

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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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**.

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, \$20.00; junior memberships (age under 18), \$10.00; Family memberships (two 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: **Allen Wisely, Membership, British Columbia Field Ornithologists, PO Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7**.

Send material for publication in any format to the BCFO Newsletter Editors (see 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. **Deadline for receipt of material for publication is the 15th of the month preceding the March, June, September and December issues.**

Editors for the **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST**: A. & M. Buhler
Distribution of **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST**: Allen Wiseley

EDITORS' NOTES AND NOTIONS

Did YOU have an enjoyable time at the Fifth BCFO AGM in Victoria? We certainly did and we would like to extend a big round of thanks to all of those people who worked so hard to bring it all together -- organizers, speakers, leaders, helpers and members who took the time to attend were all important to the meeting's success.

We also send Kudos to those who have taken the time to write articles, letters and Site Guides for us recently. September was busy for us and we were away on holidays in October so I was afraid that we would really have to scramble for this issue. However, members came through again and we even have an article already for the NEXT issue. Thanks and keep up the good work as it really makes our job easier.

As usual in this December issue we provide a listing of all the CBC dates we could find from throughout the province. If your count is missing please send us a contact and we will get it noted next year. We do not have a NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS section in this issue -- any volunteers? However, we have put in a few items which we have seen in the Seen in Passing page. At the AGM one member asked if we could start listing some bird-related projects suitable for amateurs or volunteers from around the Province. We feel this is a good idea but you, the members, will have to keep us informed. Several items in this issue show how birders can get involved. Dave volunteered to help with bird banding, Prue has become involved in keeping nest records and Charles shows how a small organization (TROG) can do great things when members are stimulated by a good dose of enthusiasm. Mark has provided us with an excellent SITE GUIDE and more from the Dawson Creek area. Bruce, posted northward, shows that there is still a lot we can learn about bird species near our northern borders. Jo Ann's article on bird behavior shows that backyard bird watching will give you much to ponder. Don reminds us that even experienced birders can still get an "Oh, WOW!!" high when Lady Luck favors them. (We have yet to see four of his five "ticks" even though we have lived on the coast for four years. I think this proves how well our AGM crew orchestrated the whole weekend, ensuring that both amateurs and professionals were kept excited and happy!) Do not forget to read the LETTERS TO THE EDITORS. Jack and Prue have some interesting submissions for you to think about, Martin directs you to funding possibilities and the Harris family ask you to remember the late Dr Barry Leach. It was great to have letters, send more!!

Once again Marilyn and I would like to wish our readers, wherever you may be, a Joyous Christmas Season. We hope that you can share this Christmas with family and friends and that 1996 will find you well and prospering. Good Birding. ☺

BCFO OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1993-1994

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SOCIETY NEWS

President's Report

by Marian Porter

The BCFO directors met on 29 October 1995 in White Rock to discuss pressing issues and review the 1995 AGM. Allen Wiseley was able to report that the 1995 membership list has now been completely revised and updated, and the new list will be included with the next issue of the newsletter. John Dorsey is looking into the possibility of a financial audit and will report at the next meeting. All directors agreed the 1995 AGM was a definite success. The cost, at Dunsmuir Lodge, was higher than in previous years, but was within reason considering the location and excellent birding environment. A modest profit was made. The high quality of the talks and banquet presentation impressed the group, and a decision was made to formally thank all of the speakers by letter. All directors agreed that a late spring meeting in the Okanagan would be a preferred time and location for next year's meeting, with the details to be finalized as quickly as possible, and published in the newsletter. [Unfortunately the 1996 AGM details were not confirmed in time for this issue. EDS]

Problems encountered with publishing the 1993 Journal were discussed, and the procedures used will not be continued for the 1994 Journal. An action plan was outlined which would take less time and cost less.

The publishing of a sightings supplement to the newsletter was discussed, and John Dorsey agreed to organize a committee to accomplish this. Martin McNicholl distributed a detailed status report on the 1994 and 1995 journals. A promotional brochure will be produced in the next few weeks to distribute at meetings and mail to natural history clubs throughout the province. This will assist us in our 1996 membership drive. An application is ready to be submitted for the BCFO to achieve charitable organization status so we may work towards expanding the activities of the organization. Our next meeting will be mid-January, after the holiday season. ❏

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

- Jan 10-12, 1996 **SEVENTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP**, Biloxi, Mississippi. Contact: Wendy Brown, 1208 Claire St. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104, USA; Local chair Scott Hereford, Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR, 7200 Crane Lake, Gauthier, MS, 39553, USA, ph (601) 497-6322.
- Feb 4-6, 1996 **SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL SYMPOSIUM**, Memphis, Tennessee. Contact: Mickey Heitmeyer, Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., 1 Waterfowl Way, Memphis, TN 38120, USA.
- March 17-22, 1996 **SECOND INTERNATIONAL SHRIKE SYMPOSIUM**, Eilat, Israel. Contact Reuven Yosef, I.B.C.E., Box 774, Eilat, 88000, Israel.
- March 27-31, 1996 **COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**, San Diego, California. Contact: Barbara Kus or Abby Powell, Department of Biology, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182, USA; phone (619) 594-4357 or (619) 594-1685.
- April 11-14, 1996 **WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**, Cape May, New Jersey. Contacts not yet announced.
- Aug 13-17, 1996 **114TH STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION & RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING**, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho. Contacts not yet announced.
- Aug 20-24, 1996 **SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL GROUSE SYMPOSIUM**, Fort Collins, Colorado. Contact: Clait E. Braun, Wildlife Research Center, 317 West Prospect Rd., Ft. Collins, CO 80526, USA; or Kathy Martin, Canadian Wildlife Service, 5421 Robertson Road, RR 1, Delta, BC V4K 3N2. Phone (604) 946-8546 or (604) 822-9695. ❏

List of Birds Seen at the Fifth BCFO AGM

Pacific Loon	Surfbird	Steller's Jay
Common Loon	Red Knot	Northwestern Crow
Pied-billed Grebe	Sanderling	Common Raven
Horned Grebe	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Red-necked Grebe	Western Sandpiper	Bushtit
Eared Grebe	Least Sandpiper	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Western Grebe	Baird's Sandpiper	Brown Creeper
Sooty Shearwater	Pectoral Sandpiper	Bewick's Wren
Double-crested Cormorant	Short-billed Dowitcher	Winter Wren
Brandt's Cormorant	Long-billed Dowitcher	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Pelagic Cormorant	Common Snipe	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Great Blue Heron	Red-necked Phalarope	Hermit Thrush
Mute Swan	Parasitic Jaeger	American Robin
Canada Goose	Bonaparte's Gull	Varied Thrush
Green-winged Teal	Heermann's Gull	American Pipit
Mallard	Mew Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Northern Pintail	California Gull	European Starling
Blue-winged Teal	Herring Gull	Solitary Vireo
Northern Shoveler	Thayer's Gull	Hutton's Vireo
American Wigeon	Western Gull	Orange-crowned Warbler
Harlequin Duck	Glaucous-winged Gull	Yellow Warbler
Surf Scoter	Sabine's Gull	Yellow-rumped Warbler
White-winged Scoter	Common Tern	Blk-throated Gray Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Common Murre	Townsend's Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Pigeon Guillemot	Common Yellowthroat
Osprey	Marbled Murrelet	Rufous-sided Towhee
Bald Eagle	Cassin's Auklet	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Rhinoceros Auklet	Fox Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Rock Dove	Song Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Band-tailed Pigeon	Lincoln's Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Mourning Dove	Golden-crowned Sparrow
American Kestrel	Barred Owl	White-crowned Sparrow
Merlin	Vaux's Swift	Dark-eyed Junco
Peregrine Falcon	Rufous Hummingbird	Lapland Longspur
Ring-necked Pheasant	Belted Kingfisher	Red-winged Blackbird
Ruffed Grouse	Downy Woodpecker	Brewer's Blackbird
California Quail	Hairy Woodpecker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Semipalmated Plover	Northern Flicker	Purple Finch
Killdeer	Pileated Woodpecker	House Finch
Black Oystercatcher	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Red Crossbill
Greater Yellowlegs	Eurasian Skylark	Pine Siskin
Lesser Yellowlegs	Horned Lark	American Goldfinch
Solitary Sandpiper	Violet-green Swallow	House Sparrow
Wandering Tattler	N. Rough-winged Swallow	
Black Turnstone	Bank Swallow	

