

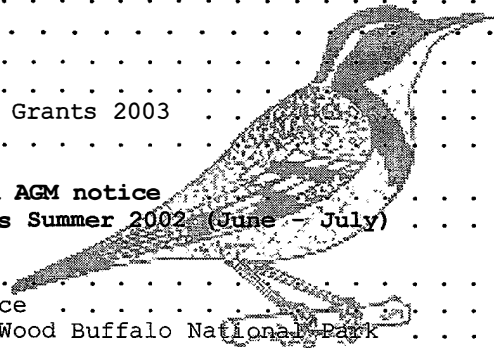
BC BIRDING

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NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
Volume 12 Number 4
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Check Out BCFO Website at <http://www.birding.bc.ca/bcfo>. Site courtesy of Kevin Slagboom.

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A subscription to this quarterly is a benefit
of membership in the society.
Members will also receive a copy of the annual
journal, **British Columbia Birds**.

Membership in BCFO is open to anyone interested
in the study and 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.

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Memberships are for the calendar year.

For further information, or to join, write to:

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P.O. Box 8059
Victoria, BC V8W 3R7

Send material for publication in any format to
the editors. We especially welcome bird-
finding information for our "Site Guide"
series and any articles about birding
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 & December issues.**

Advertising rates available upon request.

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We hope everyone is ready to participate in one or more CBCs somewhere in BC. This is the issue which gives as many contacts and dates as we could determine before publication date. This is also the issue which asks you to reflect on your lists of birds observed and to send those numbers to Ken as soon after January 1, 2003 as you can.

A new column, requested by a BCFO member, and provided courtesy of Don Cecile, debuts in this issue - British Columbia Bird Sightings, Summer 2002. We hope you find it useful and our thanks to Don and those who made it happen.

And speaking of things new - do check out Chris' new Birding Tour Company, Avocet Tours, which appears in this issue. We would tell you the page but we want you to read through the issue!

John has ventured just outside of our province and he tells us about a great birding trip; there is some information on the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund grants; there are several notes and notices about the next BCFO Annual Conference and AGM which is to be held in Radium Hot Springs next June; Russ will be giving a 'digiscoping' workshop on the Friday afternoon so register and arrive early; three members got their heads together to write up the BCFO 2002 pelagic trip; Geoff sent us in a sighting from the Kettle Valley; Ivar sent us in a lot of sightings from the Canal Flats area but everyone will have to wait until March to see them as we have filled up 24 pages; Dannie wrote the Director's Corner for this issue plus a book review; and both Jo Ann and Martin provided their regular column reports. It takes a number of people contributing a variety of material to get our newsletter together - thank you to all who have contributed - and we ask all of those who have been somewhat shy in the past to please think about contributing.

Received too late to edit the notice into the newsletter but here are a few lines and a contact for **Birds on the Bay**: "We have been working hard here on an Important Bird Area project to raise awareness about the Fraser Est. as an IBA and why it is so. We are focusing our display and events on the Boundary Bay and its watershed." A full program of events for all ages and interest levels are planned for January 23-May 4, 2003. **Contact the White Rock Museum & Archives, 604-541-2222, for event schedule details** and watch for announcements in your local paper. **Registration is required** for presentations and field trips. - Best regards, Marg Cuthbert.

This is the last newsletter of 2002. May we take this opportunity to wish you, one and all, a new year full of hope, love, peace and lots of 'lifers'. Andy and Marilyn

FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, the BAD news: Andy and Marilyn Buhler, our steadfast newsletter editors for more than 10 years, will retire in the spring. At the Annual General Meeting in Dawson Creek in 2001, they issued fair and generous warning of their wish to step down. They gave us another year's grace – year 11. Now, well into the second year of grace – year 12 – it's "crunch time". Andy and Marilyn are producing this issue, and are willing to do one more – then, they will step down. Unless someone, or more than one person, comes forward, there will be no more newsletters. That would be a very unwelcome situation. Far better to have a new editor (or editors) come forward now, when the Buhlers are still available and willing to assist the new editor in getting started in the role. Surely, there is someone among our talented membership willing to rise to the challenge! I sincerely hope that he, she, or they, will contact me or the Buhlers, as soon as possible, and volunteer to carry on in producing our newsletter.

Now, the GOOD news: I am pleased to say that BCFO will benefit from the experience of two of our members. Krista De Groot (Vancouver) has accepted a directorship, bringing our Board of Directors to its full complement of nine. Krista is Coordinator for the BC and Yukon Region of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. I am further pleased to welcome Rita Wege (Nelson) as our new Membership Chairperson. Rita is also Treasurer and Membership Secretary of the Nelson Naturalists.

The Pelagic 2002 trip in September, out of Port McNeill on Vancouver Island, was very successful. The M. V. "Naiad Explorer" carried 36 participants 75 nautical miles off Cape Scott, to the vicinity of Triangle Island. This is very much an under-explored area of our province. An account of the trip and a list of species seen is included in this issue of the newsletter. Tentative plans are being made for another trip in 2003.

Work continues on bringing the journal, *British Columbia Birds*, up to date. At the time of writing (early November) editor Martin McNicholl expects that Volumes #9, #10 and #11 will be out by the end of March.

Mark the weekend of June 20-22, 2003 on your calendar, for our 13th Annual Conference, to be held in Radium Hot Springs. There will be an interesting line-up of field trips and speakers. Watch for more details in the March issue of *BC BIRDING*.

The winter weather that grips most of this province does not have to mean the seasonal end of birding and bird study. Passerines that are still in our area should be easier to see when there are no leaves on deciduous trees and shrubs. The less experienced observers among us, working on sharpening I.D. skills, might find the task a little easier at this time of year. Those of us participating in volunteer activities such as the B.C. Coastal Waterbird Survey, the Beached Bird Survey and other on-going endeavors, will continue through the winter. Project Feeder Watch will appeal to some. Birders with various skill levels will enjoy participating in Christmas Bird Counts. While we all cope with diminished hours of daylight, we can still make the most of our birding time.

Best wishes and Season's Greetings to all!

Jo Ann MacKenzie
President



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Dannie Carsen

This report covers the August 25, 2002 and September 28, 2002 meetings of the BCFO board. Changes include membership, where we welcome Rita Wege from Nelson. Rita gave us her suggestions during lengthy discussions on improving the membership sign up process at the last board meeting. We thank Russ Tkachuk for all his efforts in his years of work on society membership. Krista De Groot has been confirmed as our ninth director. Krista has been involved in the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture, a bird conservation initiative within south and central interior BC and the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. Some exciting news from the last two meetings include:

- Martin McNicholl reports that progress on Volume 9 of the journal is good and we expect it go to the printers by the end of 2002.
- Much of the September meeting was devoted to planning our Annual Conference 2003 and it has been confirmed for June 20-22, 2003 in Radium/Invermere (see details in this issue).
- Board members had a lengthy discussion on ways and means of improving access to bird records in B.C. The process of getting a bird records committee reconvened depends to some extent on resolving current concerns about where bird records should reside and how access is to be given.
- We are still looking for a Newsletter Editor to take over from the Buhlers, who appear to be irreplaceable! The board is open to your suggestions.
- The Board voted to provide a one-time grant of \$800 to the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory for the purchase of banding equipment.
- Meeting of September 28, 2002 was at Dick Canning's home in Naramata. Dick led an early visit to the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory (VLBO) that was a real pleasure. The VLBO is a most worthwhile venture and the board was happy to assist in providing point information for the North American banding scheme. While some of the board helped with banding, the remainder checked the nets and did a bird census around the north end of Vaseux Lake and up the dyke that follows the Okanagan River. After a rewarding morning at the VLBO, we all migrated to Dick's house, which is perched right on a cool, birdy ravine. Inside, we discussed BCFO matters and had a quick and tasty lunch hosted by Dick on his spacious back verandah overlooking the ravine.
- The Board agreed to co-sponsor with Bird Studies Canada an annual workshop on volunteer-based birding programs.

Everyone agreed that Wayne Weber's suggestion of including a 'Seasonal Summary of Noteworthy Bird Sightings' in BC BIRDING was a great idea! Dick Cannings contacted Don Cecile who agreed to provide what he submits to North American Birds. Please look in this issue* for a B.C. summary.

EDITORS NOTES: * See pages 9-10 of this issue.



