

# BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST

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The BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST is published four times a year by British Columbia Field Ornithologists, PO Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7. A subscription to this periodical is a benefit of membership in the society. Members will also receive a copy of the annual journal, British Columbia Birds.

Send material for publication in any format (mail, phone, FAX, print, IBM WordPerfect or Word for Windows files on 3.5" or 5.25" floppies) to the BCFO Newsletter Editors (name, address and phone no. page 2). We especially welcome bird-finding information for the "Site Guide" series and any 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 & enjoyment of wild birds in British Columbia. 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, \$25.00; junior memberships (age under 18), \$10.00; U.S. and foreign memberships, \$25.00 (U.S.). Memberships are for the calendar year. For further information, or to join, write:

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**EDITORS' NOTES AND NOTIONS**


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Well, we hope all of our members had some productive spring birding. We were certainly busy in May as we were able to attend both the FBCN AGM in Naramata and the Okanagan Mountain Bird Blitz in Kelowna. While Okanagan birders are known for their hospitality, we would like to extend a special thank you to Lloyd & Shirley Coffin and to Gwynneth Wilson for taking two out-of-towners "under their wing". Thank yous are also extended to Anne Murray (Delta) for driving skills; Jim, Laurie, Syd, Steve, Joan, Harold, Hugh, Chris, and the "Dusty-Trail Flycatchers" for good birding and fellowship; and to all attendees, volunteers, staff, coordinators, etc. for making both of the events so enjoyable.

In this issue Martin McNicholl provides us with an analysis of the membership survey responses. Stick with us while we develop and grow as we need your support. The BIG NEWS is that the BCFO AGM will be held over here in the Victoria area this September (see page 7). Let's have a great turnout because there will certainly be interesting speakers, enjoyable trips, lively debate, fantastic birding, good camaraderie and just a "bit of business" since it is the AGM. Consider supporting the direction of the BCFO by allowing your name to stand for nomination to the Board; volunteer to assist with the AGM plans; get involved, it's your Society!

Our news and announcements correspondent missed the printing deadline so we have included a few items we have "Seen in Passing". The second of Wayne's articles on the rare bird alert numbers of the Pacific Northwest appears in this issue. Ron and Jack, two birders with many years of birding experience, took pens in hand and provided us with some enjoyable reading. Bonita, whose profession requires a pen in hand, has allowed us to share her special experience with an over-wintering hummer. Harold gave us some great bluebird stats. Peter sent us an informative article on BC songbird monitoring. We have assisted in a local banding project so we know that even novice volunteers can get involved in this useful and interesting aspect of birding. Mike went to bat for us again. He sent us part two of birding and baseball, but this time gave us one of the benefits of having dual passions.

**Late breaking news:** immediately following their success in the Okanagan Big Day in May, the team of Dick Cannings, Alvaro Jaramillo, Blake Maybank and Tom Plath set out on another challenge to see what a BC Big Day (Okanagan and Vancouver areas combined) might produce. Their tally for the BC Big Day was a whopping 196 bird species and sets a new BC record! More on this in the next issue we hope.

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**BCFO OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1993-1994**

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**SOCIETY NEWS**

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**Whither B.C. BIRDS?: Results of Membership Survey.**

by Martin K. McNicholl

All but the newest members of BCFO will be aware that our journal, British Columbia Birds, has been a source of considerable concern and some contention among both board and non-board members alike. The main concern has been over late publication, but there has also been some disagreement over what should and should not be included. To address the latter, the board decided prior to the annual general meeting in 1994 that a membership survey was in order. Such a survey, devised by President Marian Porter, was included in the December 1994 issue of BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST. By mid-February 1995, 44 survey slips had been returned, a remarkably strong response for a membership survey. Clearly, the journal is important to our members! I did not see the addresses of all of the respondents, but those which I did see encompass a broad sweep of the province: Courtenay, Delta, Duncan, Kelowna, Masset, Nanaimo, Prince George, Princeton, Sechelt, Sidney, Summerland, Surrey, Vancouver, Vernon, Victoria, and Westbank. The only out-of-province response was from Cam and Joy Finlay (CJF) of Sherwood Park, Alberta (but with plans to move to the coast in the near future).

**FORMAT ISSUES**

Although many respondents omitted some of the questions, most answered the format questions. Most indicated that they prefer the size used in the first two issues of the journal. Barbara Begg (BB) and the Finlays find it easy to file and K. Shewchuk (KS) likes the fact that it can be three-hole punched and kept in a binder. However, 11 respondents indicated that they would prefer a smaller-sized journal. One feels that the large format wastes space. Eight others were unsure or indicated no preference. For example, "M.B." likes the current size, but would not be averse to a smaller format either and Les Gyug (LG) indicated that a smaller format would be acceptable with finer print.

Few respondents felt that there have been too many photos, and 12 felt that there should be more. One indicated that more would be nice provided that BCFO could afford them. On the other hand, LG feels that there are too many and both he and Hue Mackenzie (HM) indicated that only photos that complement the text should be included. I am inclined to agree that the number of illustrations (photo or otherwise) should be governed by their relevance to the text. Alvaro Jaramillo (AJ) commented that he hoped that reports of the Rare Birds Committee will include plenty of photographs. They are certainly especially relevant to such reports. Laurie Rockwell (LR) suggested a quiz bird photo in each issue. This is a successful (albeit humbling) feature of Birders Journal, Ontario Birds and some other journals, and can be a useful educational item. Such photos always remind me how much I rely on behaviour and sounds in identification.

Respondents were almost equally divided between those who felt that drawings or other artwork would be desirable and those who didn't. LR suggested that artwork be used to promote the efforts of young bird artists and that the work of adults not be featured. Sketches and drawings can be very useful in documenting rarities and would certainly be a useful feature of rarity reports, especially when photographs are not available. Readers will see an excellent example of this in Peter Sherrington's note on the Yellow Rail in Yoho National Park, scheduled for publication in volume 4 ("1994").

Several respondents offered additional suggestions on format and production matters. Like LG and the other respondent mentioned above, Cathy Antoniazzi (CA) would prefer smaller type. She also suggested that the publication could be more compact. BB suggested that the text would be easier to read in two columns. Prue and Bernie Spitmann (PBS) feel that the print job could be much better and that the journal should be printed on lighter paper.

**CONTENTS**

Six respondents felt that there are presently too many book reviews, while two felt there are too few. One reader believes that book reviews merely reflect likes and dislikes of the reviewers and John Cooper (JC) feels that they are too far out of date to be useful and thus should receive low priority. On the other hand, HM

**Whither B.C. BIRDS?: ... (continued)**

commented that book reviews are useful in bringing the attention of new books to readers, especially those published by local or obscure publishers, and feels that they will become more helpful when the journal is published on schedule. Most readers seemed to agree, as they indicated that the current number is about right. A good review outlines the contents and indicates the most appropriate audience for the book. While criticism is important, it should be constructive and helpful to potential buyers. I hope to continue this feature, with preference given to books on birds in B.C. and immediately surrounding areas.

Most respondents favoured including papers and notes on rare bird sightings, range extensions, first nest records, behaviour and regional studies. CJF were especially anxious to see more regional ornithological studies. Support was also high, but less, for submissions dealing with conservation and area-specific sightings summaries or accounts of local birdwatching areas. HM commented that conservation advocacy was better left to other organizations, whereas another respondent felt that more attention should be paid to bird conservation. My inclination is to leave conservation advocacy to organizations like the Federation of B. C. Naturalists. However, British Columbia Birds would be an appropriate place to publish some of the studies which indicate conservation needs (e.g. surveys indicating that a particular species is declining in a given area or in response to a changing land-use pattern). Studies on which management decisions can be made would also be desirable (e.g. the response of a given species to artificial nest-sites, results of a study attempting to lower nest losses of island seabirds, etc.). LG feels that surveys of popular birdwatching areas are best published in the newsletter. This certainly applies to the bird-finding guides now featured there and to brief surveys, but results of some expeditions into remote areas and results of systematic counts in a given area might be appropriate in the journal, depending on how they are presented. Perhaps this can best be summarized by combining the comment by JC that lists should be relegated to the newsletter with the comment by another respondent expressing special interest in inventories related to biogeoclimatic zones, etc. -- i.e. mere lists are probably not appropriate in the journal, while more detailed studies relating the avifauna of a given area to various habitat and environmental features are appropriate.