BEYOND BIRDLISTING

At the AGM we met some members who were professional naturalists and others who only recently purchased their first field guides. As a group we all enjoyed the bird walks and, with assistance from experts, many amateurs got to identify and tick a few lifers. It was great to have professionals share their expertise and assist the amateurs in bird identification. However, it is also possible for many amateurs to greatly assist the professionals. Beyond birdlisting there are many ways for both amateur and professional to interact. Christmas bird counts, bird banding projects, feeder watch surveys, lake surveys for loons, reporting specially banded birds, hawk migration surveys, bluebird trails, eagle and swan counts, breeding bird surveys, nest record reports, specific area surveys, etc. are just a few examples of ways in which both amateur and professional birders can cooperate to increase our knowledge of bird behavior and distribution. Laird Law asked us whether we could start listing some of these projects from around the province. Therefore, we ask you, our members, to help keep us informed of any projects you know of where novice or experienced amateurs might be able to provide assistance. We will gladly print up information on any projects that you send us. Send us some information soon. ☺

Seen in Passing

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.

Bald Eagle Nest Registry Program: "The purpose of this program is to generate a continual supply of Bald Eagle nesting data. Up-to-date nesting data will aid in the management of this magnificent species. It is hoped that upon the discovery of any Bald Eagle nest you will fill out the BC Bald Eagle Nest Registry Program Field Observation Form. We are asking that you forward copies of this form to three places: the planning department of your municipality, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, (Wildlife Branch), and the Conservation Data Centre (CDC)... To obtain copies of the two page recording form or for more information please contact the Ministry of Environment office in Surrey at tel: (604) 582-5200."

Annual Summary of Bird Sightings for 1995: A notice to all Birders! The Vancouver Natural History Society is planning an Annual Summary of Bird Sightings for 1995. To make this publication as complete as possible, we need your help. Please send ANY and ALL sightings to the addresses below. Please include: date, location, species, approximate number, and any other information. Contact: Kyle Elliott, 11701 Cascade, Delta, BC V4E 3C3 (604) 596-4565 or to Wayne Gardner, 33501 Lynn Ave., Abbotsford, BC V2S 1E2 (604) 853-7448.

Marked Barrow's Goldeneye: The Canadian Wildlife Service is seeking your help in locating marked Barrow's Goldeneye wintering in coastal areas. Barrow's Goldeneye have been marked with nasal disks on the breeding grounds in Interior British Columbia. Disks of various shapes and colours were used, one on each side of the bill. Observe carefully since the colour and shape of the nasal disk may differ on the right and left side of the duck. Please record the following information: location of sighting, sex of duck, duck's RIGHT side nasal disk colour and shape, duck's LEFT side nasal disk colour and shape. Send information to: Sean Boyd or Saul Schneider, Pacific Wildlife Research Centre, Canadian Wildlife Service, 5421 Robertson Road, RR #1, Delta, BC V4K 3N2. (604) 946-8546 / fax (604) 946-7022.

Squamish Bird Counts: The Squamish Estuary Conservation Society is pleased to announce the dates for its fifth year of monthly bird counts in the Squamish Estuary. All counts meet at McDonald's restaurant, except the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) which meets at the Brackendale Art Gallery. Contact Jim Wisnia (604) 898-2000 for more information and count dates. (List of count dates is also available in BC Naturalist 33(6): 7, 1995.)

The Squamish Estuary Conservation Society has prepared a couple of very useful area maps. One is the Squamish Estuary Trail Map showing windsurfing access, rock climbing access and walking trails. The second is Squamish Valley Eagle Viewing Sites. These may be purchased from the Squamish Estuary Conservation Society, PO Box 1274, Squamish, BC V0N 3G0. They are also available at the Travel Information Centre in Squamish or at the Brackendale Art Gallery.

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 (604) 242-3305, Charles (604) 242-3984 or Paul (604) 242-3393. See page 16 of this issue for an article by Dr Charles Helm, president of TROG.

Canada -- New Birding Tours: Trips within BC, a West Coast Pelagic trip, Alberta, the Canadian Rockies, and Point Pelee -- in May and June 1996. Tours are led by Peter Burke, Al & Jude Grass, Alvaro Jaramillo, and Marian Porter. Please contact Eagle-Eye Tours Inc., PO Box 94672, Richmond, BC V6Y 4A4. phone (604) 231-9661 / fax (604) 231-9482 for further information. ☐

The Waxwings of the Yukon

by Bruce Bennett
#31 -- 203 Range Road
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 3A5

On June 30th I began field work in southwestern Yukon. I was to gather more information on breeding birds for the Canadian Wildlife Service's 'Bird's of the Yukon' project, that is being compiled for publication. The search began at Johnson's Crossing, about 1.5 hours drive east of Whitehorse. I was waiting by a payphone for a phonecall when I secured my first successful nest record. Into a small birch tree outside the store at Johnson's Crossing flew a waxwing. I presumed that this was a Bohemian Waxwing because that is "...the only species of waxwing you see" in this part of the Yukon and is recorded in the Checklist of the Birds of Whitehorse as being uncommon throughout the year. Though I have birded in the Okanagan in the winter and have participated in the Squamish Christmas Bird Count, I had not seen a Bohemian Waxwing until my move to the Yukon this April. I was, therefore, understandably excited and proceeded to take notes as to the location of the nest and materials used in its construction.

The nest was built in a paper birch (*Populus neoalascensis*) about 2.75 metres (9') off the ground, on a branch about 1.2 metres (4') out from the trunk. It was constructed primarily of the catkins of trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), with grasses and some arboreal tree lichen lining it. I took a few photographs but didn't want to disturb the bird that was sitting deep within its nest with only the tip of its beak and the yellow band on the end of its tail showing. I reported the findings to Wendy Nixon in Whitehorse who was equally excited and informed me that only one other Bohemian Waxwing nest had been recorded within the Whitehorse area. This is an area encompassed by Johnson's Crossing and the Teslin River to the east, the Territorial boundary to the south, Champagne to the west, and Braeburn & Lake Laberge to the North.

I was determined to find more nests as I proceeded north along the South Canol road towards Ross River. Later that afternoon I discovered another Bohemian Waxwing nest. I had been watching several waxwings mingling about in the white spruce trees. Every now and then an individual would break off a small branch from one particular spruce and fly away with it. After following them for half an hour and very patiently waiting and watching, while feeding the mosquitos, I finally discovered its location. This one, however, was of considerably different construction from the previous one. It was in a small white spruce (*Picea glauca*) about 1.5 metres (5') off the ground and less than 0.3 metres (1') from the trunk. The nest was constructed entirely of spruce twigs and was lined with reindeer moss (*Cladina sp.*) and fine grasses. On closer inspection I discovered one light bluish egg with dark spots that were almost square, sprinkled sparingly over the surface of the egg. It was about the same size as an American Robin's egg.

The nests were so different in appearance and construction that I noted in my field note book that "...it seems remarkable that both of these nests could be constructed by the same species". I had observed the adults in their nest building. They had the distinctive white and yellow markings on the wings that I use to distinguish the species at a distance and on closer inspection I noticed a dark belly (gray with no yellow), dark undertail coverts (rusty-red), and the lack of white above the bill. The colors I have put in brackets according to the Peterson Field Guide's Western Birds (Peterson, 1990) because, being colorblind, I tend to look for patterns more than actual colors. I was certain that these were Bohemian Waxwings and then continued on with my search.