SOCIETY NEWS
UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

- Jan. 21-25 2003** **NINTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP**, Sacramento, CA. Contact: Scott G. Hereford, phone (228) 497-6322, extension 28.
- Feb. 5-8 2003** **NINETEENTH TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE**, Richmond, B.C. Contact: Trumpeter Swan Society, 3800 County Road 24, Maple Plain, MN 55359, USA, phone (763) 476-4663.
- March 19-21 2003** **2003 INTERNATIONAL CANADA GOOSE SYMPOSIUM**, Madison, WI. Contact: Ricky Lien, phone (920) 892-8756, extension 3045.
- March 19-23 2003** **WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S 84th ANNUAL MEETING and ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' ANNUAL MEETING**, Delaware, OH. Contact: Edward (Jed) H. Burt, Jr. Department of Zoology, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, OH 43015-2398; phone (614) 368-3886.
- March 27-30 2003** **HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA 2003 CONFERENCE**, Corpus Christi, Texas. Contact: Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi, Box 3352, Corpus Christi, TX 78463.
- Apr. 30 -**
May 3 2003 **COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING, Flagstaff, AZ.** contact: Mark K. Sogge, Colorado Field Station, Box 5614, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011; phone (928) 556-7466, extension 232.
- May 18-25 2003** **VIth WORLD CONFERENCE ON BIRDS OF PREY AND OWLS**, Budapest, Hungary. Contact: WWGBP, Box 52, Towcester NN12 7ZW, England; phone/fax ++44-1604-86 23 31.
- June 20-22 2003** **13th BCFO ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM** will be held in Radium Hot Springs. Contacts: Larry Halverson, Ev Miyasaki, Hank VanderPol. See additional notices within this issue.
- July 30-**
Aug. 3 2003 **5th BIENNIAL HUMMINGBIRD RESEARCH GROUP CONFERENCE**, Weldon, California. Contact: Donald Mitchell, phone (715) 381-9685.




BC BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

- Status of Xantus's Murrelet** -During April 2002, the Pacific Seabird Group petitioned the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to classify Xantus's Murrelet as Threatened in the U.S.A. after a review started by PSG in 1992. -based on Anonymous. 2002. *Ornithological Newsletter* 149:3.
- Solecki Awarded** -The efforts of Daphne Solecki on behalf of nature conservation and nature education, including several bird-specific projects, have been recognized previously in awards from both the Vancouver Natural History Society and the Federation of BC Naturalists. More recently, her contributions have been recognized nationally through one of nine Canada-wide Volunteer Awards by the Canadian Nature Federation. -based primarily on Anonymous. 2002. *Vancouver Nat.* 4(3):3 and Anonymous. 2002. *Grass 'n Roots* Sept. 2000:4.
- Eric MacBean** -Prominent lower mainland birder Dr. W. Eric MacBean passed away on 29 August 2002. Brian G. Self, current Chair of the Vancouver Natural History Society's Birding Section, described him as having "a dry wit and keen sense of humour. His inability to stand still for two or three minutes at once, always gave one the impression of a small human dynamo hurrying about its business." Dr. MacBean

donated copies of several photographs to the *B.C. Birds* photofile, some of which are scheduled for publication in volume 9, "1999." -based partly on e-mail written by Brian Self and sent to various Vancouver-area birders and ornithologists by Larry Cowan, with thanks to Andy & Marilyn Buhler for forwarding a copy sent to them by Russ Tkachuk.

Wilson's Snipe Restored -In their latest (43rd) check-list supplement, the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union (*Auk* 119:897-906, 2002) has split North American populations of Common Snipe into a separate species, now known as Wilson's Snipe, *Capella delicata*, restoring the name those of us over a certain vintage first knew it by! The only other change affecting a species of regular British Columbia occurrence is a shift in the scientific name of Red Phalarope from *Phalaropus fulicaria* to *Phalaropus fulicarius*. Changes to species that do not normally occur in B.C. but have strayed here include the division of White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica* into White-winged and Pacific (*Zenaida meloda*) doves and the merging of Blue Grosbeak from the monotypic *Guiraca* into the genus *Passerina* (which includes Lazuli, Indigo and a few other buntings). Readers who have seen redpolls in the British Isles or central Europe may also be able to add a species to their life lists as the former subspecies of Common Redpoll, *Carduelis flammea cabaret* has been elevated to a full species, Lesser Redpoll.

Okanagan Bluebirder Awarded -During the 2002 annual convention of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) in Osoyoos, B.C., Sherry Linn, President and newsletter editor of the Southern Interior Bluebird Society, was one of five individual recipients of 2002 NABS awards. -based on Anonymous. 2002. *Bluebird* 24(4):18-19. 

James L. Baillie Memorial Fund Grants 2003

Since 1978, the Baillie Fund has awarded more than \$416,000 to some 424 bird research and conservation projects. All projects must be about Canadian birds and take place either in Canada or on the wintering grounds or migration routes of Canadian birds. Priority is given to projects that enable enthusiastic amateurs and volunteers to put their interest to work to support conservation or increase knowledge of birds.

There are two types of grants: (1) Regular grants for projects that involve research or education or that contribute to preservation of Canadian birds; and (2) Migration Monitoring Grants, a special 5-year program (1999-2003) supports migration monitoring stations that monitor Canadian landbirds during their migrations. Individuals and organizations are both eligible for support. Most grants have ranged between \$200 and \$3000 and they average about \$1000. Grants are awarded annually, but multi-year support will be considered.

Applications are now available in PDF format on our website, at www.bsc-eoc.org/ilbmf.html. It is important that the current version of the application forms be used. Requests for additional information should be directed to: **Secretary, James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, Bird Studies Canada / Études d'Oiseaux Canada, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0. Telephone 519-586-3531 ext. 217; Fax: 519-586-3532; Email: jwilson@bsc-eoc.org**. Completed forms must be returned to the Secretary by **3 January 2003**. Faxed applications are not acceptable. Applicants will be informed about grant decisions in late April 2003.

Support of graduate student research is not a priority for the Baillie Fund, unless the research clearly involves substantial numbers of volunteers in data collection or other aspects of the project. However, the Fund does provide the James L. Baillie Student Research Award, which is administered by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO). **The deadline for this award is 30 January 2003**. For information on this and other SCO awards, students should write to **Dr. Kevin Teather, Chair, SCO Student Awards Committee, Department of Biology, University of P.E.I., Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 4P3. (Telephone 902-566-0325, Email: kteather@Upei.CA)**.

Money to fund grants awarded by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund is raised primarily by individuals and clubs who participate in the Bird Studies Canada annual Baillie Birdathon. By taking part in the Birdathon, they support the Fund and raise money for their own club projects. For more information on how to take part in this exciting fund-raising idea, please contact **Wendy Cridland, Bird Studies Canada/Études d'Oiseaux Canada, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario, N0E 1M0. (Telephone: 519-586-3531 ext. 201; Fax: 519-586-3532; Email: wcridland@bsc-eoc.org**

Recent projects supported by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund

2002

1. Linking events of the annual cycle in a long-distance migratory bird using stable-carbon isotopes. Ryan Norris, Queen's University. (Student Award for Field Research)
2. Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Travel Grants; Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, ON
3. Monitoring of Neotropical Migrant and Resident birds in the Venezuelan Andes; La Mucuy Bird Observatory, Sierra Nevada National Park, Venezuela
4. Telecommunication Towers Impacts on Migrant Birds along the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River, QC; Explos Nature, QC
5. Roost Site Selection by Swainson's Hawks in its Wintering Grounds in Argentina; José Hernán Sarasola, Argentina
6. Census and Sounds 2002: Manx Shearwater Banding & Leach's Storm Petrel Census in Newfoundland; The Alder Institute, NF
7. Cape Breton Nocturnal Owl Survey; Susann Myers, NS
8. Demography of the American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) Population at Churchill Manitoba: The Third Year of the Study; Joanna Klima, MB
9. The Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program; Nova Scotia Bird Society, NS
10. The PEI Piping Plover Guardian Program; The Island Nature Trust, PEI
11. The Extent of the Partial 1st Pre-basic Molt (with special attention to the carpal covert and its usefulness as an ageing criterion) in North American Passerines and Near Passerines; Miguel Demuelemeester, Belgium
12. St. Walburg Bird Study (In Progress); Muriel Carlson, SK
13. **Osprey Nest Monitoring in the West Kootenay; Nelson Naturalists, BC**
14. Seal Island and Bon Portage Island Migration Monitoring Stations; Atlantic Bird Observatory, NS
15. **Mackenzie (Mugaha Marsh) Nature Observatory; Mackenzie Nature Observatory, BC**
16. Cabot Head Research Station; Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory, ON
17. **Rocky Point Bird Observatory; Rocky Point Bird Observatory, BC**
18. Selkirk Park, Ruthven Park and Rock Point Park Migration Monitoring Stations; Haldimand Bird Observatory, ON
19. St. Andrews Banding Station; Tracey Dean, NB
20. Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory; Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, ON
21. Point Lepreau Bird Observatory 2002 Seabird Migration Monitoring; Saint John Naturalists' Club, NB
22. Tadoussac Bird Observatory; Explos Nature, QC



GUIDELINES FOR SITE GUIDES

Site Guides should be about two to three 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.



