything. Knowledge of the many individual aspects that make up the picture is critical to its proper evaluation. In the final analysis, it is the ability to receive, process and interpret current data and to recall past data that separates the novice from the expert birder.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS -- Part 1 Continued**Identification**

I now want to address the specifics of actually identifying bird species. The scope of this article, however, does not permit me to be as exhaustive as Gerry Bennett was in his Beginner's Page which ran from May 1986 to November 1989 in his magazine Birdfinding in Canada, nor do I intend to.

Roger Tory Peterson developed the first field guide many years ago. It was a revolution in simplicity because it focused on key aspects of the birds general appearance with diagnostic features pointed out by lines; for example, wing bars, eye lines and rings, rump colour, tail and bill shape, etc. Unfortunately, the most readily identifiable features were seen in breeding plumages and often did not distinguish juvenile plumages to any degree or even fall/winter plumages for that matter. While changes have been made in subsequent guides, this format has been the basis for field guides ever since. There are new guides, however, that break with this tradition.

One that I want to highlight is Hawks in Flight by Peter Donne and David Sibley. This book has had a great impact on my APPROACH to birding. In fact, Tory Peterson says of the book: "A landmark. The first book dealing with a new aspect of birding -- the holistic method." The cover goes on to say "Hawks -- probably the most popular birds among birders -- are notoriously difficult to identify using the traditional field mark method. Hawks in Flight shows how to recognize hawks the way we recognize our friends at a distance: by their general body shape, the way they move, and the places they are most likely to be seen."

This is precisely the gestalt that I have previously referred to -- looking at the whole picture. In breeding season, in good light, a still bird may be readily identified by its traditional field marks; in flight, in non-breeding plumage, these field marks may be of little use.

How is it that some birders can identify a bird clearly, or even its family or genus, at a great distance, or if they've never seen it before? Surely not by diagnostic field marks alone, especially if the bird originates outside of Canada or even North America. What these birders are cuing in on is the total picture: "It looks like a ...; it acts like a ...; it flies like a ...; it sounds like a ...; it associates with ...; it was seen in ... habitat; it was eating ...; it was seen after a storm; it forages like a ..." and so on.

The point, then, is that traditional diagnostic features are but one aid in identification. They are not infallible given the time of year, light conditions, distance, weather and even the way we tend to see things differently. If, however, you add flight pattern, relative size of head/tail to body length, wing dihedral, wing shape as well as habitat, seasons, feeding activity, association with other birds and so on, you have a much more reliable method of identification.

My advice to beginners, then, is to use a holistic method of identification rather than relying solely on the usual diagnostic (field guide) marks. It is also advantageous to know the habitat in which you are birding (water, alpine, coastal, dry interior, etc.) and the kinds of birds one can expect in these habitats rather than rummaging through a field guide trying to find a bird to INSERT into a habitat. Right away you can eliminate many possible impossibles, so to speak. ◀

EDS' NOTE: We will present Part 2 of Laurie's article in our September issue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Members are really getting the right idea. Every letter we received in time for this issue contained an article for publication along with a short personal note. Thank you for your kind words and THANK YOU for the articles. Keep sending them in! We did not receive any letters complaining about the smaller type size. Mind you we did not get any letters complimenting the change either. However, since we did discuss the issue with several members on our various field trips, and since most verbal comments were positive, we have retained the type size in this issue. ◀

BIRD-LISTER'S CORNER

by Wayne C. Weber
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The listing totals below, for British Columbia and Canada life lists, are based on the Listing Report Forms (included with the December 1992 issue) which were returned to me, plus a few totals which were phoned in. A few lists sent in for December 1991 were not updated, but are included here anyway, so please bear in mind that not all the totals are up-to-date.

In a future issue, we will report totals for National and Provincial Parks and local checklist areas. We plan to send out another Listing Report Form with the December 1993 issue, and will continue to print a few pages of listing totals in every second issue. We hope those of you who keep lists will support this feature, and will enjoy comparing notes with others who do the same.

LISTING DATA: DECEMBER 1992

BRITISH COLUMBIA (448 species)