It was not until two weeks later that I was to discover my initial mistake. I stopped in once again at Johnson's Crossing and I decided to inspect the nest more closely. The adult was on the nest when I arrived and this time I was surprised to see a distinctive white line above the black mask staring at me from the nest. It was a Cedar Waxwing! As it left to forage, I peered into the nest and discovered five sightless, flightless young. The return of the adult provided the photographic documentation. They are known to breed in central BC and are found along the Alaska panhandle to Skagway, yet prior to this year the Cedar Waxwing has been considered an accidental species for the Yukon.

The Waxwings of the Yukon (continued)

The Yukon's first documented record came on July 27th, 1989 when Rudolf Koes of Winnipeg, spotted one at Haines Junction. Then on June 14th, 1992 Helmut Grünberg observed a single bird near Rancheria (Eckert, C., 1995). This year, the Yukon Parks and Outdoor Recreation Branch and Canadian Wildlife Service sponsored an expedition into the extreme southeastern forests of the Yukon, along the LaBiche and Beaver Rivers. Cedar Waxwings were observed quite commonly by all participants, including myself. It was felt that this may perhaps be a usual occurrence in this unbirded corner of the territory. In the Whitehorse area this summer there have been an unprecedented number of reported sightings. On June 19th, Bob Murkett and Boris Doborowolsky reported a pair of Cedar Waxwings at Jackfish Bay on Lake Laberge. On June 26th, Pam Sinclair and Cameron Eckert observed a pair in downtown Whitehorse. Valorie and William Cunningham reported that waxwings with "...distinct yellow-white abdomens" successfully raised three young in their Riverdale yard, a suburb of Whitehorse. René Carlson and Helmut Grünberg spotted single Cedar Waxwings at Lewes Lake on July 8th, and along the Annie Lake Road on July 9th. (Eckert, C., 1995). The increase of observations throughout the Yukon this summer may represent an "invasion" or may merely be an increase in the number of birders reporting sightings. One thing is clear, however, that the Bohemian Waxwing is not "...the only species of waxwing you may see" in this part of the Yukon.

References:

Eckert, C. 1995. Cedar Waxwings invade southern Yukon. Yukon Warbler. Fall. p.8.
 Peterson, R.T. 1990. Western Birds. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company. ◀

An Adult Great Tit Tries to Force a Fledging

submitted by Jo Ann MacKenzie
 15341 -- 21 Avenue
 South Surrey, BC V4A 6A8

Recently, while researching Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*) nesting behaviour, I came across an interesting item regarding another member of the Paridae family, the Great Tit. The article was published in Bird Study (the Journal of the British Trust for Ornithology). I wonder if anyone has observed other birds attempting to force-fledge a tardy chick?

"The nest of a pair of Great Tits (*Parus major*) was built inside a model house which stood on a bird table in the garden of Mr. H. Henworth at Atwick, two miles north of Hornsea.

Originally there had been eleven eggs, but on 18 May there were six newly hatched young. These were ringed [banded] on 28 May, and one was noted to be smaller than its siblings. Of the fledging Mr. Henworth described the following sequence of events.

Five young fledged between 06.30 and 07.30 hours on 11 June. The sixth continued to be fed in the nest by both parents. On 13 June, at about 14.00 hours the male contrived to pull the remaining nestling out, using a green caterpillar. The caterpillar was not relinquished until the nestling was outside the 'nesting box' and sitting on the ledge. After three or four minutes the runt fell into a flower bed. The flight feathers were still in quill and far from fully developed, and it was returned to the nest by Mr. Henworth. The parents fed the runt at the nest until the following morning, 14 June, when at 10.00 hours there was a repeat performance of the male pulling the runt out of the box using another green caterpillar. After falling from the ledge, the runt was again replaced in the nest by Mr. Henworth. The whole procedure was repeated at 14.00 hours and again at 18.00 hours. After the last abortive attempt to fly the runt could not be located, but was found dead nearby the following morning. The ring number corresponded to that of the smallest pullus at the time of ringing."

Reference: Walker, J.E.S. 1972. Attempts at fledging of a runt Great Tit. Bird Study. 19: 250-251. ◀

A Birdfinding Guide to the Dawson Creek Area

by Mark Phinney
305 -- 4444 Glenshee Road
Prince George, BC V2N 4E1

As part of British Columbia which lies east of the Rocky Mountains, the Peace River Parklands form a unique biotic area within the Province. With the Rockies forming a natural western boundary to the ranges of many bird species, the avifauna of the region is under a distinct eastern influence. Thus, several bird species which can be found here are not typically encountered elsewhere in the Province.

Dawson Creek is situated near the southern edge of the Peace River Parklands. A tremendous variety of habitats can be found within a short distance of the city, including agricultural land, aspen and mixedwood forest of various ages, woodland ponds, prairie potholes, large lakes, and more. Good habitat diversity equates to good bird diversity, and during the mid-April to mid-July period, at least 213 species have been recorded in the general Dawson Creek area over the last five years. An intensive day of birding in mid- to late May should net around 120 species; 100 species can be expected from a serious effort anytime between mid-May and early July.

Eastern birds (particularly warblers) are a big reason for birders from "the rest of the Province" to visit Dawson Creek. Broad-winged Hawk, Franklin's Gull, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blue Jay, Philadelphia Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, LeConte's and Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and Common Grackle can all be found in varying abundance. Eastern warblers include: Black-throated Green, Palm, Black-and-White, Connecticut, Mourning, Canada, and Ovenbird. (Go further north for Bay-breasted and Cape May.) A western birder will notice some different subspecies as well. The "Baltimore" Oriole is common here; Solitary Vireos and Fox Sparrows are more colourful (and sing differently); Alder Flycatchers and Common Yellowthroats do not require wetlands, and White-breasted Nuthatches are restricted to mature deciduous forest.

There are **many** places to bird around Dawson Creek. I only mention a few here, but I encourage visiting birders to pick up a local PRP (Peace River Product) farm map and bird checklist at the tourist office, and go exploring. You will find birds.

McQueen's Slough -- from the traffic circle, go east on Highway 49 (towards Spirit River). At 1.6 km, check the small effluent pond on the right (there is plenty of room to pull off). Numerous waterfowl species are found here, as well as loafing gulls. If the pond has been drained, it can be a good spot for shorebirds. It is a dependable location for Common Grackles. If you want a closer look, no one seems to mind if you hop the barbed-wire fence and walk down to the dyke. At 3.2 km, the Dawson Creek garbage disposal site can be worth a stop if there seems to be gull activity. Stop at the checkpoint and tell the attendant that you would just like to look at the birds (they're used to it by now). Franklin's, Ring-billed, California and Herring are the common dump gulls. Anything else is noteworthy. The sight (and sound!) of a thousand or more Franklin's Gulls assembling here in late April - early May is most impressive. Continuing east, turn left (towards Rolla) at the crossroads at 5.1 km. (There may be wildlife viewing signs along the way). At 5 km from this intersection, turn left onto a small gravel road and follow it to the designated parking area. Gravelled trails lead to two boardwalks. The one on the left is much longer, but is not yet finished. (At the time of writing, about 160 metres have been completed. Further extension and a viewing platform are planned). McQueen's Slough is a true "prairie pothole". It is actually comprised of two waterbodies, only the southern one being easily accessible. The variety of bird life is most impressive. Many species of waterfowl nest here, as do Eared Grebes, Soras, coots, Black Terns, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and Marsh Wrens. Watch for Common Grackle, Eastern Kingbird, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Oriole, and others in the vegetation around the edge of the slough. Sharp-tailed Sparrows are sometimes found in the sedges and dead willows on the left side of the boardwalk. The other boardwalk crosses a narrow channel of open water, accessing a small island. By walking slowly and quietly, you should see various birds at close range. Another option is to stay right, and walk along the edge of the field (a couple hundred metres), then along a trail through the willows. This eventually leads to a Ducks Unlimited water control structure, where a different part of the slough can be viewed. A good variety of birds can be seen here; it is usually worth the walk.