**British Columbia Field Ornithologists
Thirteenth Annual Conference
June 20-22, 2003**

The **Thirteenth Annual Conference** will be held at the **Radium Resort**
in **Radium Hot Springs, B.C.** on the weekend of June 20-22, 2003.

Events:

Reception on Friday evening
Birding field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings
Annual general meeting and technical presentations on Saturday afternoon
Banquet on Saturday evening

Transportation & Accommodation:

Transportation and accommodation are up to the individual(s) to arrange.
Accommodation information and the conference registration form will be provided in the March issue of the newsletter.

Registration:

The Conference fees are:

Conference only (includes all events except banquet)	\$30
Banquet only	\$25
Conference and banquet	\$55

Attendance is limited to BCFO members and spouses/family members. You may join BCFO at the same time as you register for the Conference. Please refer to the front page of this issue for membership fees.

Extension trip:

An extension trip following the Conference is being organized. Details and registration information will be provided in the March issue of the newsletter.

For information contact: Hank VanderPol (250) 979-0363 email: rhvander@shaw.ca
Ev Miyasaki (250) 656-8066 email: emiyasaki@shaw.ca

Registration forms will be provided in the March 2003 issue of BC BIRDING

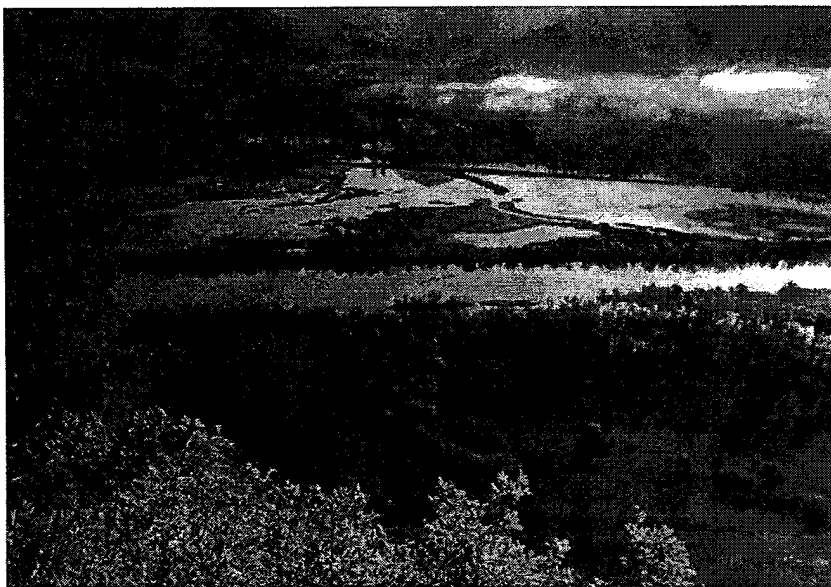


Photo taken in the Columbia Valley by Larry Halverson.

The **BCFO 2003 Annual Conference and AGM** will be held at Radium Hot Springs on the weekend of 20-22 June 2003.

See page 16 for another photo and see page 24 for information about this diverse and birdy area.

British Columbia Bird Sightings**Summer 2002 (June-July)**

by Donald G. Cecile
 7995 Wilson-Jackson Road
 Vernon, BC V1B 3N5
 (dcecile@sd22.bc.ca)

Abbreviations:

Chichester (Chichester Bird Sanctuary, Kelowna), C.I.P. (Cottonwood Island Park, Prince George), F.F.T.W. (Forests for the World, Prince George), m.obs. (many observers).

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

An out of season Horned Grebe in alternate plumage was at Victoria 9 Jul (PL et. al.). An Eared Grebe colony that is not often successful produced 101 nests at Rawlings L., Lumby 8 Jul (GSD). Another colony on Rock L., Becher Prairie, contained 549 nests (RWC, LVD). American White Pelicans were reported on several occasions at Swan L. six were present 4 Jun, 30 on 15 Jun and four on 12 Jul (*fide* MC). These birds are likely wanderers from prairie breeding colonies where drought conditions persisted. Double-crested Cormorants, away from the coast, included an immature at Waneta Dam in the West Kootenays 25 Jul (GN). Williams L. was host to a Great Egret 1-5 Jun (PR), the only report received this season. It's smaller cousin, Snowy Egret, was in Saanich 3-9 Jun (EP, m.obs.) for one of only a handful of Vancouver I. records. A very late White-fronted Goose was near Tofino 28 Jun, 2 and 4 Jul (AD). A Wood Duck was well out of place at Lightning L., Manning P.P. 6 Jul (PL et. al.). Rare in the s. interior, a Harlequin Duck was at Okanagan Falls 4 Jul (CC, m.obs.). A Long-tailed Duck was very late at T'Kumlups Marsh, Kamloops 11 Jun (WCW). There were a few late Rough-legged Hawks in the south this spring, by far the latest was a weak individual that died 12 Jul at Little Fort (*fide* RH). A Northern Goshawk survey on Vancouver I. discovered eight active nests in the Nimpkish drainage (*fide* MGS). A new Yellow Rail location was discovered when three were heard n.e. of Chetwynd 10 and 23 Jun (LL, SK), there are only three known locations in the province. The west coast of Vancouver I. had its second breeding record of Sora Rail, from the same location as the first, along the lower Kennedy R. 28 Jul (MB, DB).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS

The Province's first nesting of Black-necked Stilts proved to be a success 21 Jul (DW) when a fledgling was observed then 22 Jul four fledglings were seen [T'Kumlups Marsh] (WCW). A pair of American Avocets that were first reported in May near Dawson Cr. were seen again 14 Jun (LL, SK) with one bird sitting on a nest. Unfortunately, their nest was subsequently ploughed under since the farmer was unaware of it. Other avocets at the Fort St. John lagoons may have been more successful where an observer was dive-bombed and scolded by a pair 9 Jul (DW), and if confirmed, would represent the first nesting for the Peace River area. Whimbrels are very rare in the interior and the ad. found in Vernon furnished the fourth record for the Okanagan 31 Jul (CS, CM). Very rare along the south coast, a **Bar-tailed Godwit** was in Tsawwassen 12 Jun (RS). Marbled Godwits were either very late or very early at Long Beach near Tofino 27 Jun, 22-23 Jul (AD). Wilson's Phalaropes are rarely encountered on the west coast, two were present in Tofino 9 Jun (AD). Breeding was discovered at Alex L. in the Chilcotin 4 Jul (GSD, CS) where there are few breeding records. Pelagic trips out of Tofino produced South Polar Skuas on two occasions: two on 21 Jun, and a single 16 Jul (AD).

Mew Gulls are rare in the interior but particularly so during the summer months such as the one found at Robert L., Kelowna 22 Jul (CC).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Rarely encountered south of the c. interior, single Alder Flycatchers were noted at: Pitt Meadows, 29 May - 15 Jun (TP et. al.); near Merritt 2 Jul (WCW) and two singing