Check lines were missing on the questionnaire for the question on biographical notes, resulting in only 16 answers. Slightly more answered "no" to this question than "yes," but some indicated that they were not sure what was intended. One indicated an interest if the biographies were of the authors. This was a question that I suggested adding when the others were read to me over the phone. I was really interested in whether or not members would like occasional contributions on historical aspects of ornithology in B.C., including biographies of prominent ornithologists in the province.

Several respondents offered additional comments on contents. LG would prefer to see a "more permanently useful" journal akin to American Birds (presumably before it reverted to a strictly seasonal report journal) and Ken Morgan similarly called for a refereed journal of the quality of Canadian Field-Naturalist or Blue Jay. On the other hand, one reader requested that we not get "too professional" and another asked that we "stay away" from overly technical items. One respondent called for "all sorts" of features, including letters and opinions and material reprinted from elsewhere, but not sightings, which "belong in museum." PBS called for less reprinted material, presumably referring to the seasonal bird sightings. CA also agreed with the board's decision to remove the seasonal sightings from the journal *per se*, commenting that they were too far out of date by the time they are published. Doug Innes commented that rare bird sightings are "a matter of judgement"... a brief mention possibly sufficing for some. Another reader called for papers by new authors, such as graduate students, who do good research, but have not yet published. Another suggested papers on government research efforts and projects that utilize volunteer input. LR suggested updates on changes in the American Ornithologists' Union check-list and "how to" tips. AJ called for annual reports from the Rare Birds Committee. A brief report of the committee is included in volume 3 ("1993"), but I suspect that Alvaro would prefer a more detailed report, similar to those that appear annually in Ontario Birds.

**JOURNAL VS. NEWSLETTER**

Although the question of the desirability of having a journal was not addressed in the questionnaire, three respondents suggested that it be eliminated

**Whither B.C. BIRDS?: ... (continued)**

or combined with the newsletter. Alan Burger feels that a journal is not needed and too expensive, considering that most of the contents will be out of date in five to ten years (presumably referring to the seasonal reports). Hank Vanderpol would prefer an improved newsletter and pointed out that several other journals already exist. CA feels that although the journal was worthwhile, the newsletter is currently more interesting and an expanded version of it in place of the journal might be more practical. In addition, PBS suggested that we concentrate on the newsletter until BCFO is in a better financial position. Although a few organizations publish combined newsletter/journals or include a newsletter section within a journal, most prefer to publish their more ephemeral material, time-dated announcements and club business in a newsletter and material of more lasting significance in a peer-reviewed journal.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches, and the BCFO board will undoubtedly continue to consider various options.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Praise for the work of the newsletter editors (initially Wayne C. Weber and more recently Andy and Marilyn Buhler) is implied in the comments of those who suggest concentrating on the newsletter. LG and PBS specifically offered praise for the newsletter. The journal editor (Wayne Weber) also received compliments on his work on the journal by Fred Bender and two other respondents.

Other comments for BCFO generally included a request that all forms be sent to a single address, an offer conveyed by Chris Charlesworth for an annual general meeting in Kelowna, and a suggestion by LR that we have BCFO T-shirts.

**CURRENT AND FUTURE STATUS OF THE JOURNAL**

As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, the lateness of the journal is of considerable concern. PBS suggested that we lose members by not living up to promises. Derrick Marven commented that he couldn't comment on the journal because in two years of membership, he had yet to receive one! At the time this article is being written, Wayne Weber is in the final stages of formatting volume 3, scheduled for 1993, and I hope that readers will have received it before reading this.

After being appointed book review editor for volume 3, I requested several review books and invited several birders and ornithologists to review them. Although I would like one or two more reviews for volume 4, scheduled for 1994, we now have enough reviews edited for that volume, with several others still due. Thus, book reviews are now essentially up to date. We also have one paper and three notes under review and several potential contributions lined up. In response to an offer by Ken Morgan to help with the journal, I have asked him to join our editorial board. I have also called for submissions to our journal in the Ornithological Newsletter (received by all members of North America's four largest ornithological societies) and in Picoides (the newsletter of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists). My next step will be to twist arms of several university, amateur and government researchers for submissions. We plan to have volume 4 ready to be picked up at this year's annual general meeting. If submissions suffice, we should be able to produce volume 5 by the end of this year, and thus be back on schedule.

Exact contents and the schedule proposed in the previous paragraph depend on submissions. I shall consider the journal to be in a healthy state when I have about half the submissions edited at about the time that the current issue goes to press. Members can assist by submitting material and/or encouraging friends or colleagues with interesting observations or research results to consider submitting to us.

**Acknowledgements**

I appreciate Marian Porter's efforts in designing the questionnaire on which this article is based. She passed on those forms returned to her and Allen Wiseley passed on the responses that were mailed to the BCFO box number. Special thanks to all of you who took the time to respond. All suggestions will be considered and many will be used. Our first priority is to get back on schedule, so some suggestions may not appear immediately, but we shall be attempting to institute some improvements in each volume. All comments are appreciated. ◊

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**


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- June 3-4, 1995 **MOUNT ROBSON PROVINCIAL PARK BIRDING WEEKEND.** BC Parks will allow free camping at Robson Meadows in the Park. For additional information please contact Gail Ross (604) 563-1017 [home] or (604) 565-6270 [work].
- June 10-11, 1995 **STRATHCONA PROVINCIAL PARK BIRD SEARCH,** a Strathcona Wilderness Institute annual event. You can ski, paddle or hike but we need good birders to assist in recording the species of this area. Camping available. Contact Betty Brooks, 1630 Seaview Road, Black Creek, BC V9J 1J5. Phone (604) 337-8180.
- June 16-18, 1995 **MANNING PROVINCIAL PARK BIRD BLITZ.** Free camping is available. For further information and to register please contact Michael of Square Bear Interpretation c/o Manning Provincial Park Visitors Centre. Phone (604) 840-8836.
- June 16-18, 1995 **WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY & WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS JOINT MEETING,** Spokane, Washington. Contact Bill Tweit, 623 N 7th Street, Tumwater, WA 98502. Phone (206) 754-7098.
- June 18-25, 1995 **Birding Tour to Okanagan & Southern BC.** Trip will visit Oliver, Osoyoos, Vernon and Creston. For further information contact Derrick Marven in Duncan, BC. Phone (604) 748-8504.
- Aug. 5-11, 1995 **FIFTH NEOTROPICAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS,** Asuncion, Paraguay. Contact Nancy Lopez de Kochalka, c/o Comit e Organizador Local del V CON, Museo Nacional de Historia Natural del Paraguay, Sucursal 19, Campus, Central XI, Paraguay. Phone 595-21-505075.
- Aug. 13-20, 1995 **AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGIST' UNION** annual meeting, Cincinnati, Ohio. Please contact Robert S. Kennedy, Museum of Natural History, 1720 Gilbert Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45202. Phone (513) 345-8510 or FAX (513) 345-8501.
- Sept. 12-17, 1995 **THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY** second annual meeting, Portland, Oregon. Contact The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814-2197. Phone (301) 897-9770.
- Sept. 15-17, 1995 **BCFO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** to be held in the Sydney/Victoria area of Vancouver Island. Start making your plans to attend. We look forward to seeing you all here on the Island this September. See **NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** on page 7 for further information.
- Sept. 22-24, 1995 **WESTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOCIATION** annual meeting, Rio Grande Nature Center, Albuquerque, NM. Contact Catherine I. Sandell, 8101 N. Main St., Las Cruces, NM, 88012.
- Nov. 8-12, 1995 **JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY AND PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP** will be held at the Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, BC. Theme of the meeting is "Behavioural Mechanisms of Population Regeneration". For further information please contact Rob Butler in Vancouver, BC at (604) 946-8546 or by e-mail at: butlerr@cwsvan.dots.doe.ca.␣

**Two 'Net Notes:**

**January 1995:** publication of 1st edition of The Yukon Bird Club's "Checklist of the Birds of Whitehorse, Yukon". Checklist describes seasonal abundance and breeding status for 215 species recorded in the Whitehorse area. To receive the checklist send SASE & \$1.00 bill to: The Yukon Bird Club, P.O. Box 31054, Yukon Y1A 5P7. Any birders wishing to receive The Yukon Bird Club's quarterly newsletter, Yukon Warbler, please send a Canadian \$10.00 money order to address listed above.