Birdfinding Guide to the Dawson Creek Area (continued)

Radar Lake/Bear Mountain Community Forest -- from the traffic circle, go west towards Prince George (Highway 97 south). Check the golf course ponds on the right at 2.8 km. The field on the left may have gulls, waterfowl, shorebirds and longspurs in early spring. At 3.5 km, turn left onto the "dangerous goods route". Proceed another 3.3 km and turn right onto road 206-A at the Bear Mountain Community Forest (BMcF) sign (around the curve). Follow this road for 1.7 km, then turn left onto Rd 223 at the BMCF sign. Stay on this road (keeping right at the fork at 4.1 km) and the Radar Lake parking lot is at km 7.9. The lake is used by a variety of waterbirds, including Horned Grebe, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, and Sora. However, forest birds are the main attraction here. The trails at Radar Lake should yield a decent variety, but do not limit yourself to them. Explore the ski trails, seismic lines, old logging roads, and even the main Bear Mountain road. If your vehicle can handle **rough** roads, consider driving a few more kilometres and investigating the various habitats. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Philadelphia Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black-throated Green, Black-and-White, Mourning, and Canada Warblers can all be found at Bear Mountain. Forty passerine species should be tallied without too much trouble.

Swan Lake area -- from the traffic circle, head south on Route 2. The turnoff(s) to Swan Lake Provincial Park are approximately 31 km south, and are well-marked. The boat launch area is a good place to scan the lake. The nearby forest and brush provide cover for many birds. There is a trail along the lake edge which begins to the right of the boat launch, past the beach. If you don't find an Eastern Phoebe somewhere in the park, there is something terribly amiss! Exploring back roads of the Tupper/Tomslake area is worthwhile. It is a good place for Connecticut Warblers and Sharp-tailed Grouse. As well, *cliff nesting* Cliff Swallows can be seen adjacent to Rd 20 (Gundy Rd) where it crosses Tupper Creek. Several kilometres further south on Highway 2 (*within sight of the Alberta border*) is Rd 201. Turn left for a view of the (more productive) south end of Swan Lake, and birds of riparian brush and mature deciduous forest. **Or**, turn right and proceed up a long grade until reaching a communications tower on the left (3.3 km). **Park here and walk** a couple hundred yards along the road (downhill now), then turn right and follow a severely rutted road through the forest. This place is loaded with birds during the month of June. The road eventually reaches a regenerating aspen clearcut which is good for a different selection of birds.

Heritage Highway/Brassey Creek -- from the traffic circle, go towards Prince George on Highway 97, crossing the Kiskatinaw River at km 21.5. (A colony of approx. 1000 pairs of Cliff Swallows nests under the bridge). At km 21.9, turn left onto the Heritage Highway. There are several small roadside ponds between km 1.1 and 1.9. The last one on the right has been the most productive, and is worth a scan for shorebirds in May and July. Another pond 400 metres east (left) on the Arras road is often worth the minor detour. Continue south on the Heritage Highway; at km 26 turn right onto the Brassey Creek road¹. At km 1.4, the road crosses a tiny creek. A LeConte's Sparrow can often be heard singing from the *brushy* field on the left; Ovenbirds and Connecticut Warblers have nested in the middle-aged aspen on the right. Philadelphia Vireos can be found in the aspen/poplar forest adjacent to this road (and elsewhere along the Heritage Highway). The mature mixedwood forest beginning around 6 km is good for Black-throated Green Warblers, and the brushy clearcut at km 7.5 has lots of Mourning Warblers. Continue along this road until a "T" intersection at km 13.3 and turn right. A road to the right at 1.3 km is definitely worth checking out, but for reliable Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, continue on until km 2.6 where a gas pipeline crosses the road. The flycatchers prefer young pine/aspen forest on dry sites in this area.

General Notes -- Mid May to late June is the most productive season for birding in Dawson Creek, and early morning is easily the best time of the day (strong winds often pick up by late morning). A reminder that the city is at nearly 56° latitude, so dawn comes early in the summer. A 5:00 start is none too early.

Bugs are not too bad in this area; the exception being voracious hordes of mosquitoes around ponds and marshes starting about June 1.

¹ The Brassey Creek Rd has many branches and side roads. Stay on the most heavily travelled route for these directions, but pay attention on the drive in so you don't get confused on the way out!

Birdfinding Guide to the Dawson Creek Area (continued)

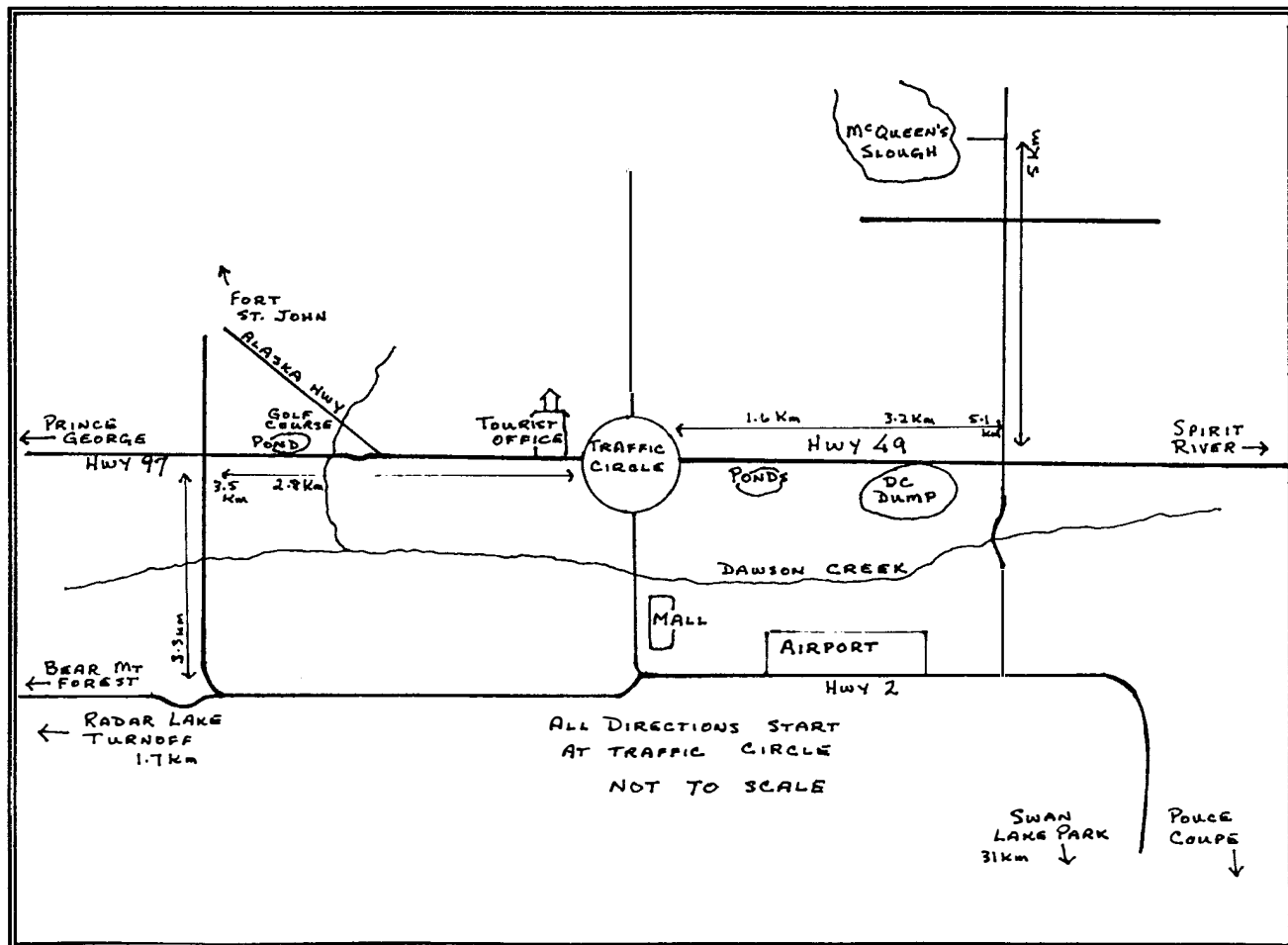
Rubber boots are probably the most versatile footwear for this area. There is often a heavy dew in the morning and if it is muddy at all, you'll be happy to have them.