males near Edgewood 16 Jun (GSD). A Willow Flycatcher was upstream from Tahsish Inlet along the Artlish R. extending its known Vancouver I. range 21 Jul (MGS). Least Flycatchers have become scarce but regular visitors to the s. interior in recent years. Breeding was confirmed in the Okanagan when a nest was discovered along Mission Cr., Kelowna 21 Jun (CC). A few Western Kingbirds ventured well west of their range with one in Ft. St. James 17 Jun (RR) for the first time in ten years, and another was near Tofino 1 Jun-30 Jul (AC, CC) for a first summer record. Loggerhead Shrikes are very rare on the coast. An adult was discovered at Iona I. 4 Jun (RT0, MM) and furnished the first local summer record and first Vancouver record since 1989. Northern Mockingbirds are very rare in the southern interior; one was reported from Keremeos 7 Jun (ED) and another was at Kaslo 19 Jun (DR). Sage Thrashers are very rare away from the s. Okanagan; one was seen briefly at Leach L., Creston 30 Jul (MAB). Rarely encountered west of the Rockies, a Chestnut-sided Warbler was in Fort St. James 5 Jun (RR). A few Magnolia Warblers establish territories in the Kootenays but have yet to provide convincing evidence of breeding. Three singing males were at Summit L., Nakusp, 26 Jun (GSD) and another singing male near Hills 8 Jul (GSD). A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was discovered near downtown Victoria and furnished the second local record and the eighth record for the province 28 Jun (DA). A male Black-throated Gray Warbler was upstream from Tahsish Inlet along the Artlish R. 21 Jul (MGS) extending its known Vancouver I. range. A Black-and-white Warbler was a rare find at Williams L. 5 Jun (AR). Connecticut Warblers are localized breeders in the Peace R. area but confirmed nests are very rare such as the one found s.w. of Dawson Creek 14 Jun that contained five eggs by 19 Jun and by 9 Jul five young had fledged (MP). Yellow-breasted Chats are very rare on the south coast where there is one breeding record thus it was with some excitement when two birds were discovered at Pitt Meadows 4 Jun - 2 Jul (MW *et.al.*). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are very rare summer visitors to the southern interior, one was at a feeder near Rossland 26 Jul (JBe), and another was at Williams L. 3 Jun (SH). A male Black-headed Grosbeak was upstream from Tahsish Inlet along the Artlish R. where this species is not known to occur (MGS). Lazuli Buntings continued their northward and westward expansion with at least four individuals discovered on Vancouver Island. The first male arrived 1 Jul (m.obs.) and was joined by a female 2 Jul (m.obs.) on Mt. Tolmie, Victoria; by 18 Jul two males, a female and three juvs were present (RS) and furnished the first breeding record for Vancouver I. Farther north on the Island, a male was in Nanaimo in early July (m.obs.). Very rare in the province, a male Indigo Bunting was at Gang Ranch near 100 Mile House 8 Jun (TG, PR). The Province's sixth **Green-tailed Towhee** was found in Lillooet 7 Jul (HD). Lark Sparrows are rare in the Kootenays and in the North Okanagan, one was at Skookumchuck 25 Jun (GR, RG) and 2 were present near Winfield 7 Jul (TF). A Lark Sparrow that was discovered at Churn Creek 8 Jun (TG) was later found with another adult and a recent fledgling 5-7 Jul (GSD, CS), this would constitute the most northerly and westerly breeding. The Province's seventh **Chestnut-collared Longspur** was seen near Clearwater 1 Jul (CR, m.obs.), unfortunately, it was not relocated despite many attempts on subsequent days. Kelowna's **Great-tailed Grackle** was seen sporadically this summer season (m.obs.). Rare away from the Peace R. area, a Common Grackle was at Invermere 4 Jun (LC, RaH).

CONTRIBUTORS (subregional editors in bold-face):

David Allinson, Jim Bahr, Marc-André Beaucher, J. Bedoyo, Lucille Campbell, R. Wayne Campbell, Murray Clark, Alison Cookson, **Gary S. Davidson** (Kootenays), Henry Davis, **Adrian Dorst** (Tofino-Ucluelet), Eva Durance, Trevor Forder, Tom Godin, Ruth Goodwin, Randy Hopkins, Steve Howard, Sandra Kinsey, Laird Law, Paul Lehman, Colleen Marchand, Mitch Meredith, Ted Murphy-Kelly, Gwen Nichol, E. Pellizzon, **Mark Phinney** (Peace River), **Phil Ranson** (Cariboo), Randy Rawluck, Dirk Rinehart, C. Ritcey, Anna Roberts, Greg Ross, Michael G. Shepard, Chris Siddle, R. Swanston, Rick Toochin, Linda Van Damme, Wayne C. Weber, Doug Wilson, Mark Wynja.



EDITORS' NOTE: Our thanks to Jo Ann and Dick for coordinating the development of this new column and especially to Don Cecile for compiling the information and making it available to us. We hope BCFO readers will find this column both interesting and informative. Send us your feedback.

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

Sandra Kinsey

An early-rising birder and a BCFO director, Sandra enjoys birding those underbirded areas and is not adverse to doing a bit of 'bush-wacking' to get to them. She lives in the Prince George area.


Jo Ann MacKenzie

Jo Ann has been an avid birder for over 25 years. She and husband Hue moved to the Lower Mainland from Ontario in 1983. Jo Ann teaches birding classes for the White Rock & Surrey Naturalists, and has participated in the Beached Bird Survey since 1987. Jo Ann enjoys birding anywhere, anytime!

John Neville

John is a Nature Recordist currently working on a CD called 'Bird Songs of the Boreal Plain'. His web page is : www.nevillerecording.com

Andy Stepniewski

A recent recruit to BCFO from near Yakima Washington, Andy, a self-professed 'avid naturalist', was actually born and educated in Canada. After graduation from UBC he was the Parks Naturalist for some years at Garibaldi and Mount Robson Parks. 

BCFO Digiscoping Workshop

A digiscoping workshop will be held during Friday afternoon, 20 June 2003, prior to the Thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the B.C. Field Ornithologists, at the Radium Resort in Radium Hot Springs, BC.

Digiscoping is a recent revolutionary advance in bird photography, where pictures are taken with a digital camera coupled to a bird-spotting telescope. The telescope 30-60x magnifications coupled with a camera 4x optical magnification can result in a '35 mm equivalent' focal length of up to 7000 mm; which is equivalent to images magnified to approximately 12x relative to a 35 mm camera equipped with a 600 mm telephoto lens. Digiscoping will prove to be extremely useful to birders, both as a method for obtaining high quality bird pictures and identification evidence.

The advantage of digiscoping over traditional photography is the acquirement of outstanding pictures and the instant viewing of them, by using available, lightweight equipment. However, digiscoping of distant objects is also very challenging, and the purpose of this workshop is to enable one to use this technique successfully.

This workshop will provide some optical principals and technical details involved in digiscoping, and also the selection of suitable cameras, scopes and scope eyepieces. The plan is to have two lectures, an outdoor practicum with two different digiscoping setups and a display of results at the reception.

The organizers of this workshop are Russ Tkachuk and Brian Scott. Interested members please contact Russ Tkachuk (email: rtkachuk@dccnet.com ; telephone: (604) 885-8867; mail: Box 132, Roberts Creek, BC, V0N 2W0).

The attendance notification DEADLINE is 25 May 2003. The workshop fee is \$25.00. A minimum of 15 attendees is required to hold the workshop. Cancellations prior to 25 May 2003, will receive a full refund; after this date, a fee of \$10.00 will be retained. Additional workshop details will be given in the March 2003 Newsletter.

Attendees need to arrange their accommodation and travel.

Good Birding.

Impressions of Fort Smith and Wood Buffalo National Park

by John Neville
138 Castle Cross Road
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2G2

We headed north, roughly following the Athabasca River on Alberta's Highway 88. Not until we reached Fort Vermillion did we cross the mighty Peace River. It too was traveling to Wood Buffalo National Park. I have thought about visiting this park for many years and the anticipation was growing! What did I know about this large space on the map? The 44,800 square kilometers make it the largest park in North America. It is actually bigger than Switzerland!

The Peace, Athabasca, and Birch rivers form a huge freshwater delta in Lake Athabasca, within the park. The outlet to this lake is the Slave River which carries the water via Great Slave Lake on down the MacKenzie River to the Beaufort Sea. The landmass is mainly in Alberta and north of 60° in the Northwest Territories. This park is home to wood buffalo, wolves and many other mammals, over 200 species of birds, two kinds of frog and one toad. The Whooping Crane is the most famous and seriously endangered bird species. It was not until 1957 that their breeding ground was discovered in Wood Buffalo National Park. Alexander MacKenzie was the first to write about the White Pelican colony on the Slave River in 1789. There are about 400 breeding pairs each year on the islands above the rapids. It is the heart of the boreal plains and the place where parts of all four North American flyways converge. The geology and water flow in the region is also intriguing, but more about that later.

May 27, spring was arriving late and some lakes were still partially frozen. From Fort Vermillion we made our first attempt to enter the park by driving along Highway #58 towards Garden River. We stopped so often to watch and record birds that we never reached the least known entrance to the park. Two days later we took the main route from Hay River to Fort Smith. To our surprise (and the surprise of people of Hay River) it had snowed overnight! We crossed impressive rivers like the Hay and Buffalo, each flowing into Great Slave Lake. The forest gradually changed from aspens to more black and white spruce. Soon after we entered the park we saw a bull wood buffalo grazing along the verge. His hair was coming out in tufts but he was still a very imposing animal. He barely lifted his head in acknowledgment as we stopped to photograph him and continued on our way. Common Raven were huddled down in their nests as we passed under the power poles.

Our second morning allowed us to get a glimpse of the mighty Slave River Rapids. MacKenzie took a whole day to portage his canoes past them. It is the only obstacle to navigation between Lake Athabasca and the Arctic Ocean. On Parson's Lake Road, I was able to record the songs of Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Solitary* Vireo, Boreal Chickadee, and female Spruce Grouse. We watched and listened to skeins of Snow Geese flying overhead. It was another cool day but I warmed up quickly when a female black bear suddenly came around a corner following two small cubs. Three pairs of paw prints in the mud solidified the memory as we drove on. On the Pine Lake Road, we passed another grazing buffalo, much more nervous of the car, smaller and with straight horns - signifying a female. She had long shaggy hair on her forelegs (typical of northern buffalo) but otherwise resembled the bull. If this wasn't enough, a flight of Tundra Swans flew overhead, followed by Sandhill Cranes, Common Tern and Whimbrel - all heading north.