TOTAL	PERCENT	BIRDER	ADDRESS
394	87.9	Mike Force	Vancouver, B.C.
393	87.7	David Stirling	Victoria, B.C.
392	87.5	Wayne Weber	Delta, B.C.
383	85.5	Jo Ann MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
382	85.3	Doug Kragh	Port Coquitlam, B.C.
382	85.3	Hue MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
380	84.8	Thomas Plath	Richmond, B.C.
378	84.4	Dick Cannings	Vancouver, B.C.
370	82.6	Tony Greenfield	Sechelt, B.C.
365	81.5	Chris Siddle	Vernon, B.C.
362	80.8	Audrey Viken	West Vancouver, B.C.
361	80.6	Danny Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C.
360	80.4	Gary Davidson	Nakusp, B.C.
360	80.4	Wayne Diakow	Richmond, B.C.
354	79.0	Peter Hamel	Toronto, Ontario
353	78.8	Colin Butt	Surrey, B.C.
353	78.8	Mike McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
350	78.1	Robin Weber	Prince Rupert, B.C.
347	77.4	Bryan Gates	Victoria, B.C.
346	77.2	Rick Howie	Kamloops, B.C.
345	77.0	Mary Collins	Vernon, B.C.
342	76.3	Stefan Zaremba	Burnaby, B.C.
340	75.9	Hank Vander Pol	Victoria, B.C.
339	75.7	David Mark	Amherst, New York
338	75.4	Steve Cannings	Penticton, B.C.
336	75.0	Kevin MacPherson	Vancouver, B.C.
336	75.0	Rick Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C.
335	74.8	Linda Van Damme	Nelson, B.C.
333	74.3	Lloyd Esralson	Surrey, B.C.
332	74.1	Barb McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
330	73.7	Barbara Begg	Sidney, B.C.
327	73.0	Jack Williams	White Rock, B.C.
326	72.8	Val George	Terrace, B.C.
323	72.1	Eric MacBean	West Vancouver, B.C.
323	72.1	Ron Walker	Christina Lake, B.C.
310	69.2	Eric Tull	Calgary, Alberta
308	68.1	Bob Morford	Delta, B.C.
305	68.8	Ken Morgan	Sidney, B.C.
302	67.4	Steve Johnson	Sidney, B.C.
296	66.1	Don Wilson	Kelowna, B.C.

BRITISH COLUMBIA (448 species) (Continued)

TOTAL	PERCENT	BIRDER	ADDRESS
289	64.5	Aziza Cooper	Victoria, B.C.
281	62.7	David Allinson	Victoria, B.C.
279	62.3	Denise Brownlie	Kelowna, B.C.
278	62.0	Ken Taylor	Kamloops, B.C.
276	61.6	Peter Axhorn	Sooke, B.C.
273	60.9	Jerry Herzig	Princeton, B.C.
273	60.9	Laurie Rockwell	Summerland, B.C.
273	60.9	Chris Sandham	Victoria, B.C.
273	60.9	Arnold Skei	Sechelt, B.C.
271	60.5	Blake Maybank	White's Lake, N.S.
267	59.6	Elsie Nykyfork	Vernon, B.C.
267	59.6	Edward Chan Sing	Burnaby, B.C.
266	59.4	Andy Buhler	Victoria, B.C.
266	59.4	Marilyn Buhler	Victoria, B.C.
251	55.0	Tom Gillespie	Victoria, B.C.
250	55.8	Maurice Ellison	Trail, B.C.

CANADA (596 species)

TOTAL	PERCENT	BIRDER	ADDRESS
486	81.5	Hue MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
486	81.5	Jo Ann MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
484	81.2	Peter Hamel	Toronto, Ont.
467	78.4	David Mark	Amherst, N.Y.
462	77.5	Eric Tull	Calgary, Alberta
461	77.3	David Stirling	Victoria, B.C.
460	77.2	Thomas Plath	Richmond, B.C.
451	75.7	Blake Maybank	Armdale, N.S.
443	74.3	Mike Force	Vancouver, B.C.
441	74.0	Doug Kragh	Port Coquitlam, B.C.
440	73.8	Wayne Weber	Delta, B.C.
430	72.1	Dick Cannings	Vancouver, B.C.
430	72.1	Jack Williams	White Rock, B.C.
425	71.3	Mary Collins	Vernon, B.C.
419	70.3	Colin Butt	Surrey, B.C.
417	70.0	Mike McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
416	69.8	Audrey Viken	West Vancouver, B.C.
414	69.5	Rick Howie	Kamloops, B.C.
409	68.6	Stefan Zarembo	Burnaby, B.C.
401	67.3	Barb McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
399	66.9	Allen Wiseley	Victoria, B.C.
391	65.6	Hank Vander Pol	Victoria, B.C.
389	65.2	Wayne Diakow	Richmond, B.C.
388	65.1	Steve Cannings	Penticton, B.C.
384	64.4	Tony Greenfield	Sechelt, B.C.
382	64.1	Chris Siddle	Vernon, B.C.
379	63.6	Barbara Begg	Sidney, B.C.
379	63.6	Ken Morgan	Victoria, B.C.
374	62.8	Lloyd Esralson	Surrey, B.C.
373	63.6	Gary Davidson	Nakusp, B.C.
372	60.4	Eric MacBean	West Vancouver, B.C.
369	61.9	Derrick Marven	Duncan, B.C.
362	60.7	Robin Weber	Prince Rupert, B.C.
361	60.5	Danny Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C.
360	60.4	David Allinson	Victoria, B.C.
356	59.7	Bryan Gates	Victoria, B.C.
353	59.2	Danny Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C. ◀