"Peace country gumbo" is infamous. When dry, it is like concrete, but when wet it is unbelievably slippery, and the consistency changes with alarming quickness. Dirt roads with a gravel base are OK, but **do not attempt to travel on pure dirt roads after a heavy rain**, even with four wheel drive. Give them a day or two to dry out. I would even hesitate to go down some roads if it looks like it might rain. One thundershower and you'll be going nowhere but the ditch. All dirt roads specifically mentioned here (except parts of Rd 201 and Bear Mountain past Radar Lake) have a gravel base and are OK when wet.

Much of the land around Dawson Creek is privately owned. It is not possible to discern between Crown and private forested land, unless the private land is posted in some way. General rules include: no trespassing where signs are posted; leave all gates/fences the way you found them, and avoid trampling crops in fields. Where trespassing is prohibited, birding from the roadside can be quite productive.

A final recommendation is that birders attempt (in advance) to become familiar with the songs of birds that they hope to see. You will hear many more birds than you will see, and a lot of time can be saved by tracking down singing warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and grosbeaks rather than hoping to stumble across them in a tree somewhere.

The Dawson Creek area has a lot of birds, and a lot of places to look for them. Only a very few have been included here. I encourage all visiting birders to do some back road exploring, I'm sure you'll be pleased with what you find.



Map: Hub for Dawson Creek Birding

**Relative Abundance, Habitat Preference and Breeding Status of Some
Peace River Specialty Birds in the Dawson Creek Area**

SPECIES	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE	HABITAT	BREEDING STATUS
<u>Trumpeter Swan</u>	rare	isolated lakes	confirmed
Broad-winged Hawk	rare	mature aspen or mixedwood forest	probable
Franklin's Gull	very common	large lakes, marshes, open fields	non-breeding
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	very common	mature aspen forest	confirmed
<u>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</u>	uncommon	young pine/aspen forest; spruce bogs	probable
Eastern Phoebe	fairly common	stream banks and other riparian areas	confirmed
Blue Jay	uncommon	mature aspen or mixedwood forest	confirmed
<u>Philadelphia Vireo</u>	uncommon	pole-stage and mature aspen/balsam poplar forest	confirmed
Cape May Warbler	very rare	mature spruce or mixedwood forest	non-breeding
<u>Black-throated Green Warbler</u>	fairly common	mature spruce/aspen forest	confirmed
<u>Palm Warbler</u>	rare	spruce bogs	probable
Black-and-White Warbler	fairly common	riparian forest, moist woodland	confirmed
Ovenbird	common	pole-stage and mature aspen forest	confirmed
Connecticut Warbler	fairly common	pole stage and mature aspen forest	confirmed
Mourning Warbler	common	brushy areas; edges, forest opening	confirmed
<u>Canada Warbler</u>	fairly common	moist deciduous or mixedwood forest	confirmed
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	common	pole-stage to mature deciduous forest	confirmed
LeConte's Sparrow	rare	tall, lush grasses	probable
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	rare	wet grass/sedge meadows	confirmed
Common Grackle	uncommon	ponds and marshes	confirmed
Northern "Baltimore" Oriole	common	mature aspen forest	confirmed

Red-listed species are in bold type; Blue-listed species are underlined. ❏

Report on Sea Island Banding Station -- 1995

by Dave Guild
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In the spring of 1995 a new bird banding station was established west of MacDonald Road on Sea Island, Richmond, British Columbia. The site was nearly the size of two city blocks. It consisted of grassy fields, hedgerows, large brambles of blackberries, apple, plum, pear and other deciduous trees.

The idea for the banding station arose out of a conversation between two friends: Mike Toochin, one of BC's foremost birders and Tom Plath of British Columbia Environment, Wildlife Management, who himself is an accomplished birder.

It was Tom who brought the idea to fruition by soliciting the help of Dick Cannings, the holder of a Master Bander's license. This license is mandatory in order to run a banding station. The University of British Columbia (UBC) Zoology Department supplied the Banding Permit. Permission for the use of the site was requested and secured from the Vancouver International Airport.

The spring banding season got off to a rather rough start. There were insufficient people and those who were available needed training. Mist net sites had to be selected and cleared. There was insufficient banding equipment to handle the volume of birds and the weather was uncooperative. In the third week of May, however, the project received what might well have been a fatal blow. The mist nets -- poles, stakes and all -- were stolen from the site.

Tom Plath, while discouraged, was not defeated. He immediately set to work to find funding for the project. Wild Bird Trust came to the rescue with funds to cover the mist nets and additional banding equipment.

On August 3rd the fall banding season commenced. This time the start-up phase went more smoothly. There was increased volunteer support. In excess of forty people worked on the station during the months of August and September.

The procedures used at Sea Island include the setting of mist nets, three meters high and 10 - 12 meters long, in defined, numbered sites. These nets are monitored frequently. When birds are caught they are carefully removed from the net and placed into drawstring cotton bags. The bags are taken to the banding table where the birds are weighed, identified, the correct size band selected and affixed, wing chords measured, fat content evaluated and age and sex established. All information is then recorded against the unique band number and later entered into a computer program that disseminates the data North America wide.

Up to ten mist nets were operated weekdays for four to six hours. The time and number of nets varied according to the quantity of birds caught and the staff available.

During August and September a total of 3,068 birds were handled. Of these 2,642 were processed and banded and 426 were recaptures. The recapture rate was 16.1%. A total of 41 different species were banded in 38 banding days.

The fall banding season had many highlights. The two Magnolia Warblers are believed to be the first two documented records in the Vancouver checklist area. The two Clay-colored Sparrows are a species listed as accidental for the check-list area. September 29, 1995 is believed to be the latest date ever for a Hammond's Flycatcher in this area. Four Nashville Warblers and six White-throated Sparrows were banded, both of these species are listed as rare for the Vancouver checklist area. Remarkable also was the sheer number of Lincoln's Sparrows that were banded. Another point of interest was the fact that of the 327 "Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrows banded, only 15 were adults.

The chart on the following page shows the species, numbers banded (B) and numbers recaptured (R) for the months of August and September 1995.