At dawn on June 1st, we stopped at the Lookout over the Salt Plains. Salt is eroded from ancient deposits and flushed to the surface where it lies in a thick white crust. Special plants such as red samphire and sea-blite grow because of their salt tolerance. More birds were migrating along the Salt River, including mixed flocks of sandpipers and Snow Geese, "white wavys" as Brad Bourke, the Park Guide, described them. There were recent footprints of buffalo and Sandhill Cranes. I recorded the harsh bugalling calls of the crane from forty meters away. As I stood on the Lookout contemplating the ancient landscape and absorbing the atavistic feeling of the place, I found mere words failed to fully describe the pleasure of being there.

The following day, Brad took us for a boat trip up the Peace to Drum Island. We stepped onto a small beach below a cliff. Cliff Swallows were calling along the rock face but our focus was on a pair of Peregrine Falcon and their nest ten meters above us. I was

able to obtain close-up recordings of the calling birds. However, our presence was clearly a disturbance. The female changed her calls from harsh alarms to a pleading sound. We responded by moving away quickly, but deeply enriched to have been so close. The falcon are still 'threatened'. In a dive, this is the world's fastest animal, reaching speeds of 350 kilometers an hour! Later, walking along a riverside trail, I listened to the songs of Cape May and Magnolia Warblers and the calls of a Northern Hawk-Owl. Driving back from Peace Point we passed a large black bear rubbing his back on a tree, the 18th we had counted so far on the trip.

Sink holes, or karst, are present all across the flat land of the park. We took the prepared Karst Trail one day to learn more. Because the surface limestone is quite porous, water is able to percolate vertically. Over time, salt layers and gypsum have been eroded away, leaving underground caves. Eventually the limestone also erodes causing the roof of the caves to collapse. The karst along the trail were ten to fifteen feet deep. The undermined spruce trees were tilted at crazy, drunken angles. In the bottom of some of the holes, where the sun could not reach, snow and artistic layers of ice lay undisturbed. The holes and crevasses in the rocks also provide a winter refuge for red-sided garter snakes. As we walked along the well prepared trail, the pock-marked landscape gave the appearance of having caught a bizarre disease. In contrast, the lovely song of Hermit Thrush and the ubiquitous Ruby-crowned Kinglet were always there to uplift our spirits.

After two short weeks, we have got to know some of the side roads and trails which add enormously to the natural charm and wonder of this Park landscape. Loon Lake, Halfway Marsh and invigorating walks among tangled willows between the Salt and Slave rivers leave lasting memories - Great Gray and Boreal Owls that were just too far away for me to record; a red fox running across the road at dawn; beaver coming ashore while I listened to loons; a large black bear pinning down a small tree in order to reach the fresh young shoots; smart Cliff Swallows nesting in the eaves of the Fort Smith firehall and using the mud from the carwash to line their nests! The lonely roads, the migrating birds flying overhead and the presence of geological wonders all gave a sense of nature reaching back over eons.

In addition to the animals, the people of the north are special. The Fort Smith Metis nation recognized one of their own for this quality. Although Little Ma died in 1976, she is still lovingly remembered as a person who had limitless spirit, generosity and strength of character. To Little Ma, every man was "sonny" and every woman was "my girl". People who visited the Salt River Settlement could depend on a meal and hot tea if Little Ma was home.

The howl of sled dogs at supertime was a reminder every evening that we were in a northern community. At dawn, I could always hear one of three birds - delicate beautiful refrains of Swainson's Thrush, the rich tune of a Robin or a noisy pair of nesting Raven. The boreal forest is the cradle for up to five billion birds each year. Bird Studies Canada recently reported that the Canadian boreal forest generates over 90% of the fledged landbirds in North America and the evidence was all around us. The background roar of the Rapids of the Drowned was a reminder of the power of nature. Traveling in the north, I was constantly amazed by the rapid advance in the season and the budding of new life. The vivid landscapes of Wood Buffalo National Park illustrated the long term influences of water, weather and geology. It is truly a magnificent place on our planet.



EDITORS' NOTE: * With the name change splits for Solitary Vireo this sighting is most probably a Blue-headed Vireo, at least from the range maps of the area.

BCFO Pelagic Trip 2002

by Andy Stepniewski, Sandra Kinsey, Jo Ann MacKenzie

Date: 7 September 2002**Time:** 0700 to 1700 hours**Destination:** 12.5 nautical miles SW of Triangle Island (75 nm off Cape Scott, Vancouver Island, British Columbia); 100 fathom line (edge of Continental Shelf), 50° 44' 863" N, 129° 00' 348" W. **Distance traveled:** 222 nautical miles.**Vessel:** M.V. "Naiad Explorer" **Operated by:** Mackay Whale Watching **Port:** Port McNeill, V.I.**Weather:** Calm in morning, with sea fog clearing by 0830h; heavy overcast all day; winds building slowly, eventually to SW 35 knots by mid-afternoon. Calm again on inside waters.

Fifty kilometers off the coast of the northern tip of Vancouver Island lies Triangle Island, home to more than a million nesting seabirds, including the world's largest colony (500,000) of Cassin's Auklets, 15,000 Tufted Puffin, and 6,000 Common Murre. There are also a few pairs of "Alaskan" alcids such as Horned Puffin and Thick-billed Murre, here at the southern edge of their breeding range. The abundance of seabirds attract predators; four or five pairs of "Peale's" Peregrine Falcons nest on the island's cliffs and at least one pair of Bald Eagles. Northern Sea Lions are common here, too. The continental shelf and pelagic waters lie just a few minutes boat ride west of the island. Thus, a number of birds attracted to pelagic waters are known from this area.

The possibility of pelagics and Alaskan alcids prompted 35 otherwise reasonable folks of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists to undertake the very long trek to Port McNeill to meet dockside of the Naiad Explorer. Led by Bryan Gates, most observers were from Vancouver Island or the Lower Mainland. There were a few from the Okanagan, Prince George and south of the border.

The weather was very good in the morning. Except for light fog, we made very fast progress (the Naiad Explorer can do 40 knots, but we averaged 30!) west out to Cape Scott, zipping by a number of interesting species such as Sooty Shearwater, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Common Murre, and Rhinoceros Auklet. The strategy was to speed out to pelagic waters and take a leisurely pace inbound, assuming early morning hours are, on average, calmer than afternoon. This was indeed the case on our trip. At 10:30 am, we were west of Triangle Island at the 100-fathom mark, the edge of deep waters. Precisely at this point, pelagic birds such as Black-footed Albatross appeared. Chumming here for about 45 minutes and again farther offshore (at roughly 200 fathoms) brought in a nice assortment of pelagic birds, including Black-footed Albatross; Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Buller's, and Sooty Shearwaters; Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel; South Polar Skua; Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers; Sabine's Gull; Black-legged Kittiwake; Cassin's Auklet; and Tufted Puffin. There were no fishing boats in the area, and thus no bycatch. The frenzy of thousands of seabirds milling about fishing boats, a common sight off Washington, was absent. These birds appeared to be making "an honest living."

About noon the wind suddenly increased. It seemed that within minutes, the sea changed from serene to an ominous scene of substantial swells and chop. We had planned to lunch in the lee of Triangle Island. The weather precluded us from doing this, as a gale warning had been hoisted for these waters. Bryan announced we were heading for the sheltered waters of Vancouver Island post haste. There we would slow for lunch, perhaps in waters with whales. This was a good decision, as the inward journey was quite rough and our progress markedly slower than our smooth outbound trip. The waters around northern Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes are known amongst mariners as rough and dangerous and not to be trifled with. The abrupt change from a smooth sea to whitecaps and spray convinced me these waters, though only 500 kilometres north of Westport on the Washington coast, enjoy a substantially narrower period of peaceful weather.

Though we did not get to view Triangle Island up close, we did skirt it and a number of other small islands lying off Cape Scott. I was surprised to note how similar they appeared to those in the Aleutians, treeless and covered with lush herbaceous growth, and presumably ferns and bryophytes.

Once past Cape Scott, the going became much smoother. Everyone, especially the skipper, was relieved. I thoroughly enjoyed cruising through the many scenic channels and islands, and will long remember the picturesque views of fog-shrouded coastal forests of Sitka spruce, Western hemlock, and Western red cedar meeting the rocky seashore, a classic Northwest scene.

While cruising in near-smooth waters along Goletas Channel, we viewed swarms of birds, including several thousand California Gulls, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Marbled and Ancient Murrelets, and Rhinoceros Auklet. We noted humpback, grey, and killer whales, and Dall's porpoise outside the channel. We had especially good studies of several humpbacks, their life history ably interpreted by Bryan. Landward, we watched a black bear ambling along the beach.