**May 1995:** Bryan Gates of Victoria is using the 'Net to quickly submit and receive information on banded birds. To submit info leave a message on Victoria Rare Bird Alert tape 592-3381. It is very important that information be accurate, including band number, placement, and color; species; location; date and time of sighting.␣

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**NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
1995 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
VICTORIA, B.C.**

**WHEN:** September 15, 16, 17 (Friday to Sunday)

**WHERE:** The meeting will be held at Dunsmuir Lodge, overlooking the Saanich Peninsula and the southern gulf islands, and only minutes from the Victoria airport and the Swartz Bay ferry terminal.

**PROGRAM:** Registration and a wine and cheese reception will be held on Friday evening at Dunsmuir Lodge. The registration desk will also be open on Saturday.

Field trips will be held on Saturday and Sunday. A few years ago, a major hawk migration route was discovered on southern Vancouver Island in the vicinity of East Sooke Regional Park. There will be field trips to the Beechey Head lookout to observe the hawk migration. Other field trips are planned for the Martindale Valley, one of the premier birding areas in the Victoria area; the Victoria waterfront for shorebirds, gulls and jaegers; Sidney Island for shorebirds and passerine migrants; and possibly a pelagic trip in the Strait of Juan de Fuca (not confirmed at press time).

There will be guest speakers, focusing on migration of seabirds and landbirds around southern Vancouver Island, as well as a business meeting on Saturday afternoon. A banquet will be held Saturday evening with Terry Wahl as our banquet speaker. Terry, well known for his great pelagic trips from Westport, Washington, will relate some of his experiences on these trips.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Dunsmuir Lodge has on-site accommodation available in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting and is able to provide pickup/return service to the airport and ferry terminal for their guests. There is also a variety of other accommodation in the Sidney and Victoria areas as well as nearby campgrounds. An accommodations list will be provided with the registration package which will be sent to all 1994 and 1995 BCFO members in July.

**Registration packages for non-members** can be obtained by leaving your name and mailing address with: Mike McGrenere (604) 658-8624 or Ken Morgan (604) 655-1987.

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### Seen In Passing

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**Injured Birds:** While at the BC Federation meeting in Naramata we saw an excellent little pamphlet entitled "First Aid for Injured Birds: What to Do and Who to Call". It was produced by South Okanagan Rehab Centre for Owls (S.O.R.C.O.) and has been so popular that it is already in a second printing. S.O.R.C.O. are "... your non-profit society for injured or orphaned Birds of Prey in the Southern Interior of B.C." For information on First Aid for Injured Birds pamphlets or on S.O.R.C.O. itself please write to: S.O.R.C.O., Box 1166, Oliver, BC V0H 1T0.

**Bald Eagle Study by BC Hydro and BC Environment:** "The objectives of this study are to determine the location and hardware configuration of poles frequently used by eagles and the behaviour of eagles around these structures. This will assist BC Hydro in developing an appropriate mitigation program. You can assist this study by recording information you observe on the use of power poles by eagles." For Bald Eagle Study Data Forms to assist in the correct documentation of power pole usage contact: Richard Wiacek, Bald Eagle Study, Environmental Affairs, E-16 -- 6911 Southpoint Drive, Burnaby, BC V3N 4X8.

**BC Conservation Data Centre:** We recently received a copy of the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC) Newsletter. For those of you who may not know what the BC Conservation Data Centre does, their March 1995 Newsletter (#4) states "... the goal of the CDC is to provide a single access point for information on the rare elements of bio-diversity in the province. Our scientific specialists prepare lists of rare species and plant communities, then compile detailed records for every verified occurrence of each of these 'elements'. We use a standardized methodology employed in similar centres in over 80 jurisdictions in Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The sharing of common methods and technology enables the sharing and exchange of data throughout the hemisphere, as well as summarizing range-wide information on species.

Map, paper, and computer files keep information organized and easily accessible. Professional knowledge is added to the raw data so that this information is up to date and relevant to the array of clients served by the Centre. Old records are checked in the field, new areas are surveyed, known occurrences are monitored, and changes in land conservation status are recorded. The assessment of the province's ecological resources is kept as current as possible and increasingly accurate.

Individual occurrence records are indexed by many parameters, including standardized names, location (UTM map coordinates), endangerment status, 1:50 000 topographic map sheet, major watershed, forest district, biogeoclimatic designation, ecosection, managed area (National and Provincial Parks, Ecological Reserves, etc.), and Indian Reserve. The site is located as precisely as possible based on the available data. The intent is that all extant records will eventually be located within a hundred meters." We also received their publication "Tracking Lists for Vertebrate Animals, Vascular Plants and Plant Communities". If you require information regarding the database or you wish to contribute data to the database please contact: Conservation Data Centre, Wildlife Branch, 780 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4, phone (604) 356-0928/29, FAX (604) 387-0239. Birders wishing to contact Syd Cannings about CDC or related matters can also reach him on the 'Net at scanning@fwhdept.env.gov.bc.ca.

**BIRD-BANDING TRAINING COURSES** will be offered by The Institute for Bird Populations this summer. Five-day courses will be conducted near Portland, Oregon, in June and July, and one in Virginia in July. These courses are for people operating or planning to operate MAPS stations or who are involved in other research and monitoring programs and wish to improve their banding skills. For further information, please contact Kenneth Burton, The Institute for Bird Populations, PO Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956; (415)388-3388. [Notice excerpted from Events Calendar in Winging It Volume 7(5): 13].

**TUMBLER RIDGE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP (TROG)** have produced a neat little pamphlet entitled "Tumbler Point: Bird Sanctuary and Trails Guide". It includes a map and a bird checklist. Contact Jackie 242-3305, Charles 242-3984 or Paul 242-3393.



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**Rare Bird Alerts in the Pacific Northwest: PART 2 -- US Northwest**

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by Wayne C. Weber  
51-6712 Baker Road  
Delta, B.C. V4E 2V3

Taped rare bird alerts (RBAs) as a means of notifying birders of rare birds are a relatively recent invention; first such tape began operating in Massachusetts in the 1950s. Now, however, there are at least 120 such RBAs operating in the United States and Canada, according to the August 1993 issue of Winging It (newsletter of the American Birding Association). The Pacific Northwest is well served by the five RBAs which operate in our area. For the benefit of travelling birders who may not be aware of all of these RBAs, the following summary may be helpful.

All of these RBAs have provision for the caller to leave his/her own message about a rare bird sighting at the end of the tape -- a handy provision, as it may save the caller the cost of a second long-distance phone call. However, only the Vancouver RBA lists phone numbers of two or three persons who can provide additional information on birding in the local area. This is a useful feature which should be adopted by more RBAs.

**SEATTLE, WASHINGTON RARE BIRD ALERT** -- (206) 526-8266, sponsored by the Seattle Audubon Society. Eugene Hunn, one of Washington's top birders, has operated this tape for several years. Coverage is statewide, although it concentrates on the Puget Sound area. Particularly noteworthy birds from Vancouver and Victoria are usually noted as well. Tape is updated about once a week, sometimes more often if a "super rarity" shows up, sometimes less often if things are very quiet. The message is often very long, including detailed directions to rare bird locations. If anything, rare bird details are retained longer than necessary on this tape, often including sightings 3 weeks old or more, including cases where the bird may long since have flown. An excellent tape, but it could be a bit briefer!