Report on Sea Island Banding Station (continued)

SPECIES	AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		TOTAL	
	B	R	B	R	B	R
Willow Flycatcher	31	1	1	-	32	1
Hammond's Flycatcher	1	-	1	-	2	-
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	7	1	2	-	7	1
Barn Swallow	2	-	-	-	2	-
Black-capped Chickadee	33	22	3	17	36	39
Bushtit	33	1	1	-	34	1
Bewick's Wren	6	4	1	2	7	6
Marsh Wren	-	-	1	-	1	-
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	-	7	-	7	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	-	9	-	10	-
Swainson's Thrush	2	1	3	-	5	1
Hermit Thrush	-	-	1	-	1	-
American Robin	34	1	22	-	56	1
Cedar Waxwing	4	2	1	-	5	2
Solitary Vireo	-	-	1	-	1	-
Warbling Vireo	6	-	3	-	9	-
Orange-crowned Warbler	273	31	83	6	356	37
Nashville Warbler	4	-	-	-	4	-
Yellow Warbler	162	9	15	-	177	9
Magnolia Warbler	1	-	1	-	2	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	3	-	3	-
- Audubon's	-	-	3	-	3	-
- Myrtle's	-	-	3	-	3	-
MacGillivray's Warbler	13	2	-	-	13	2
Common Yellowthroat	62	10	15	6	77	16
Wilson's Warbler	22	1	-	-	22	1
Western Tanager	5	-	2	-	7	-
Black-headed Grosbeak	9	-	-	-	9	-
Spotted Towhee *	11	3	12	5	23	8
Clay-colored Sparrow	-	-	2	-	2	-
Savannah Sparrow	43	1	111	4	154	5
Fox Sparrow	4	-	27	2	31	2
Song Sparrow	5	1	279	60	284	61
Lincoln's Sparrow	126	11	304	60	430	71
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	6	3	6	3
Golden-crowned Sparrow	3	-	46	17	49	17
White-crowned Sparrow **	13	1	-	-	13	1
- Puget Sound	6	2	18	3	24	5
- Gambel's	1	1	326	101	327	102
Dark-eyed Junco	-	-	2	-	2	-
Brown-headed Cowbird	2	-	-	-	2	-
Purple Finch	1	-	-	1	1	1
House Finch	174	14	86	10	260	24
Pine Siskin	10	-	2	-	12	-
American Goldfinch	52	1	77	8	129	9
TOTALS	1162	121	1480	305	2642	426

* Rufous-sided Towhee

** Initially this species was not race identified.

This report is submitted in the hope that it will inspire others to volunteer for banding jobs and in the hope it will be useful and interesting to other birders. ☺

Nest Notes

by Prue Spitmann
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I recently discovered an old love, rekindling fond memories of a childhood passion and occupying a considerable amount of my time of late. Lest anyone should draw the wrong conclusion from this titillating piece of trivia, I must quickly explain that this reawakening has nothing to do with l'amour and everything to do with a fascination for nesting birds.

When I was young, I spent many long hours combing the countryside with two savvy cousins who taught this city slicker all she needed to know about how to look for birds and their nests. Over the years my husband Bernie and I have become fairly serious birders and this magnetism towards the nesting side of the equation has once again resurfaced.

Like many birders, Bernie and I have often come across an interesting nest or young family and, in spite of our best intentions, have not often documented our sightings. However, last year we finally won the battle with inertia and got started with the BC Nest Records Scheme, gathering up all the nest sightings data we could muster.

In 1995, we got down to business, organized ourselves a little better and achieved a much more satisfying result. Birding has so many facets and a strong interest in the breeding cycle brings its own rewards. We learned a lot about the courtship rituals of many species, the wide array of building materials needed to create an avian nursery and the disparate "delicacies" served to discriminating nestling/fledgling palates. Our experiences were always very interesting, often amusing, occasionally hilarious and sometimes downright tragic.

In an attempt to keep this as brief as possible, I will outline only a few of the highlights of this year's nesting season and hope that more birders will be tempted to document their own observations.

In April, the discovery of a number of active Bushtit nests in S. Langley's Campbell Valley Regional Park catapulted us into an early start on the nesting season. We monitored each nest on a regular basis and, during one of these visits, witnessed an extraordinary tribute to the gentle nature of the Bushtit. The pair we had been watching was unusually cautious, so our vantage point needed to be carefully chosen. Their nest was suspended in the centre of a cluster of bushes and after some considerable time, the male silently emerged into the open. At that moment, we realized that a pristine male Black-throated Gray Warbler, which had been feeding nearby, was quickly moving in close proximity to the nest. To our amazement, the Bushtit opted not to fight for his territory; instead, he sat motionless a few feet away, as the warbler meticulously foraged over the entire surface of the nest, including the entrance hole! The intruder eventually continued on its way and the stoic little Bushtit returned to his home.

On May 13, 1995 we made an exciting discovery which later proved to be ill-fated. We had been driving past the Lone Duck campground in Manning Provincial Park and noticed what appeared to be a Northern Flicker, clinging to a hole on a large snag not far off the road. A closer look with binoculars revealed that the bird was actually a female Williamson's Sapsucker, always a good bird for the area. The bird preened for a while, after which she entered the nest cavity and completely disappeared. Fifteen minutes later, the male arrived and fed his mate through the nesthole. Without a sound the male flew off. The female, extremely plump, remained inside. Both birds were in beautiful fresh plumage.

In the days that followed, we were quite dismayed to learn that other birders had not been able to re-locate this pair. On May 27 we left for a trip up north and made a wide loop over to Manning Provincial Park to check on "our" birds. Sadly, we found the female dead in the nesthole, apparently caught by the wing in a split in the bark which held her tight as she attempted to enter the nest chamber. There was no sign of the male. A very disappointing end to what had been a promising find, and not an encouraging start to our journey.

Nest Notes (continued)

On a lighter note, some of the more endearing incidents have involved the myriad antics of the ubiquitous hummingbird. During one of our many visits to Campbell Valley Park, we were strolling the ravine trail, looking and listening intently as we walked. An unfamiliar sound caught our attention and we were startled to see a female Varied Thrush, bill full of decayed leaf litter, clucking loudly at us for all the world like a broody hen. We had never heard a thrush call like this before. (At another location a second nesting Varied Thrush also carrying nesting material, was totally quiet so maybe this was an unique situation.) The bird was extremely nervous and, realizing that this was an uncommon nester here, we felt it prudent to move slowly away so that she would not feel threatened. However, the continuing ruckus attracted the interest of a female Rufous Hummingbird, which buzzed the poor thrush unmercifully, possibly she had a nest of her own in the thicket below.

At another Bushtit site in the same park, the pair was under heavy seige from a male Rufous Hummingbird which angrily flew at them with all the ferocity of a Mack truck. The canny Bushtit deftly distracted the feisty little hummer away from his nest whilst his partner artfully resumed her task of carrying feathers inside. It seems that the Bushtits had been unfortunate enough to build in the middle of the hummer's flower territory.

The most comical of all our hummer anecdotes happened at the nest of a Great Horned Owl. We had been tracking this particular nest for a number of weeks in the woods near our home. On the day in question, we had already located the male roosting in an adjacent Douglas fir tree and had turned our attention to the female snoozing in her nest, about forty feet up in a maple tree. A curious female hummer, unidentified due to bright sunshine, suddenly swooped down and made numerous passes over the sleeping owl, at times almost clipping her ear tufts. The audacious little bird almost had us in stitches as we watched her approach over and over again. Just as our laughter was in danger of bubbling over, the owl's head suddenly snapped up, giving the hummer a terrible fright and it hastily retreated.

I hope these tales will coax other birders to investigate the joys of the nesting season and to add their contributions to this very important data base. Studying the breeding aspect of birding can be a very fulfilling experience in itself and for those interested in submitting their nest records, I recommend that you contact **Mrs. Margaret Harris, coordinator of the BC Nest Records Scheme, PO Box 10, Penticton, BC, V2A 6J9**, for a supply of nest record cards.☪

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

Question for the Quarterly

Since our last issue we received a letter back from Tom Dillon, an educator from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. He did a "quick and dirty" search on Biosis (major biological database of journal articles) for red-eyes and towhees. He did not find anything specific to towhees but did suggest that, in other species, the eye color probably serves a function in either male competition or courtship. In Birder's Handbook pg 233 there is a paragraph on eye color and they suggest that, since eye color changes as some birds mature, so "...in some birds they may serve to help determine the maturity of potential mates." In our last issue we wanted a new name -- see suggestions on page 20, this issue. Send us your comments and/or suggestions. For this issue we do not have a topical question -- members help!!☪

Tumbler Ridge Ornithology Group

by Dr. Charles Helm
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The town of Tumbler Ridge was founded in 1981 as a part of the North-East Coal Development initiative. It lies in the centre of a vast area which previously had been virtually unsettled, little explored, and minimally "birded". With the advent of mining, forestry, and oil and gas exploration, access to much of the area has (unfortunately) been facilitated, although some of the mountain areas are still inaccessible except by air. Tumbler Ridge lies east of the Hart Ranges of the Rocky Mountains, in the far southern part of the Peace Country.