Lunch was served in mid afternoon, a hearty beef stew, accompanied by scrumptious desserts. We arrived back at the dock in Port McNeill precisely at 5 PM, as scheduled.

In our one-day cruise of 222 nautical miles, we were treated to much of that which makes the British Columbia coast such a special place. There's world-class scenery, birds and marine mammals, "memorable" weather, and an aura of wildness. Naturalists return time and again, and casual tourists come from afar to ply these waters in luxury aboard cruise ships, not to mention thousands of visitors coming to fish the straits, with their abundant salmon.

Our sincere thanks goes out to Bryan Gates of the BC Field Ornithologists for organizing this adventure, and Bill MacKay, owner and skipper of the *Naiad Explorer*, for our safe return! I can now see why skippers show reluctance in venturing out into open ocean in this region. These waters are anything but "pacific."

Species order follows Vertebrates of BC: Scientific and English Names, Version 3.0. Published by the Resources Information Standards Committee, BC Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. April 2002. (Editors' NOTE: PM Harbour = Port McNeil Harbour)

Bird Species	Number		
Red-throated Loon	1	Mew Gull	50 PM Harbour
Pacific Loon	7	California Gull	2000 inshore, mainly rips; adults and immatures
Common Loon	2		
Red-necked Grebe	1 PM Harbour	Herring Gull	20 inshore
Black-footed Albatross	13	Glaucous-winged Gull	200
Northern Fulmar	10	Black-legged Kittiwake	12
Pink-footed Shearwater	50	Sabine's Gull	2
Buller's Shearwater	1	Common Murre	200
Sooty Shearwater	2000	Pigeon Guillemot	50
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel	30	Marbled Murrelet	2
Leach's Storm-Petrel	10	Ancient Murrelet	4
Brandt's Cormorant	2	Cassin's Auklet	20
Pelagic Cormorant	50	Rhinoceros Auklet	200
Great Blue Heron	1 wharf	Tufted Puffin	20
Harlequin Duck	1 PM Harbour	Belted Kingfisher	1 wharf
Surf Scoter	10	Northwestern Crow	6 PM Harbour
White-winged Scoter	7	Common Raven	1 wharf
Bald Eagle	4	Savannah Sparrow	1 wharf
Merlin	1 wharf	Song Sparrow	2 wharf
Peregrine Falcon	2		
Black Turnstone	12	Mammals	Number
Least Sandpiper	10 wharf	Black Bear	1
Baird's Sandpiper	1 wharf	Northern Sea Lion	20
Red-necked Phalarope	300	Harbour Seal	1
Red Phalarope	8	Grey Whale	7
South Polar Skua	5	Humpback Whale	3
Pomarine Jaeger	3	Killer Whale	2
Parasitic Jaeger	7	Dall's Porpoise	4 one was newborn
Bonaparte's Gull	5 PM Harbour		

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Andy and Marilyn:

While I live here in greater Victoria (Saanichton), since retirement I have been able to spend a lot of time in the Kettle Valley area, where I was raised. This summer was no exception.

As was reported in the last *Kettle River Echo**, Kettle Valley experienced an unusual and destructive wind storm in early August. However, there was another rare occurrence in the valley which may have past almost unnoticed by most residents.

Rock Creek is located on Highway 3 about 45 kilometers east of Osoyoos. This portion of the Kettle River is well known in some circles as a great place to go birding and is often associated with birding in the Okanagan Valley. The golf course is located about five km east of Rock Creek.

While golfing at the Kettle Valley golf course in early August I discovered a Great Egret in the little pond just beside the T-Box on the 9th hole. The bird was attempting to feed on frogs in the pond while a young employee continued to weed-wack the bullrushes along the edge of the pond, neither paying much attention to the other. After we discovered the egret I phoned the bird alert folks at Kelowna but do not know how many people were able to get to the area.

Great egrets, extremely rare visitors to BC, are about four feet in height. They are completely white with blackish legs and a heavy yellow bill. The last time (to my knowledge) a Great Egret was recorded in the Interior of BC was back in 1987 when two were reported, one in Osoyoos and another in Creston.

My personal previous sighting occurred while on a birding trip to Costa Rica.

Geoff Bate (Vincent G. Cornwallis-Bate)



*This was in the September 2, 2002 issue of the *Kettle River Echo*.



Photo by Larry Halverson

**Columbia National Wildlife Area
at Wilmer, Upper Columbia River
Valley**

The Upper Columbia River Valley is unique on the planet - One hundred and sixty kilometers of Columbia River wetlands, flanked by grasslands, forest and alpine tundra, provides habitat for over 250 bird species. The Columbia River Wetlands have been declared a Wildlife Management Area because of its international significance as a stopping-off area for birds on the North American flyway.

Please see:

**2003 Annual Conference and AGM
writeup on page 24 of this issue.**

BIRD-LISTERS' CORNER

by Ken Morgan

#63 2600 Ferguson Road
Saanichton, BC V8M 2C1

Welcome back to Bird-Listers' Corner - here is your annual reminder to start locating your checklists, notebooks, etc., that will be needed to tally up your regional bird totals. Hopefully all of you have had an enjoyable year of birding and most managed to find a few of the species that have eluded you for years.

As usual, here is a brief summary of the 'rules'. At the end of 2002, please send me the total number of species you have seen in each of the listing areas. The totals you send should represent the number of species that you have seen in each area throughout your life, not just within the past year. The column on the accompanying form labelled "**Accepted Total (if different from what is listed)**" is for contributors to provide me with the most up-to-date total for an area, In other words, if I have presented the wrong number of species on the accompanying form, please let me know. The totals I present here are those that were printed in *B.C. BIRDING* (March 2002, Vol. 12, #1).

Last March, I challenged listers to try to rack up the biggest percentage increase in any area. As I mentioned in that issue, there wouldn't be a prize - this challenge is simply for fun. Shortly after issuing the challenge, John Sprague contacted me and pointed out that simply calculating straight percentage increases favours those birders with small lists. The more species you have seen, the harder it is to get the same percentage increase as someone with a small list. John suggested that I should use a different method to determine who has seen the most new species in an area that eliminates the problem associated with small versus large species totals. The formula that I will use is:

the number of new species seen divided by the result of subtracting the total number of species a person has seen in an area from the total of all possible species in the area, expressed as a percentage.

As I pointed out in the last Bird-Listers' Corner, I am no longer carrying forward totals for those individuals who contributed in a previous year but either failed to send me their list or did not report on some of the areas that they included the year before. I will only accept lists that reach me by the end of January (2003) - please send me (by post or email*) your totals as soon after the January 1st as possible. **Phone-in totals will NOT be accepted.**

I have tried to present the most recent species count for most of the areas (**in bold**). Please notify me when you submit your lists if any of the numbers are inaccurate.

And a final comment - several areas (Princeton, the Charlottes, West Kootenays and Creston Valley) will be dropped if there aren't more contributors. So, if you feel passionate about seeing those areas in this article and as yet have not sent in totals for those locations, this could be your last chance.

EDITORS' NOTE: * Ken's e-mail is: kenhmorgan@shaw.ca

Listing Areas

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) ABA area (918) | 10) Princeton area (251) |
| 2) Canada (634) | 11) Kamloops Checklist area (295) |
| 3) British Columbia (484) | 12) Sunshine Coast Checklist area (286) |
| 4) Alberta (395) | 13) West Kootenay Checklist area (285) |
| 5) Vancouver Island (387) | 14) Prince George Checklist area (274) |
| 6) Queen Charlotte Islands (250) | 15) Creston Valley Checklist area (265) |
| 7) Vancouver Checklist area (406) | 16) Washington State (454) |
| 8) Victoria Checklist area (362) | 17) North Pacific Pelagic Waters |
| 9) Okanagan Valley Checklist area (319) | 18) World Total (9808) |

Listing Rules

- Determine the total number of bird species you have observed in each area up to the end of 2002 (for the benefit of new listers this means all years, not just during 2002).
- For areas 1, 2, and 3 (ABA, Canada, BC) include all land and water bird species including marine species seen out to the two hundred (200) nautical mile (approx. 370 km) limit.
- For areas 5 through 8, 12 and 15 include all terrestrial as well as marine species that you have seen but only out to five (5) nautical miles (9.6 km) from land.
- For area 16 (North Pacific Pelagic Waters) include only those species that you have seen no closer than five (5) nautical miles from land, north of the Tropic of Cancer (23° 27'N) and south of the Bering Strait. For this area, you can count species seen beyond the 200 nautical mile limit. Birds that can be included in this list are: loons, grebes, albatrosses, fulmars, shearwaters, gadfly petrels, storm-petrels, frigatebirds, tropicbirds, pelicans, boobies, cormorants, geese, ducks, phalaropes, skuas, jaegers, gulls, kittiwakes, terns, and alcids - misguided passerines, etc. cannot be counted.
- Phone-in totals will **NOT** be accepted. **I will only include totals that reach me by the 31st of January, 2003.**
- If I do not receive a listing form on time, I will re-print the totals from the previous year. If a person does not submit a form for two (2) consecutive years, he or she will be dropped from the list.