**PORTLAND, OREGON RARE BIRD ALERT** -- (503) 292-0661, sponsored by Portland Audubon Society. Harry Nehls, the dean of Oregon birders, has operated this tape for more years than I can remember. Noteworthy sightings may be phoned directly to Harry at (503) 233-3976. The tape is updated once a week on Thursdays, with rare exceptions. If an Eskimo Curlew showed up on Friday, it probably wouldn't make the tape until the next Thursday. (However, I hasten to add that Oregon Field Ornithologists have an efficient, well-organized telephone network, and the majority of keen birders would probably know about the Curlew by Friday evening!).

Coverage on this tape is truly statewide, and Portland area sightings often make up a small percentage of the total. Sightings from southwestern Washington are often included as well. Unlike most other tapes, this one often mentions major migratory movements of commoner species; however, the emphasis is always on the extremely rare birds that most birders are especially interested in. Also, dates, locations, and contact numbers for upcoming pelagic birding trips are often mentioned on the Portland tape.

**NORTHERN IDAHO/EASTERN WASHINGTON RARE BIRD ALERT** -- (208) 882-6195, operated by Kas Dumroese of Moscow, Idaho on behalf of the Palouse Audubon Society. This tape is updated once a week on Fridays. Most of the sightings are from the Idaho Panhandle area, but there is sporadic coverage of eastern Washington as well. The pickings on this tape are usually rather slim, which is not surprising in view of the rather small number of birders in the area it serves. However, good directions are usually given for the rarities which are reported, and this tape is certainly a valuable resource for birders in the area from Lewiston north to Spokane and Coeur d'Alene.

**EDITORS' NOTE:** In our last issue Wayne provided the BC Rare Bird Alert numbers for two lower mainland areas, Vancouver (604) 737-9910 and for Victoria (604) 592-3381. If BCFO members in other areas have regular Rare Bird Alert numbers which they would not mind sharing with the membership we would be more than happy to publish them.

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**Bird Migration Monitoring  
In The South Okanagan Valley, British Columbia.**

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by Peter W. Jones  
615 Morningside Drive  
Columbia, MO 65201

A pilot migration monitoring study, funded in part by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund and the British Columbia Ministry of Environment, was conducted from August 14 to September 15, 1994 in the South Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. The study was designed to investigate the potential of the South Okanagan as a long-term migration monitoring station, and was one of five new stations initiated in Canada to increase our understanding of songbird populations. This effort to increase migration monitoring of songbirds across North America was coordinated by the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO), the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Okanagan Valley is a 200 km long mountain-lined trench in the southern interior plateau of B.C., and is known for its dry desert-like conditions, its fruit production, and its birds. The migration station was operated at Vaseux Lake, one of the largest remaining undeveloped riparian zones left in the South Okanagan Valley. This habitat, combined with a reputation as one of Canada's most exciting birding areas and the presence of a strong naturalist community in the Okanagan Valley, made this site a strong candidate for a long-term migration monitoring station.

The field procedures used at the Vaseux Lake site included: 1) capturing (and on occasion recapturing) birds using mist nets and banding them; 2) recording all the birds found during a one-hour census along a fixed-route through the study area, and; 3) documenting all other bird observations throughout the day. Banding, recapture, census, and observation data were then used to derive Estimated Total (ET) of all individual birds of each species in the study area each day. These numbers can be used over the long-term to track bird population fluctuations.

Up to eleven mist nets were operated daily for six hours/day (1936 total net hours). A total of 694 birds, comprised of 40 species, were banded during 31 days of banding effort in the 33 day study period. On average, 22 birds were banded per day, with a high of 61 on September 5. Daily ETs averaged 1022 birds, comprised of 54 species. In total 130 bird species were recorded during the study period.

The most common species banded included the Orange-crowned Warbler (162 individuals), the Gray Catbird (102), and the Song Sparrow (71). Among the species of birds that added excitement to the procedures because they are rarely seen in the hand, were a Virginia Rail, a Belted Kingfisher, and several MacGillivray's Warblers. High recapture rates (>30% of the banded population were recaptured at least once) in six species indicate that some species were either sedentary populations or that the Vaseux Lake site was utilized as a possible stop-over point for replenishing fat or moulting. For example, of the 55 Common Yellowthroats banded, 17 were recaptured. One hundred and nineteen of the 694 total birds handled were in the process of some moult. One species of note was the Swainson's Thrush, many of which were in the midst of heavy moult; this species was not even known to occur regularly at this site. In addition, only 145 of the 694 total birds handled had stored fat (fat deposits are the equivalent of bird "fuel" needed for migration) of any consequence. Thus, a significant proportion of the birds captured were not in "prime migrating condition".

Thirty-two volunteers took part in at least one day of the field study, each gaining hands-on experience in migration monitoring. Volunteers from the South, Central, and North Okanagan Naturalists' Clubs participated in the study, in addition a German and an American contingent were instrumental in adding to the overall success of the project. The participants were rewarded with the opportunity to get an incredible hands-on experience and contributed significantly to a scientific study. Close to 100 passers-by observed the banding operations during the study and received interpretation on the purpose of migration monitoring.

What does the future hold for this station? It's too early yet to determine whether this site will be suitable for long-term migration monitoring. Captures were low compared to the typically large numbers banded at LPBO and other Eastern

**Bird Migration Monitoring ... (continued)**

stations. Why the catches at this site, as well as the other British Columbia sites, were somewhat lower in comparison to stations in the East -- suffice it to say at this time that we know very little about songbird migration west of the Rocky Mountains and more studies are needed.☺

EDITORS' NOTE: We were fortunate enough to be able to assist a few times at a new bird banding project at Rocky Point on Vancouver Island. This project, like the Vaseux Lake project, is designed to get a handle on where the songbirds migrate on this side of the Rockies. We had hoped to have a companion article from the Rocky Point project but our potential author(s) would not commit to print. Perhaps in a future issue...?? Thanks very much to Peter for his informative article. We are led to understand that there may be five areas in BC which are being tested for bird monitoring potential -- articles on other areas anyone? We also know that there are special banding projects in the province as we observed a multi-banded Brown-headed Cowbird while birding near White Lake, a single-banded Double-crested Cormorant near Victoria and a banded/flagged Western Sandpiper at Witty's Lagoon. There are also requests for observers to report banded Harlequin Ducks. Our members might also be interested to know a bit more about these projects. Write soon!

**1995 Spring 'Armchair Birders' Challenge: The Birders & The Birds**

Thanks to all the members who submitted their observations. Special thanks to Jack Williams who included an article with a special birding challenge (no binos and a moving platform) for any 'transit'ory BCFO birders. (see page 12)

From the results received it was obvious that all of the entrants have a good knowledge of birds from around the world. When Editor A originally tried this contest he only found about 25 birds. There certainly are some unusual names!

All names accepted in this contest were checked with the Index to English Names in the back of Clement's **BIRDS of the WORLD: A CHECK LIST**. Our entrants found and listed at least one more than Gerry himself listed.

One quite interesting observation from the entries was how secretive an owl can be. Many missed the owl, that silent observer caught up within the meadow Lark.

Although the names of certain birds appeared more than once in the contest Gerry Bennett and the Editors only allowed each name once in the final tally. Mew, Mouse, A, and Io were not given credit because they are not listed in Clement's index nor listed by Bennett. Since only one contestant had a complete listing, our exclusions did not change the final winner. We hope that the runners-up liked their consolation prizes. The checklists were purchased at the FBCN meeting in Naramata and they were so new that Steve Cannings was still putting on a couple of finishing touches while we purchased them.

If you felt it was difficult to find all the hidden birds, stop a moment and imagine Gerry's difficulties when he created the dialogue to obscure them. Amazing!