The area of the Peace Country surrounding Fort St. John and Dawson Creek has been quite extensively researched ornithologically, notably by Chris Siddle, who produced a number of papers in this regard. Phinney, Kinsey and Law have been surveying the Dawson Creek area annually since 1991. However, these observers seldom ventured south past Gwillim Lake or Swan Lake into our area. From the mid 1980's Steve Howard and his helpers formed the Tumbler Ridge Raptor Rehabilitation Society, and did outstanding work in this field for almost a decade, serving much of the Peace District. Steve did a lot of birding in our area and compiled an area list, but without details regarding individual sightings. I arrived in 1992 and began to help Steve until he moved in 1993. It took the arrival of Nigel Mathews (an experienced and fanatical birder) as a locum tenens physician to galvanize other birders in our town, such as Jackie Clance, into action. Nigel's infectious enthusiasm soon led to the formation of TROG (Tumbler Ridge Ornithology Group). What we lack in numbers and time we make up for in enthusiasm!

We have a number of current projects which include:

- the creation of the Tumbler Ridge Bird Sanctuary, on the outskirts of our town. Through it runs a four km hiking trail through a variety of habitats to Tumbler Point. Fine views of river and mountain complement the good forest birding. To date its checklist boasts 75 species. The trail is appropriately signed. Pamphlets & checklist are available at the trailhead.
- the annual survey of five lakes for the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey.
- participation in Project Feederwatch commencing this winter.
- the final construction of a bluebird trail by the spring of 1996.
- the rehabilitation of small birds, and provision of a halfway house function for rehabilitating bigger birds.
- promotion of an interest in birding by conducting guided trips through the Bird Sanctuary for youth groups and, in 1996, we will offer a Bird Identification and Appreciation Course through the Northern Lights College.
- if time permits, we would be keen to meet and escort visiting birders.
- perhaps most important, we are slowly but surely accumulating a database of bird sightings for our area. By using the Wildlife Observation System program (WLD), we regularly send David Pearce our data, so that it may enter the provincial data base. Our "locations" are in fact 1:50000 maps, which eases data entry and conforms to the pattern of the Birds of British Columbia. To give an idea of the size of our area, it covers twelve of these maps! Our bird list for this whole area stands at 156 species for 1993-1995. Steve Howard's list includes an additional 22 species, for a recorded total of 178 species.

Although our bird numbers cannot compare with the prairies to the north and east, our region has a number of interesting ornithological features. This is often where east and west meet; where, for example, Townsend's Warblers and Ovenbirds are found in the same patch of forest. We have an interesting mix of habitat including lots of accessible alpine areas which lend themselves to hiking. In August we have found Baird's Sandpipers up in these alpine areas.

Tumbler Ridge Ornithology Group (continued)

Some of the secluded lakes support breeding Trumpeter Swans. A large slough a few kilometres out of town has a small platform to facilitate the use of a tripod -- in spring this is a very good location for waterfowl. A visit to the Bullmoose Marshes, 25 km out on the road to Chetwynd, can yield many species in a short while. The Winter Wren finds a niche in some of our moist canyons. It is our emblem, largely for its scientific name: Troglodytes troglodytes!

The spectacle of Kinuseo Falls and the beauty of Monkman Park are quite well known. The greater Tumbler Ridge area holds many other fascinating natural wonders, and sees comparatively few tourists. A visit to this region will leave no one disappointed. TROG can be contacted through the Travel Infocentre, or directly through Charles Helm at (604) 242-3984.♣

And Lady Luck Smiled Down...

by Don Wilson
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The 1995 BC Field Ornithologist's AGM will be remembered by a few members for more than the excellent field trips, papers, AGM facilities & accommodations. Except for Sunday's hawk watchers, we all enjoyed the weather -- David Allinson, you deserved better after the presentation of such a good paper on Saturday.

Sunday's overcast skies actually made viewing from the MV Coho easier on the pelagic trip, although slightly stronger breezes would have ensured a few more "pelagic" species were airborne. As we cleared Victoria Harbour, Kelowna's Gwynneth Wilson spotted two Parasitic Jaegers flying southwest towards Washington State. An omen of better things to come? Sabine's Gull, Cassin's Auklet and Sooty Shearwater were among the other good species seen on our two crossings.

All too quickly our "mini-pelagic" trip was over and final packing for home was done. Our carload had hopes of making the 4 pm sailing from Swartz Bay but our car and four others were lucky to make the 5 pm sailing. Two of these five vehicles were literally shoehorned onto the Spirit of BC superferry. This is all by way of explaining how lucky about a dozen of us were to make the voyage across the Strait of Georgia together. A quick bite to eat and it was out to the viewing deck for the transit of Active Pass. Would we be lucky and see more jaegers? A few Bonaparte's Gulls flew by us as we entered the west end of the pass. Darn -- slack tides and nary a bird to be seen. One more chance at the eastern gap. A dozen pairs of eyes strained hard through binoculars. Some of us were aware of the amused stares aimed our way by other passengers.

"There", someone shouted! A large flock of Bonaparte's feeding -- and "Look, JAEGERS!" -- two of them, but far away and hard to tell which species. As if by command one of them broke from a harassing run and flew towards the ferry -- so close the tail extensions were clearly seen as was the diffuse barring on the upper flank. Deep, powerful wingstrokes -- consensus a Pomarine Jaeger. Wow! The group of us were so excited that one or two of us were seen explaining our very odd behaviour to other passengers sharing the railing. Our Pomarine banked and headed for another group of Bonaparte's, now far to our starboard aft. Eyes again scanned the waters of Georgia Strait and the sky above. Any more surprises, I wondered? Not two minutes later Brian Self was, if you will pardon me, beside himself as he screamed, "Another %*!# Jaeger!!" Eyes followed his pointed finger up and to the left to a more buoyantly flying bird. Passing less than ten meters above and in front of us, its long streamers clearly visible, was a Long-tailed Jaeger. More excitement and more explanations to the non-birders present. I wondered what stories they told friends and family later that evening?

I am not sure about the others but I was still "wired" at 11:30 pm as I neared Kelowna driving down the home stretch of the connector. You see, I had just viewed three life birds this weekend and all three were Jaegers. Wow, three life Jaegers in one day in southern BC! What are the odds? And to think that six of the fourteen birders were three cars away from NOT making that 5 pm sailing. I was one of the six. Wow!♣

B.C. Christmas Bird Count Details, 1995/96

This listing of Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) is published as a service to BCFO members who would like to take part in CBCs in their local area or in nearby areas. It includes counts with the name and telephone number of the organizer(s) and the scheduled date. A **DNA** indicates that the contact person is correct but **Date Not Available** at press time. We include two CBC dates from Washington State. Data were accurate as known to the EDITORS on **November 20, 1995**. Check with the area organizers for any late-breaking changes. **NOTE: Wells Gray Park** CBC MAY NOT happen this year but there will be a CBC in Clearwater* on December 16, 1995.**

Best of luck to everyone during the 1995/96 Christmas Bird Counts!