Review of *The B.C. Roadside Naturalist*

by Dannie Carsen

3332 Doncaster Drive

Victoria, BC V8P 3V8

The B.C. Roadside Naturalist

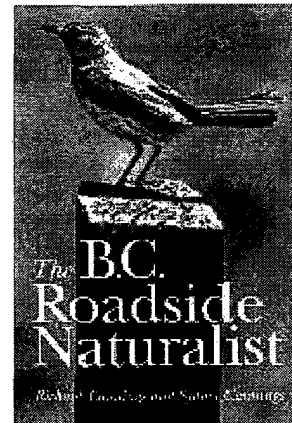
Richard Cannings and Sydney Cannings

GreyStone Books, 2002.

230pp. \$29.95

ISBN: 1-55054-902-2

Have you ever thought of taking a naturalist companion with you on a road trip - someone who could tell you everything about the landscape and its plant and animal inhabitants along the way? The closest you may come to a "virtual" naturalist is between the pages of *The B.C. Roadside Naturalist*. Before you leave, you might want to read the appropriate chapters of the book to learn more about the natural features of highways to be taken. I found it helpful to pick a place with interesting landforms and birds to stretch my legs when I stopped.



The two scientists and keen naturalists who grew up in the Okanagan Valley have created a naturalist's guide for the open B.C. road. Dick Canning's work as a consulting biologist and the B.C. contact for Bird Studies Canada and Syd Canning's work as a zoologist with the Conservation Data Centre has often taken them down B.C. highways. As authors of *The Natural History of British Columbia* and *Birds of the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia*, the brothers have good vantage points for this book.

The 230 pages of this attractive, durable, soft cover are meant to "... cover the natural history along the major highways of the province". It functions well as a general guidebook to natural history organized by linear geography rather than by species or habitat. The *B.C. Roadside Naturalist*, while clearly aimed at the non-specialist in geology, botany or birding, could take the place of several field guides normally packed on a road trip.

Chapters are organized by highway, often originating in Vancouver. The book covers most highways south of Prince George (Highway Nos. 1,19,3,5,16,17,20,93,97, and 99). The authors present an informative, engaging and well-researched guide suitable for beginning naturalist to expert. Each chapter takes you paragraph by paragraph along your travel route. Breaks are provided in the text every few pages by photographs, most taken by the authors or by their father, Steve Cannings.

Every few pages a feature vignette showcases landforms, species, or habitats seen along each highway. My favorites were explanation of the Rocky Mountain Trench, Alders and Willows: A Case of Flycatcher Evolution, and Disappearing Grasslands. A rest stop, such as Highway 97's Vaseux Lake Wildlife Centre or Chilanko Marsh off of Highway 20, is described for each road. I noticed that many proposed rest stops were exceptional places featuring many natural highlights.

The book also mentions many inconspicuous features that you will find to enjoy for the first time on your next highway trip. Changing landscape is described near Princeton (p. 71) "Sagebrush appears on the low hillsides, and Mountain Bluebirds, the colour of clear summer skies, perch on fenceposts". As well, there are many references to locations where large mammals such as elk, deer, caribou, moose, goats, and bears might be observed. Butterflies and dragonflies are also noted such as "... the river jewelwing, a stunning emerald green damselfly ..." seen only at Christina Creek (p. 83).

As you drive from place to place, descriptions are included of natural features such as Pavilion Lake (p. 220), "... a beautiful blue-green colour from the white calcium carbonate marl that lines its bottom. Nestled in a mountain range formed from coral, the

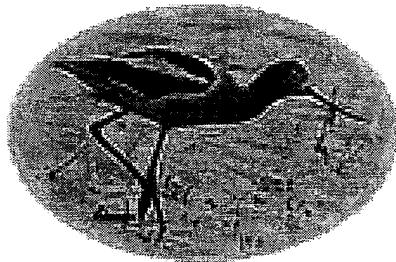
lake is famous for its own coral-like underwater structures." Fairmont Hot Springs (p. 163) is described as "... the only site in Canada where the southern maidenhair fern grows, attracted by the limestone soils and mild temperatures immediately surrounding the springs". Generous amounts of geological description also flavour the book with "... high granitic cliffs, part of the mid-Cretaceous Spuzzum pluton, a massive block of magma that cooled beneath the earth's surface" along Highway 1 (p. 15).

A fascinating description of Keremeos-Osoyoos sagebrush grassland (p. 74) is enlivened by a description of Bobolink colouration. "Most animals are coloured pale below and dark above, but Bobolinks show the opposite pattern, designed to make them stand out against the sky as they sing. Striking colour patterns such as these are common in grassland birds that use song flights for display in an environment that lacks trees and other high perches." As I read this, I was nodding in agreement due to recent experiences in Grasslands National Park where I watched displays by Chestnut-collared Longspur.

The authors are skilled writers as evidenced by their description of an area around Cinema (p. 199), "The moist pastures here merge into a broad black spruce bog at their northern end. Northern Harriers course over the sedges and sphagnum on summer evenings, listening for voles with their owl-sharp ears." Finding Cinema's location, however, requires a map or mapbook which you must use during your travels. I wish I had annotated my map with points of interest noted from this book before I left, so I could refer to the map for expected features. The authors could improve the guide by including a map with each chapter so the reader could locate the natural features.

Put *The B.C. Roadside Naturalist* in your travel kit or your glove compartment. The style of presentation means that a lot of information is packed into each chapter. This book is not just a travelogue accompanied by natural history or personal diaries of the experiences of naturalists. Rather, it uses the various roads through southern B.C. as backbones for describing a great variety of landform, plant, bird, mammal, reptile / amphibian, and insect natural history. You may find that you want to refer to it quite frequently during your journey.

Despite the authors' intent to stay behind the scenes while practicing "High Speed Natural History", their delight in the natural pleasures seen from their car windows is especially evident in their description of the Okanagan Valley. So, if you can't take Dick or Syd with you on your trip, you can take along their shared knowledge and enthusiasm for roadside landforms, flora, and fauna in our wonderfully varied province. This guide is a knowledgeable travel companion for your excursion on B.C.'s southern highways.



Avocet Tours – A new BC based company!

Chris Charlesworth, long-time BCFO member, has been leading birding trips and tours for a number of years now. He recently started his own company, Avocet Tours, and is now planning trips to a number of North American birding hotspots, including Coastal and Southern Texas, the Pacific Coast and the Okanagan Valley. The trips will be reasonably priced, well organized and lead by experienced birders. Visit www.avocettours.com for more information on all trips, call Chris at (250) 718-0335 or email at c_charlesworth@avocettours.com for more details.

B.C. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DETAILS 2002/2003

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 further afield. This information also appears on the BCFO website at - <http://birding.bc.ca/bcfo> - courtesy of webmaster, Kevin Slagboom.

A **DNA** indicates that the Date was Not Available at press time. Data were accurate as known to the Editors on 21 November 2002. Please check with the area organizers for any late-breaking changes. Additional Washington counts and contacts may be found at the Washington Ornithological Society website: <http://www.wos.org/WACBCs.htm>

Locality	Date	Organizer(s)	Contact
Abbotsford / Mission	28 Dec 2002	Lynn Miller	(604) 826-3839
Bamfield (accommodation can be arranged at the Marine Station)	DNA	Anne Stewart (H) (W)	(250) 728-3469 (250) 728-3301
Bowen Island	DNA	Allan Shatwell	(604) 947-2133
Campbell River	28 Dec 2002	Heather Asplin	(250) 923-4112
Castlegar / Trail (WKN)	4 Jan 2003	Gary Lelliott	(250) 365-1161
Chilliwack	14 Dec 2002	Annabelle Rempel	(604) 823-6549
Comox / Courtenay	15 Dec 2002	Barbara Sedgwick	(250) 335-0064
Cranbrook	28 Dec 2002	Greg Ross	(250) 489-2566
Creston	27 Dec 2002	Sheila Reynolds	(250) 866-5453
D'Arcy / Devine	17 Dec 2002	Dan Cumming	(604) 452-3453
Dawson Creek	DNA	Mark Phinney	(250) 843-2318
Deep Bay	29 Dec 2002	Barbara Sedgwick	(250) 335-0064
Duncan	28 Dec 2002	Derrick Marven	(250) 748-8504
Fauquier	DNA	Ruth Bumpus	(250) 269-7481
Fort St. James	4 Jan 2003	Joanne Vinnedge	(250) 996-7401
Galiano Island	28 Dec 2002	Mike Hoebel	(250) 539-2003
Golden	27 Dec 2002	Ellen Zimmerman	(250) 348-2225
Hat Creek	DNA	Ken Wright	(250) 921-7019
Kamloops	15 Dec 2002	Rick Howie	(250) 578-7542
Kaslo	30 Dec 2002	Dirk Rinehart-Pidcock	(250) 353-7539
Kelowna	14 Dec 2002	Chris Charlesworth	(250) 718-0335
Kimberley	4 Jan 2003	Greg Ross	(250) 489-2566
Kitimat	21 Dec 2002	April MacLeod	(250) 632-3977
Ladner	22 Dec 2002	Jude Grass (H) (W)	(604) 520-3706 (604) 432-6393