**The Birders (10):**

B. Begg	Sidney	76	G. Anderson	Sidney	62
D. Cooper	Sidney	72	M. Peet-Leslie	Langley	61
J. Williams	White Rock	72	D. Wilson	Prince George	61
A. Berger	Victoria	69	D. Wierenga	Kelowna	59
D. Johnson	Duncan	63	P. Pringle	Burnaby	51

**The Birds (76):**

Swift, Kea, Loon, Oo, Guan, Swan, Ani, Goldcrest, Grebe, Merlin, Redstart, Smew, Sora, Pratincole, Emu, Eagle, Rook, Flicker, Flamingo, Verdin, Bittern, Tern, Tit, Siskin, Darter, Rail, Brant, Ostrich, Chough, Ou, Raven, Tanager, Thrush, Stint, Ruff, Sandgrouse, Grouse, Booby, Teal, Twite, Egret, Lorikeet, Crow, Sandpiper, Puffin, Finfoot, Gannet, Gull, Knot, Rhea, Heron, Bustard, Stork, Mango, Osprey, Serin, Oriole, Shag, Stilt, Sylph, Meadowlark, Owl, Lark, Kite, Plover, Courser, Aracari, Carib, Nene, Marabou, Titmouse, Martin, Tityra, Pelican, Murre, Trogon.☺

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**Good Birding On Bus # 351**

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by Jack Williams  
302 -- 15070 Roper Avenue  
White Rock, BC V4B 2E6

Visitors or residents alike could spend a great day birding on bus #351 to Crescent Beach and, on arrival, pass several hours birding at Blackie Spit, one of the best birding spots around the Vancouver area. Have lunch at one of Crescent Beach's cafes and return to Vancouver later in the day.

As residents of White Rock we take the #351 bus to Vancouver 2-3 times a month. Having lived around here for 18 years this amounts to at least 550 round trips. In this time we have identified over 75 species of birds seen from the bus.

For visitors staying at downtown hotels the best place to catch #351 is at the N.W. corner of Burrard and Melville Streets. This is the starting point so there are always lots of seats. The best side would be on the right (facing front).

While waiting for the bus to start you will probably see House Sparrows, House Finches, Rock Doves and Glaucous-winged Gulls.

Once underway pay attention to trees and shrubbery at stops along South Granville Street, chickadees and Bushtits and even a warbler sometimes show up. At the south end of Granville Street watch around under the bridges to the airport as the now elusive Crested Mynas are here. On your return trip one could get off at Hudson Street to look for mynas and go home from here on the Granville bus.

Once on the freeway check the fence posts for Red-tailed Hawks year round and Rough-legged Hawks in winter. Bald Eagles and Northern Harriers are sometimes quite common and there is always a chance of an American Kestrel, Merlin or Sharp-shinned Hawk. Hawthorns and other trees in winter should be watched for Northern Shrikes. Short-eared owl is a possibility.

Along the verges of the freeway Great Blue Herons are always seen searching for a meal, Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds and European Starlings like this area too.

After going through the tunnel scan the slough for grebes. Western, Horned and Pied-billed Grebes may be seen and probably some diving ducks. The big trees here sometimes have many Bald Eagles resting on them.

One of the best birding spots on the route is where the freeway runs close to the ocean at Mud Bay just past the interchange with the Annacis Highway. Here, if the tide is in, one could see several species of ducks and shorebirds. Swallows and raptors like this area too.

When crossing the Serpentine and Nicomekl Rivers and ditches nearby check for Belted Kingfisher and also ducks. When passing the Serpentine Fen, Ring-necked Pheasants are often seen beside the road.

On arrival at Crescent Beach Village, the end of the line, it is only a few minutes walk to Blackie Spit where over 160 species have been seen, including several rarities.

On the return journey it might be a good idea to sit on the same side of the bus and thus see the opposite side of the road. Before entering the tunnel on the return trip look over the fields near the building marked "Pacific Potato Corp.", Sandhill Cranes have been here.

Bus #351 runs every half hour and the trip takes about 90 minutes. One way fares at time of writing were \$3.00 before 9:30 am and after 3:00 pm, between these times it is \$1.50. Seniors go half fare.

Birding from the bus can be a bit exasperating but it's lots of fun and a great challenge without binoculars.

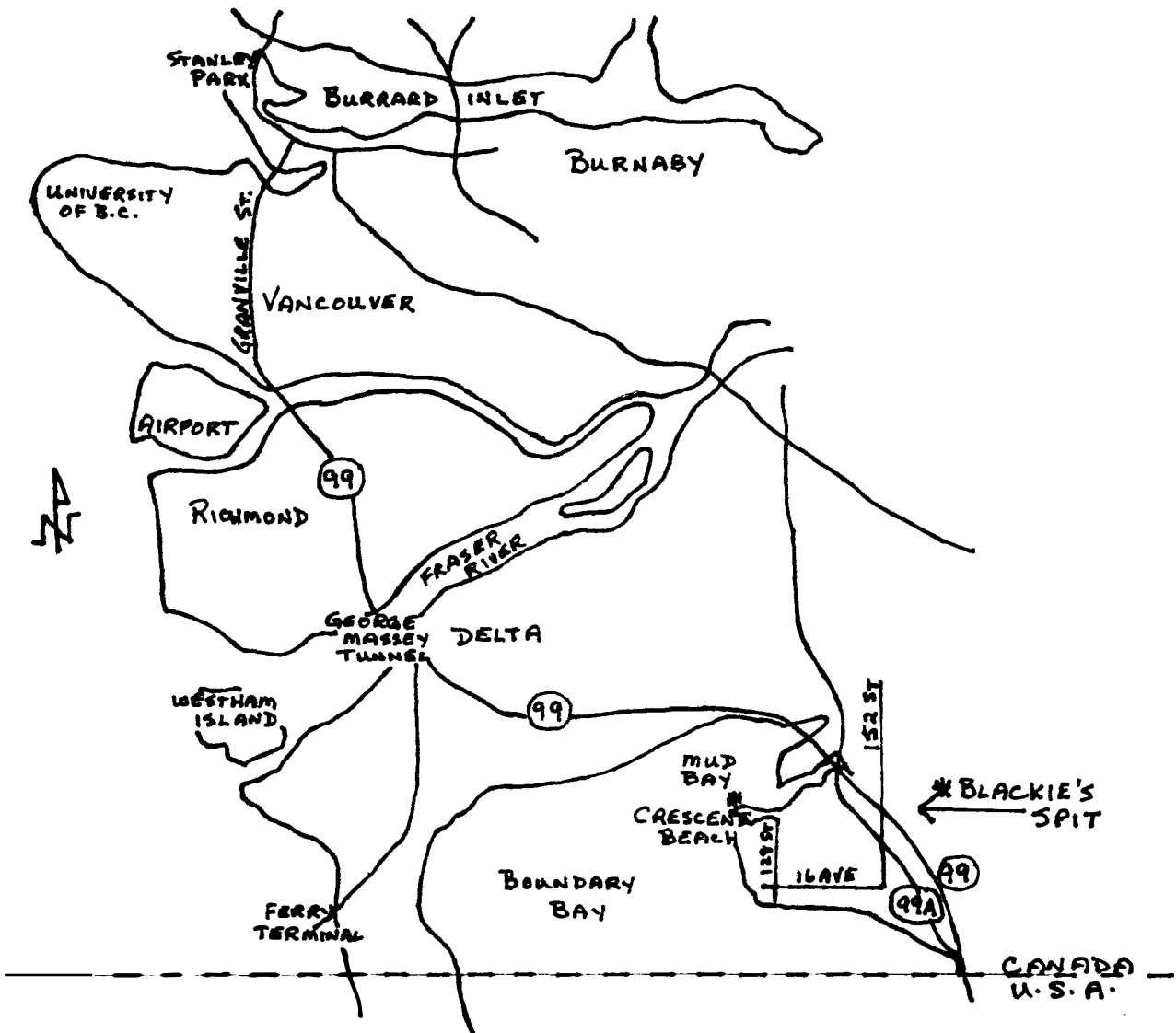
**"THE BIRDING IS FINE ON ROUTE 99"**

**List of Birds Seen from Bus #351.  
Compiled by Jack and Dorothy Williams**

Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Horned Grebe  
Western Grebe  
Dbl-crested Cormorant  
Pelagic Cormorant  
Great Blue Heron  
Tundra Swan  
Brant  
Canada Goose  
Green-winged Teal  
Mallard  
Northern Pintail  
American Wigeon  
Scaup species  
Common Goldeneye  
Bufflehead  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Rough-legged Hawk

American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
American Coot  
Sandhill Crane  
Black-bellied Plover  
Killdeer  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Dunlin  
Dowitcher species  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Mew Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Glaucous-winged Gull  
Common Tern  
Rock Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Snowy Owl  
Short-eared Owl  
Black Swift  
Belted Kingfisher  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Tree Swallow  
Violet-green Swallow

Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Stellar's Jay  
Northwestern Crow  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Bushtit  
American Robin  
Cedar Waxwing  
Northern Shrike  
European Starling  
Crested Myna  
Yellow Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Rufous-sided Towhee  
Savannah Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Western Meadowlark  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow



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**Birding Around Bella Coola:  
A Report From Ron**

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by Ron Mayo  
R.R. #1 -- Box 2  
Bella Coola, BC V0T 1C0

I live at Stuie, forty miles up at the head of the Bella Coola valley, in Tweedsmuir Park. Increasing years (and their toll on energy!) prevent me from covering the lower valley, apart from an odd day now and then, so I concentrate mainly on my own immediate stretch of river bottom. I can cover this area every few days all year round. It puts me in tune with my environment -- something I firmly believe in.