LOCALITY	DATE	ORGANIZER(S)	PHONE NO.
Bamfield	Dec 30	Alan Burger	479-2446
Bowen Island	Jan 1, 96	Allan Shatwell	947-2133
Broughton Strait	DNA	Bob Waldon	974-2281
Castlegar/Trail (WKN)	Jan 6, 96	Madge Hollington	365-2381
Chilliwack	Dec 16	Annabelle Rempel	823-6549
Clearwater*	Dec 16	Helen Knight	587-6532
Comox	Dec 17	Barbara Sedgwick	335-0064
Cranbrook	Dec 26	Greg Ross	489-2566
Creston	Dec 29	Bob Purdy	428-3554
Deep Bay	Dec 28	Barbara Sedgwick	335-0064
Duncan	Dec 30	Derrick Marven	748-8504
Fauquier	DNA	Ruth Bumpus	269-7481
Fort St. James	Dec 30	Joanne Vinnedge	996-7357
Galiano Island	Dec 30	Mike Hoebel	539-2003 (H)
		or	652-0396 (H)
Golden	Dec 27	Ellen Zimmerman	348-2225
Kamloops	Dec 17	Rick Howie	578-7542
Kelowna	Dec 16	Don Wilson	763-8036
Kimberley	Dec 30	Mildred White	427-3605
Kitimat	Dec 16	Dennis Horwood	632-2004
Ladner	Dec 23	Jude Grass	520-3706
Lake Windermere District	Dec 26	Larry Halverson	342-3305
Masset	Dec 17	Peter Hamel	626-3585
MacKenzie	Dec 16	Derek Connelly	997-4001
Mayne Island	DNA	Michael Dunne	946-8546 (W)
Nakusp	DNA	Sue McLean	265-3551
Nanaimo	Dec 17	Peter Van Kerkoerle	245-2530
Nelson	Jan 6, 96	Linda van Damme	354-1182
Oliver-Osoyoos	Dec 31	Syd Cannings	721-0338
		or Joan King	495-6907
Parksville-Qualicum	Dec 16	Keith Fortune	752-1285
Pender Harbour	Dec 20	Tony Greenfield	885-5539
Pender Islands	Dec 30	Mary Roddick	629-3308
Penticton	Dec 30	Steve Cannings	492-2303
		or Dick Cannings	496-4019
Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge	Dec 30	Kees van den Berg	463-8743
Port Alberni	Dec 17	Sandy McRuer	723-5436
Port Clements	DNA	Peter Hamel	626-3585
Prince George	Dec 17	Nancy Krueger	563-7896
Prince Rupert	DNA	Robin Weber	627-1129 (H)
		or	624-3207 (W)
Princeton	Dec 16	Madelon Schouten	295-7078
Quesnel	Dec 31	Adam Moss	747-3455
Revelstoke	Dec 16	George Winingder	837-3655
Rose Spit	DNA	Peter Hamel	626-3585
Salmon Arm	Dec 17	Frank Kime	835-8537

Saltspring Island	Dec 10	Glen Moores	537-4306
Shuswap Lake	Dec 16	Rick Howie	578-7542
Skidegate Inlet	Dec 16	Peter Hamel	626-3585
Smithers	Dec 30	Rosamund Pojar	847-9784
Sooke	Dec 23	Michael Shepard	380-9195
Squamish	Dec 16	Jim Wisnia	898-2000
Sunshine Coast	Dec 16	Tony Greenfield	885-5539
Terrace	Dec 26	Diane Weismiller	635-6984
Vancouver	Dec 17	George Clulow	438-7639
Vaseux Lake	Dec 23	Dick Cannings	496-4019
		or Steve Cannings	492-2303
Vernon	Dec 17	Mary Collins	542-5673
		or Chris Siddle	542-1034
Victoria	Dec 16	David Pearce	658-0295
Wells Gray Park**	Dec 30	Trevor Goward	674-2553
Whistler	Dec 23	Max Gotz	932-7247
White Rock and Surrey	Dec 30	Hue MacKenzie	538-1676
Williams Lake	Dec 16	Anna Roberts	392-5000

WASHINGTON STATE BORDER AREAS

LOCALITY	DATE	ORGANIZER(S)	PHONE NO.
Bellingham	Dec 17	Terry Wahl	(360) 733-8255
San Juan Ferry (Anacortes to Victoria)♠	Dec 20	Jim Duemmel	(360) 733-3448

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

Bruce Bennett

Since April 1993 Bruce has been employed as a Forest Bird & Plant Community Technician for the CWS, initially located in Delta but with relocation to Whitehorse in April 1995. His widespread interests include botany, birding, natural and human history.

Dave Guild

Although born in Ontario, Dave has lived in BC since he was a student in grade eleven. He is now retired and has been an avid birder for the past several years.

Charles Helm

Charles, a family physician practising in Tumbler Ridge, is president of TROG. Before arriving in Canada from South Africa in 1986, Charles had been observing birds since his early teens. Much of what little free time he does have now, he likes to spend birding with his family.

Mark Phinney

A wildlife biologist based in Prince George, Mark has conducted bird research in the Dawson Creek area since moving from New Brunswick to British Columbia in 1991. He has been watching birds since the age of eleven, and credits his grandmother with getting him started.

Prue Spitmann

Prue first became interested in birds and their nests as a child growing up in southwestern England and some of her happiest memories are of exploring the countryside when visiting her "country cousins". Prue and husband Bernie are avid birders and they greatly enjoy birding as often as they can find an excuse.

Don Wilson

A retired high school Biology teacher, Don is president of Central Okanagan Naturalist's Club and is co-leader of CONC's birder group. Currently working for Cedar Creek Estate Winery, he has done bird surveys during the last three seasons in both Prince George and Kelowna.♠

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

From Jack Williams:

Enclosed please find my submission for "What should we call the Newsletter?". I suggest Birding Country NEWS as I have printed. The B and C standing, of course, for British Columbia must be very much larger than the rest. This gives you the location (BC), the occupation (birding), and the "country" denotes that we are Field Ornithologists.

Birding Country NEWS

From Prue Spitman:

In the September issue of the Newsletter, you requested suggestions for a new name for your marvellous little quarterly. The following are a few of my ideas:

FIELD NOTES

THE FIELD BIRDER

THE CHAT

BIRD CHAT

ON THE WING

BIRDLINK

BOBOLINK

THE FLYWAY

FIELD FARE

I personally like "FIELD FARE" best and, while I know the "Fieldfare" is hardly a regular bird of these parts, one can always hope!!!

[Editors' Note: Thank you both for your creative suggestions. We offer the names to the members and will pass the letters and members' feedback on to the Directors.]

From Martin McNicholl [a trustee of the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund]:

Do you have plans for an individual or club project on birds that needs extra funding? The *James L. Baillie Memorial Fund* may be able to help.

The Fund offers two types of grants: (1) for projects that involve research or education or that contribute to the preservation of Canadian birds; and (2) for a special 5-year program (1993-1997) to initiate and support migration monitoring stations (bird observatories) that monitor Canadian birds during the migrations. The Fund supports projects that involve volunteers in education, research or data collection. Support of graduate student research projects is not a priority. Individuals or organizations can apply. Grants range from \$200 to \$3,000 and average about \$1000. Next deadline for applications is **27 January 1996**.

For more information and application write to:

David J.T. Hussell, Secretary, James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, Canadian Centre for the Study and Preservation of Birds, PO Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0. Telephone (519) 586-3531.

From Mr & Mrs G J Harris [White Rock and Surrey Naturalists' Society]:

To commemorate the enormous contribution made by one of our long-time members, the late Dr Barry Leach, to wildlife preservation & habitat protection, the members of the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists' Society approved, at the General Meeting of September 7th, 1995, the setting up of a memorial fund. Since that meeting *The Barry Leach Memorial Fund* has been established as a separate account to be administered by two trustees from our club. The trustees are John Harris, Past President and Tom Bates, Treasurer.

Donations are being sought from our own club members, from members of like-minded organizations in our area and from the public at large. Any amount will be welcomed, large or small, and receipts for income tax purposes will be issued if required. Cheques should be made payable to: The Barry Leach Memorial Fund. Mail donations to: White Rock & Surrey Naturalists' Society, Box 75044, White Rock, BC V4A 9M4. [Please contact WR&SN Society for further information. EDS]◄