Locality	Date	Organizer(s)	Contact
Lake Country*	29 Dec 2002	Trevor Forder	(250) 765-4082
Lake Windermere District	28 Dec 2002	Larry Halverson	(250) 342-3305
Lardeau	27 Dec 2002	Gail Spitler	(250) 366-4601
Lillooet	29 Dec 2002	Ken Wright	(250) 921-7019
Masset	27 Dec 2002	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Mackenzie	DNA	David Lambie	(250) 997-6876
Merritt	28 Dec 2002	Wayne C. Weber email: contopus@shaw.ca phone: before 21 Dec 2002	(250) 377-8865
Mayne Island	14 Dec 2002	Doreen Tamboline	(250) 539-2730
Nakusp	4 Jan 2003	Gary Davidson	(250) 265-4456
Nanaimo	29 Dec 2002	Guy Monty	(250) 752-2499
Nanoose Bay	21 Dec 2002	Guy Monty	(250) 752-2499
Nelson ★ GOLD STAR	14 Dec 2002	Rita Wege	(250) 354-1685
Oliver / Osoyoos	28 Dec 2002	Joan King	(250) 495-6907
Parksville / Qualicum	14 Dec 2002	Sandra Gray	(250) 248-5565
Pemberton / Mt. Currie	15 Dec 2002	Hugh and Jan Naylor	(604) 894-6402
Pender Harbour	19 Dec 2002	Tony Greenfield	(604) 885-5539
Pender Islands	14 Dec 2002	Mary Roddick	(250) 629-3308
Penticton	15 Dec 2002	Dick Cannings	(250) 496-4019
Pitt Meadows / Maple Ridge	29 Dec 2002	Kees Vandenberg	(604) 463-8743
Port Alberni	4 Jan 2003	Sandy McRuer	(250) 723-5436
Port Clements	21 Dec 2002	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Prince George	15 Dec 2002	Cathy Antoniazzi	(250) 562-2845
Prince Rupert	DNA	Robin Weber	(250) 627-1129
Princeton	21 Dec 2002	Madelon Schouten	(250) 295-7078
Quesnel	Dec 2002	Adrian Leather	(250) 249-5561
Revelstoke	14 Dec 2002	George Winingder	(250) 837-3655
Rose Spit (tide & weather permitting)	DNA	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Salmon Arm	DNA	Frank Kime	(250) 835-8537
Saltspring Island	Dec 2002	Nancy Braithwaite	(250) 537-9335
Saturna Island	14 Dec 2002	Harvey Janszen	(250) 539-5150
Shuswap Lake / Park	DNA	Rick Howie	(250) 578-7542

Locality	Date	Organizer(s)	Contact
Skidegate Inlet / Sandspit / Queen Charlotte Islands	14 Dec 2002	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Smithers	28 Dec 2002	Rosamund Pojar	(250) 847-9784
Sooke	21 Dec 2002	Jack McLeod	(250) 642-5369
Squamish	14 Dec 2002	Linda Dupuis	(604) 898-4770
Sunshine Coast	14 Dec 2002	Tony Greenfield	(604) 885-5539
Terrace	26 Dec 2002	Dianne Weismiller	(250) 635-6984
Vancouver	15 Dec 2002	Adrian Grant Duff	(604) 263-7957
Vaseux Lake	21 Dec 2002	Dick Cannings	(250) 496-4019
Vernon ✧ SILVER STAR	15 Dec 2002	Phil Gehlen or Mary Collins	(250) 542-8053 (250) 542-5673
Victoria	14 Dec 2002	Ann Nightingale	(250) 652-6450
Whistler	21 Dec 2002	Karl Ricker	(604) 938-1107
White Rock and Surrey	29 Dec 2002	Viveka Ohman or Ian Robertson	(604) 531-3401 (604) 530-1080
Williams Lake	15 Dec 2002	Phil Ransom	(250) 398-7110
Interior Swan-and-Eagle Count	12 Jan 2003	Rick Howie	(250) 578-7542

**** WASHINGTON STATE BORDER AREAS ****

LOCALITY	DATE	ORGANIZER(S)	Contact
Bellingham	15 Dec 2002	Joe Meche	(360) 738-0641
Everett	15 Dec 2002	Mary Teesdale	(360) 734-9077
North Cascades	13 Dec 2002	Bob Kuntz	(360) 424-9099
Whidbey Island (Oak Harbor)	14 Dec 2002	Bob Merrick	(360) 678-3161
Padilla Bay	28 Dec 2002	Steve Aslanian	(360) 435-9493
San Juan Ferry (Anacortes to Sidney)	20 Dec 2002	R. B. Porter	(360) 332-6799
Seattle	28 Dec 2002	Seattle Audubon	(206) 523-4483
Sequim-Dungeness	16 Dec 2002	Bob Boekelheide	(206) 681-4867
Skagit Bay	1 Jan 2003	Art Campbell	(206) 783-2449

* "The Lake Country Count covers the region between Vernon and Kelowna. There is a little bit of overlap on the two other counts that will have to be taken into account. The count will include Woods Lake, most of Kalamalka Lake, Beaver Lake Road, the community of Carr's Landing and Okanagan Center, as well as a large portion of Okanagan Lake and the Westside Road area, including Fintry Provincial Park." - Chris Charlesworth.

✧ Gold - first to send information : Silver - second to send information. Thanks all.

**The Upper Columbia River Valley
Site for the BCFO 2003 Annual Conference and AGM**

The 2003 BCFO Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at Radium Hot Springs from June 20-22. This area was chosen for a number of reasons, one being the fact that we have never had a conference in that part of the province, and another the wealth and variety of birds found in the area. To entice you to join us at the conference, Larry Halverson, a member of BCFO and a local biologist, has written the following about the habitats and birds we could encounter.

The Upper Columbia Valley covers the Columbia River's headwaters from Canal Flats to Donald. It includes the adjacent slopes of the Rocky and Purcell mountains that, respectively, form the eastern and western sides of the Rocky Mountain Trench. Elevations range from 800 meters above sea level in the valley bottom to over 2700 meters at mountaintop.

Two hundred and sixty-five species (including 150 breeding species) of birds have been recorded in this diverse region. Major habitats include: lakes, ponds and marshes, riparian woodlands, grasslands, farmlands and other open-country habitats, mixed and coniferous forests, brushy avalanche paths, and alpine tundra.

The wide floodplain of the Columbia River comprises some of the most extensive wetland habitats (26,000 hectares) in North America. Each spring and fall, thousands of water birds gather on Columbia and Windermere lakes and on the valley's countless ponds and marshes. Impressive numbers of swans, geese, ducks, grebes and coots can be viewed during these migration periods. In summer, the floodplain's marshes and willow thickets are alive with the sounds of Pied-billed Grebe, Sora, Marsh Wren, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Osprey, Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck and Pileated Woodpecker use the tall cottonwoods that grow along the river's edge for nesting.

Birders who venture into the coniferous forests on the mountain slopes will be rewarded with many species not often found in the valley bottom - Hermit Thrush, Townsend's Warbler, Mountain Chickadee, Three-toed Woodpecker. If the alpine summit is your destination you may see Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Clark's Nutcracker, plus White-crowned and Brewer's [Timberline] Sparrows. On your way to the top, watch for American Dipper and Harlequin Duck in the turbulent waters of mountain streams.

From north to south, the Columbia Valley becomes wider, warmer and drier. You are more likely to encounter Boreal and Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Winter Wren, Varied Thrush and Blackpoll Warbler in the wetter coniferous forests in the north. Southern 'specialties' include Lewis's Woodpecker, Turkey Vulture, White-throated Swift and Flammulated Owl.

We look forward to seeing many of you at Radium Hot Springs next year. This area has much to offer in the way of diversity and birdlife - you will not be disappointed!

For more information on the area and its birds check: www.adventurevalley.com/wings

Local organizer and contact: Larry Halverson larry.halverson@pc.gc.ca
Conference organizer and contact: Hank VanderPol rhvander@shaw.ca



EDITORS' NOTE: Check out Larry Halverson's Columbia River Valley photos on pages 8 and 16 of this issue.