I have been a keen birder since my early teens in the '30s back in England. Before retiring in Stuie I had thirty years of farm and bush life east of Prince George. Nearly everywhere I went there was usually a pair of beat-up binocs carried close to hand in lunch-boxes and tractor tool-boxes. Unfortunately saw-mills, chain-saws and rusted out mufflers on farm tractors have just about destroyed my high-frequency hearing range. So take warning you guys, wear ear-protectors EVERY time you fire up that lawn mower or Skil-saw or other racket-making device, even for five minutes!

A paucity of serious bird-watchers\*\* in this area means that much local bird-life is overlooked. The local Trail and Nature club is composed of folk whose primary interest is in club walks and local hikes. Many people do have feeders, and they take an interest in "their birds", join the Christmas Bird Counts and annual eagle counts -- but there are few other "every weekend rain or shine" birders!

The old growth fir here does not hold much bird life during winter, mainly just the resident Ravens, woodpeckers, chickadees, creepers, Dippers and duck tribe. Feeders of all kinds and an assortment of foods have proven futile in drawing in more than an occasional Steller's Jay. However, down at Bella Coola all feeders are crowded!

Some interesting birds have turned up since I've resided here (9 years) at Stuie, a community 40 miles inland: Ivory Gull (Nov. 1, 1988), Sabine's Gull (Sept. 1992), and Wandering Tattler (Sept. 2, 1986). This autumn a first-year Peregrine Falcon stayed for ten days and later on an immature Osprey stayed for three weeks.

Two recent owl records are, as far as I can find out, the first for this area of the Central Coast. The records are for Boreal and Long-eared Owls.

March 16, 1993 A dead Boreal Owl was given to me by Beth Bedard, archaeologist. It had been picked up that day in bush approximately 20 miles east of Bella Coola. The bird was still very fresh. After taking some photographs, I placed the bird into the freezer. I later forwarded it to R. Wayne Campbell, Canadian Wildlife Service, who confirmed its identity.

December 14, 1994 A dead Long-eared Owl, found in a hay barn at Firvale thirty miles east of Bella Coola was given to Dr. Harvey Thommasen who forwarded it to me. The bird had only recently died. A month of freezing temperatures and 16" of snow had no doubt created a food shortage. (Owl was also forwarded to R. Wayne Campbell on February 6, 1995.)

I have always suspected Long-eared Owls might be present in the lower, milder, part of this valley, and I will definitely check it out this Spring.

Well, I'm getting carried away with this note and it's time to get back outside. I can still see some Bald Eagles patiently waiting for the last remnants of the spawned-out Coho to drift down and hang up on the bar. So long for now, Ron.☺

\*\* In a second note from Ron: ... in case I gave you the impression that I am the sole bird "enthusiast" in this valley, I would like to mention that a very detailed daily study of bird-life at the Bella Coola estuary (January 1992-June 1992) was conducted for Pat McKim-Fletcher, Central Coast Economic Development Commission. The Commission was planning for a proposed estuary and tide flats nature reserve and Mike Wigle, with help, undertook the task. Both Mike and Pat take a great interest in bird-life and other nature subjects. Mike is a first-class nature photographer and is always interested in additional markets.☺

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITORS**

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**Birding on the Okanagan's West Side**

We have decided to let out **The Secret** ... The members of the Central Okanagan Naturalist Club have been enjoying a new "Naturalist Program" at Lake Okanagan Resort in Kelowna. Actually, the program has been developed by Central Okanagan Naturalist Club and Lake Okanagan Resort as a joint project starting in January 1993. Now the program is in full gear with Guided Tours, Bird Watching Outings, Annual Bird Counts, Bird Box Trails, Viewing Benches and much more.

Of course we get to enjoy Lake Okanagan Resort's fine food and fabulous setting after our exciting outings. The Resort recognizes nature enthusiasts with extra special hospitality.

If you wish to come or bring a group to the Resort, we would be happy to organize group hosts to show some highlights of the Okanagan area. We might even see the resident Northern Pygmy Owl. Call Lake Okanagan Resort directly 1-800-663 3273. They have special rates for any BC Field Ornithologist Member. Ask for reservations and they will arrange your tour.

R.W. (Rod) Lampard, Sales and Promotional Manager  
Lake Okanagan Resort, 2751 Westside Road, Kelowna, BC V1Y 8B2

**Wintering Anna's Hummingbird**

I appreciate all the hard work that goes into getting the newsletter sent out -- Many thanks as it is always a good read.

I thought this story in the enclosed article was fascinating -- imagine being able to keep a hummingbird in one's house over the winter. I phoned Bonita and asked her if I could send the article on to you -- she agreed.

Joyce Henderson  
Box 730, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N8

**Gerry Bennett Collection for Sale**

I have the complete set of Gerry Bennett's Birdfinding in Canada, 54 copies from January 1981. Anyone interested make an offer. (Too heavy to mail.)

Jack & Dorothy Williams  
#302 - 10570 Roper Avenue, White Rock, BC V4B 2E6

**Bluebird Enthusiasts**

In the Upcoming Meetings and Events I notice you do not list anything to do with the 'North American Bluebird Society'. One of our local naturalists went to a recent convention in Boise, Idaho. Maybe this was on last year's list before I joined? However, there has been another similar event somewhere in the east recently. Many of us have bluebird trails and even if we could not get to these events a writeup on them would be appreciated.

Doreen Wierenga  
395 Mallach Road, Kelowna, BC V1X 2W9

EDITORS' NOTE: Sorry, Doreen, we have been remiss! We recently spoke to a local naturalist, a member of the North American Bluebird Society, and he has promised to send us some information. Wayne Weber, our usual meetings and events contributor is a member of the Bluebird Society and he has also been asked if he will include future meeting dates. Unfortunately we do not have any meetings information for this issue so if **any** members know of upcoming events and meetings on bluebird or other bird-related organizations please send them to us in time future publication.

We just noticed in Birder's World. June 1995, 9(3): 16-20, an interesting article on bluebird nest box trails. On page 17 of the article they give this address: North American Bluebird Society, P.O. Box 6295, Silver Spring, MD 20916-6295 phone (301) 384-2798. See also the excerpts from H. S. Pollock's Bluebird Nesting Surveys on page 20 of this issue. Remember we rely on our readers for all of our material.

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## Hummer Made It Through The Winter!!

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by Bonita Lingenfelter  
c/o Naturalist's Notebook

A hummingbird, hovering in front of the window, sips artificial nectar from a strategically placed feeder and then, long, mobile tongue glistening, she darts back and forth flicking fruit flies out of the air. The only unusual aspect of this picture is that she's on my side of the glass while, just beyond the pane, grey, wind-driven rain lashes the cold, muddy earth.

My little free-flying house guest has been tentatively identified as an Anna's Hummingbird who, for reasons unknown, did not migrate. Rescued from certain death last November by a concerned bird lover, it became my winter-long responsibility to ensure her survival until the coming spring's flowers start producing the nectar necessary to sustain her when she is returned to the wild.

Meanwhile, she spends her time sipping vitamin-fortified sugar water, chasing fruit flies, or quietly whispering to herself while roosting in the dense foliage of the solarium's large weeping fig tree. Her sharp "chick" feeding notes and darting flight bring life and colour to these gloomy pre-spring days, and her continuing presence offers me a unique opportunity to closely study one of nature's engineering marvels.

Although minuscule, hummers are so skillfully aerobatic, and so fearless, they will attack much larger birds -- even hawks -- with impunity. Their bold-hearted bravery, coupled with their prism-hued glitter of iridescent colours make them the darlings of bird-watcher and gardener alike, and lovers of these wee rainbow warriors go to great lengths to secure their company.

Brightly coloured feeders slung under the eaves provide perfect bird viewing, but can prove to be a hazard to the tiny hummer's health. Incorrectly prepared sugar solutions, poorly maintained nectar dispensers, and feeders left out too long in the fall may all contribute to the untimely death of these delightful birds.

Migrating hummingbirds will appear in our area sometime during the next few weeks. For those who like to offer them supplemental food, there are a few basic rules to keep in mind.

First, never mix the sugar/water solution stronger than four parts water to one part sugar -- five or six parts water would probably be safer.\*\*

Second, bring this mixture to a hard, rolling boil for one minute, then cool quickly with the cover still on the vessel, and store any extra solution in the refrigerator in a clean jar.

Third, never leave the food in the feeder for more than three days, even in cool weather. During warm spells, change it more frequently and always, always, scrub out the container with hot soapy water, then rinse thoroughly before refilling. Most feeders are well designed for dispensing the syrup, but are very difficult to clean. When purchasing a feeder, keep this in mind and be prepared to spend some time shopping for the most suitable container; also pick up a pack of pipe cleaners to facilitate cleaning its tight, inaccessible corners and narrow openings.

Lastly, take down, clean and store the feeder by the end of July.\*\*\*

There are some who believe hummingbirds will migrate in the proper season regardless of their feeder dependency and no doubt, for the most part, they do. However, the Anna's has extended its normal winter range northwards from California to Vancouver Island, and it is believed hummingbird feeders play a major role in this expansion. Certainly, young birds who have done most of their feeding at such stations may linger overlong, and this could explain how my endearing houseguest comes to find herself living behind a glass wall, where her only entertainment appears to be the seeking out, and shredding, of hidden spider webs. Although she now enjoys the services of a personal body-servant, who mixes her drinks and serves her vials of fat, hand-raised fruit flies on demand, I doubt it compares with sipping rich nectar from blood-red Hibiscus, while dazzling her admirers in the golden haze of a hot Californian sun.¶



EDITORS' NOTE: Bonita's hummingbird article, submitted to us by BCFO member Joyce Henderson, originally appeared on page A-20 of The Shuswap Market News, March 18, 1995. We enjoyed the article, however, we have asterisked two points because, from other literature, we find differing opinions regarding both sugar solution strengths and feeder removal dates. Since we are not experts we offer the following notes from the literature and ask our readers to send us their thoughts and comments.

**Bonita Lingenfelter (\*\*):** "... never mix the sugar/water solution stronger than four parts water to one part sugar -- five or six parts water would probably be safer."

**Bird Watchers Digest (BWD):** Enjoying Hummingbirds More (Special Issue 1992, p.4, 21)

"Most hummingbird authorities recommend four parts water to one part sugar. A 4 to 1 ratio most closely matches the sugar content or 'sweetness' of naturally produced nectars. But some longtime feeder operators now insist that 5 to 1 and even 7 to 1 ratios are just as attractive to hummingbirds. ... Some studies have shown that strong solutions may cause liver complications in captive birds."

**Victoria Naturalist (VN):** Hummingbird Study: which sugar concentration does the Anna's Hummingbird prefer? / Tessa Campbell. 1989. 45(4): 12.

"... Hummingbirds preferred the feeder containing 75% sugar solution, which accounted for most feeding time (3,784 seconds), longest average feeding per visit (52 seconds), and nearly one-third (31%) of combined feeding time for all feeders. Sugar solutions of 60% and 90% each accounted for 21% of all feeding time. Combined, these three solutions accounted for nearly three-quarters (71%) of all feeding time."

In California the Anna's Hummingbird prefers a 30% sugar solution, which is two and a half times more diluted than my results for B.C. This difference may be due to the colder northern climate, which may require more energy for survival, hence a higher sugar solution. In addition, because the bird's natural diet also contains small insects, these may be less available in British Columbia because it is colder and hence hummingbirds may feed on more concentrated sugar solutions.

In conclusion, I determined that the preferred sugar solution (75%) of the Anna's Hummingbird in British Columbia did not agree with other studies (30%) in California and I suggested reasons for this difference."

**A Guide to Feeding Winter Birds in British Columbia (GFWB)** / Bob Waldon. Vancouver, BC: Whitecap Books, 1992. (page 96-97)

"Anna's Hummingbird... readily visits feeders for sugar-water which, in winter, should be increased in strength to 60% sugar content from the 20-25% customarily used in hot weather."

**Bonita Lingenfelter (\*\*\*):** "... take down ... the feeder by the end of July."

**BWD (page 6,7):** "Hummers that linger at feeders may be progeny of a late nesting and may need a little more time to put on adequate fat than their earlier hatched brothers. ... Every year in the fall & winter, hummingbirds are reported at feeders where they are unlikely to be able to survive the winter. ... Many of these birds are destined to die, but some may be saved by human intervention. Removal of a feeder on which a hummingbird is totally dependent will only ensure that the bird will die."

**VN 1987:** Anna's Hummingbird ... on Vancouver Island, K Taylor & C Harper, 43(6): 9

"Anna's Hummingbird has increased its population recently, expanding its range northward along the west coast & eastward in North America. ... This range expansion is due to the replacement of its natural habitat, containing seasonally-limited food sources, with residential gardens, which flower abundantly throughout the year and often contain artificial feeders that can carry birds over the winter season. ... Anna's Hummingbird is now a rare to uncommon resident in the southeast coastal lowlands from Metchosin north to Campbell River. It is most often seen during the winter months, when it is most dependent on artificial feeders, and observations have increased steadily since 1973."

**GFWB (page 98):** "Even in the benign climate of Victoria and environs it is astonishing that a hummingbird regularly winters there successfully, albeit with help from feeders in most cases."

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**Birding And Baseball: PART 2 -- Opportunities.**

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by Mike McGrenere  
1178 Sunnygrove Terrace  
Victoria, BC V8Y 2V9

It is not often that I am able to combine my two favourite pastime activities, birding and fastpitch softball, into an opportunity to do both on the same trip. Usually, they are in conflict, like the Victoria umpires fastpitch tournament which is the same weekend as the Okanagan big day challenge. However, in 1994, an opportunity presented itself to combine a softball event with a birding holiday.

The World Master's Games were held in Brisbane, Australia, over a two week period during September and October of 1994. The Brisbane games were the third World Master's Games, held every four years, to encourage individuals 35 years and over to participate in a multi-national and multi-sport event. Since I play on a master's softball team, our team entered the softball competition. Being the only birder on the softball team, I used my preparation time before heading to Australia looking up information on good birding locations in southeast Queensland while the rest of my teammates were searching for resort areas on the Gold & Sunshine Coasts.

This trip was a family affair with my wife, Barb, and our seven-year-old son, Graham, coming along for the holiday. Our first bird in Australia was not a House Sparrow but was the Fairy Martin which we saw while leaving the Brisbane airport. House Sparrows, however, were present at our motel in Brisbane. We were fortunate to have a park with a rugby field situated across from our motel which we used as a practice field. Although the park was adjacent to an industrial area, it had both Pied and Grey Butcherbirds, Rainbow Lorikeets, Galahs and even a Masked Plover which would walk to the opposite end of the field during our practices.

The World Master's Games attracted over 23,000 participants from 69 countries who competed in 30 different sports. The softball event had 73 teams from five countries in both men's and women's divisions. Our team was very successful in the softball competition, going undefeated and winning the gold medal in our division. The park where the softball event was held had 17 softball diamonds. However, we still managed to see 15 species including the large Blue-faced Honeyeater, Crested Pigeons which preferred an area near the children's climber and a Sulfur-crested Cockatoo which would fly, screeching over the park during our games.

After the Games finished, we went on a three week camping trip around south-eastern Queensland. Our primary destinations were some of the beautiful national parks in this area of Queensland. Although birding was one of our major activities, we wanted Graham to enjoy the birds, plants and animals of Australia so we chose areas which offered a variety of natural experiences.

Lamington National Park, situated to the southwest of Brisbane, was our first stop. It is in a mountainous area and the cool temperatures at the higher elevations were a relief after several hot days in Brisbane. We camped in the area of the park near O'Reilly's Lodge which is well know for Regent Bowerbirds. The store at the lodge sold bird seed so Graham had a great time feeding the Crimson Rosellas and King Parrots which would land on his head, shoulders and hands looking for seed. Some of our better sightings in the park were two female Paradise Riflebirds, a Noisy Pitta, numerous Southern Logrunners, Wompoo Fruit Doves and a Topknot Pigeon. We also found several bowers of the Regent Bowerbird and had a Brush Turkey follow us down a trail for over a kilometre as if it was a pet.

Barb and I lived in Australia from 1973 until 1977 and one of our favourite areas was Carnarvon National Park, located about 700 kilometres northwest of Brisbane. The park contains a number of gorges with vertical sandstone bluffs and it is truly an oasis in the dry outback. Domestic pets are not allowed in Australian national parks so the kangaroos, wallabies and possums can be found in the campgrounds. This, of course, was a real highlight for Graham at all the national parks, but especially at Carnarvon park.

We were fortunate to see two Australian Bustards on our drive into Carnarvon National Park. The dry forests also produced Little Lorikeets, Red-winged Parrots and a White-eared Honeyeater. The waterways in the gorges were still flowing, even though this area of Queensland was in the fourth year of drought. Birding along the

**Birding And Baseball...** (continued)

hiking trails in the gorges was very good with sightings of Azure Kingfisher, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and Glossy Black Cockatoo. The hiking trails lead to caves along the gorges which have some excellent examples of Aboriginal rock art.

On our drive back to the coast, we stopped at Eungella National Park. In John Bransbury's book, Where to Find Birds in Australia, his section on Eungella National Park states "...the park's avifauna is somewhat impoverished..." This was not our impression of the birds in this beautiful rainforest. Although it is difficult to see birds in the rainforest, we managed to identify 53 species during our day-and-a-half in the park, including both the Spectacled and Black-faced Monarchs. The highlight of this park, though, was not a bird but the many platypus in the Broken River which runs through the park. We went on our only rare bird search in this area, looking for the Eungella Honeyeater which is found at higher elevations in the Eungella range. We did not find the bird but observed many Scarlet Honeyeaters during our search.

We discovered one of our best birding areas by chance, near Yeppoon to the northeast of Rockhampton. After learning that a boat trip to Barren Island wouldn't be sailing due to high winds, we were informed, by the local tourist bureau, of a good birding area at the nearby Capricornia International Resort. The resort allows the public to have access to the property which contains several thousand hectares of wetland and forest. One of the first bird species that we observed was a flock of 25-30 Red-tailed Black Cockatoos near the resort's golf course. Although many of the grassland areas had been burnt by bushfires and some of the wetlands were dry, we eventually found an excellent wetland area where we observed 31 waterbird species including many Brolga, five species of heron and egret, both Yellow-billed and Royal Spoonbills, three ibis species and hundreds of Purple Swamphens. We located our only Bush Thick-knee on the resort property and also observed two White-tailed Sea Eagles feeding on an eel.

Our five weeks in Australia provided a great opportunity to enjoy both birding and softball. We observed 213 species of birds during our Aussie holiday. The opportunity to participate in the softball competition at a multi-national sporting event and then to go birding in many of the national parks in southeastern Queensland was a great way to combine my two favourite pastime activities.◊

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**GUIDELINES FOR SITE GUIDES**

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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 and quietly awaiting the possible appearance of an elusive lifebird.◊

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**The Question for the Quarterly**

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While we were in Kelowna one of the BCFO members asked if we might include in each issue an interesting question for birders to ponder upon. She provided us with the question for this issue. We request members (or others) to send us an answer to the following question and to pose additional interesting questions of their own.

The question for this issue is: **Why do Rufous-sided Towhees have red eyes?**

The Editors don't know. Does anyone out there know? Please send us your considered suggestions, theories, etc. Quite a few species of birds do have red eyes (certain ducks and grebes, some pigeons and vireos). Many of these birds are fairly colorful in their plumages so the eye color may not necessarily be just a display feature. Would any of our members/readers at Sapsucker Woods be willing to enlighten us?◊

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**AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE**


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**Peter W. Jones**

Peter, a much-travelled bird-watcher and a recent SFU graduate, had bird conservation as his major area of study. His involvement in bird studies began in 1987. He has worked in Eastern Quebec, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, James Bay, Long Point & several locations in BC (including Okanagan, North Coast, Queen Charlotte Islands).

**Bonita Lingenfelter**

Bonita, a butterfly enthusiast, has her own garden in Salmon Arm planted to attract butterflies. A creative writer, Bonita writes a weekly column in the Shuswap Market News about the fascinating world of nature which surrounds us.

**Ron Mayo**

Ron has been a keen birder since his early teens in the '30s back in England. Before retiring in Stuie he had thirty years of farm and bush life east of Prince George. Currently he is a close observer of nature around Bella Coola and he regularly monitors areas near his home in Tweedsmuir Park.

**M. F. (Mike) McGrenere**

Former president of the BCFO, Mike is still an active member of the Victoria Natural History Society and the BCFO. He enjoys both birding and baseball!

**Martin K. McNicholl**

Martin, our present Journal editor, has had an interest in birds from early childhood. An author or co-author of over 200 publications, and board member of 28 organizations, Martin continues his work as an ornithological field researcher with experience in Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, Yukon Territories, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Cuba. SEE V.4(4): 5.

**Harold S. Pollock**

After Harold finished teaching at Queen's University he retired to Victoria where he developed an interest in birding, especially in bluebirds. He is an active member of the Victoria NHS and birds regularly with the Tuesday Group.

**Jack Williams**

Jack and his wife, Dorothy, are presently members of the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists. When he lived in Sydney, Jack was an ornithology leader with the Victoria NHS. He was also a member of the Vancouver NHS for several years and has been birding for about 45 years.◊

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**1993-94 B.C. Bluebird Nesting Surveys -- Some Excerpts**


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At the last Victoria Natural History Society meeting we asked Harold Pollock, who had given a presentation on bluebirds and bluebird trails last year, whether he would be willing to give us a little information on bluebird nest box use. He very kindly gave us a printout of his statistics for bluebird nesting surveys taken from throughout the province. Space does not allow us to give you the complete survey results but we present some excerpts for you reading interest.

**Surveyed Trails 1993-94**

Quesnel, Smithers, Kamloops, Golden (94), Vernon, Kelowna, Westbank, Fernie & area, Salmon Arm (94), Castlegar & area, Southern Interior, Kimberly/Cranbrook, Princeton, Grand Forks, Williams Lake and Naramata to Vaseux Lake (93).

**Bluebird Fledglings 5-year increase (Best Estimate from Available Data)**

Mountain Bluebird fledglings: (1990) 991 / (1994) 5939: 5-year increase of 459%  
 Western Bluebird fledglings: (1990) 768 / (1994) 2896: 5-year increase of 277%

**Other Species Using Bluebird Nestboxes**

Violet-green & Tree Swallows; Black-capped, Mountain & Chestnut-backed Chickadees; House Wrens; White-breasted & Red-breasted Nuthatches; House Sparrows; Squirrels; Flying Squirrels and Chipmunks.

We hope to have an article from Harold in our next issue. Members wishing further information on these provincial Bluebird Nesting Surveys might contact: Harold S. Pollock, 104-225 Belleville Street, Victoria, BC V8V 4T9.◊