

BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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Art Martell on a pelagic birding trip in Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand (December 2006)

***British Columbia Birds* gets a New Editor**

by Andrew Stewart

As many of you have already heard, Dr. John Sprague has stepped down from his position as Editor of *British Columbia Birds*. John announced his decision at our recent annual general meeting held this May in Creston. The BCFO is deeply indebted to John for his all hard work and especially for getting our journal back on track. Thank you John.

We are indeed fortunate to have recruited Dr. Art Martell to fill this vacancy. Art retired to the Comox Valley in 2003 from his position as a wildlife research scientist and manager with Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada for British Columbia and Yukon region. He was also the first Canadian National Coordinator for the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. Since retirement, Art has developed an all-bird strategic plan for the Pacific Coast Joint Venture and has worked with the Commission for Environmental

please see Martell, page 3



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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.

BCFO objectives include fostering cooperation between amateur and professional ornithologists, promoting cooperative bird surveys and research projects, and supporting conservation organizations in their efforts to preserve birds and their habitats.

Since November, 2003, BCFO has maintained an official partnership with the Changhwa Wild Bird Society, Changhwa, Taiwan.

Membership Dues

Please send membership requests, or requests for further information, to

Membership
British Columbia Field Ornithologists
P.O. Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7

Membership Dues:

Individual memberships	\$30.00
Library subscriptions.....	\$30.00
Junior memberships (age under 18).....	\$20.00
U.S. and foreign memberships.....	\$30.00 (US\$)

Memberships are for the calendar year.

Newsletter Submissions

Send material for publication in any format to the editor. Submissions may include bird finding information for our "Site Guide" series and any articles about birding experiences, preferably but not necessarily in British Columbia. A brief biographical sketch (5--100 words) should accompany the article if the editor does not have a recent version or you wish to change it.

Please send newsletter submissions to

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Box 615, Fort Langley, BC V1M 2R9
604-888-1571 / strix@uniserve.com

Deadline for the receipt of material for publication is the 15th of the month preceding the March, June, September, and December issues.

Advertising

Advertising rates are available upon request.

BCFO Website

<http://www.bcfo.ca>



Art Martell cont. from page 1

Cooperation on conservation of species of common conservation concern to Canada, Mexico and the United States. Art is a keen birder who enjoys birding both nationally and internationally. He is also active in the Comox Valley Naturalists Society and currently sits as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Bird Studies Canada.

Dr. Martell's numerous professional contacts and his lengthy career in wildlife research will be invaluable in his new role as Editor of *British Columbia Birds*. Welcome aboard Art!

Recent Publications

State of the World's Birds

Birdlife International's comprehensive overview of the significance of birds and biodiversity, why birds are declining and what can be done.

<http://www.birdlife.org/sowb/>

The Status of Biodiversity in British Columbia

Bio Diversity B.C.'s recent publication explaining the issues concerning B.C.'s biodiversity.

<http://www.biodiversitybc.org>

Bird use of the Nanaimo River estuary, Vancouver Island, British Columbia: November 1998 - October 1999

by Guy L. Monty, Bill Merilees and Neil K. Dawe

This is an excellent summary of bird use of the largest estuary on Vancouver Island. Details will be presented in the December issue regarding its availability.

Acting Editor's Notes and Notions

by *Phil Henderson*

This is the slimmest volume of *BC Birding* I have worked on, which is only good news if you're a tree or a bird of the forest. In this issue you will see how you can reduce the amount of paper used and also receive *BC Birding* with colour photographs and graphics. Amazing!

This will also make the job of the Membership person easier. There's another cracker to entice those who may be thinking about taking up that post. As you will see on the masthead, that position is now vacant.

Having brought *BC Birds* up to present with Volume 18, John Sprague has left the journal in great shape for his successor, Art Martell, author of the major paper in that last volume. Thanks John and welcome Art.

Thanks also to John for contributing the piece in this newsletter from the Globe and Mail.

This newsletter is in need of a successor for editor. I can no longer continue in this capacity due to other commitments, obligations and pursuits. I had mentioned that December would be my last issue if no one stepped forward by then, but it looks like that might be optimistic: I'm beginning to doubt whether I will be able to complete it.

Until only recently Yellow-rumped Warblers were feeding in the maples, birches and alders of this area (Fort Langley). With warm temperatures around the province I would imagine bird sightings might be a little unusual. I wonder if there are any noticeable differences in hawk migration at Laird Law's stations near Prince George. An acquaintance who was hunting in the Prince George area last week said it was still very warm and the mosquitoes and black flies were plentiful. He didn't get his moose.

Of course, things can turn very quickly, catching human and bird off guard.

Be on the guard and on the lookout!

INTERNET SOURCES

BCFO

<http://www.bcfo.ca>

Alaska Bird Observatory

<http://www.alaskabird.org/>

Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies

<http://www.wildlifebc.org>

Bird Studies Canada / Long Point Bird Observatory

<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/bscmain.html>

Birding in British Columbia

General interest information including bulletin board, checklists, rare bird alerts, book reviews, etc.

<http://www.birding.bc.ca/>

BIRDNET

Site of the Ornithological Council.

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/>

Bird Source

Audubon's and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's' interactive bird information site, featuring "eBird"

<http://www.birdsource.com/>

British Columbia Breeding Bird Atlas

www.birdatlas.bc.ca

British Columbia Conservation Data Centre

Information on plants, animals and ecosystems at risk in British Columbia.

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>

eBird Canada

Online interactive program for storing, sharing, sorting and assembling bird sightings.

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/birds/>

Point Reyes Bird Observatory

<http://www.prbo.org/cms/index.php>

Rocky Point Bird Observatory

<http://www.islandnet.com/~rpbo/index.html>

The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, Seventh Edition

<http://www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3>

SORA: Searchable Ornithological Research Archive

Search and retrieve online publications from The Auk (1884-1999), The Condor (1899-2000), Journal of Field Ornithology (1930-1999), North American Bird Bander (1976-2000), Pacific Coast Avifauna (1900-1974), Studies in Avian Biology (1978-1999), Wilson Bulletin (1889-1999). All articles are available as DjVu's and PDF's.

<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/>



BACK ISSUES OF BCFO NEWSLETTERS AND JOURNALS AVAILABLE

If you are missing past issues of BC Birding or British Columbia Birds you can purchase most volumes by contacting the people listed below. Back issues of the journal *British Columbia Birds* can be acquired for \$5.00/ea or the BC Birding newsletter for \$2.00/ea (prices include postage) from the following people.

For journals contact:

Neil K. Dawe
438 Temple Street
Parkville, BC
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nkdawe@shaw.ca

For newsletters contact:

Ted Goshulak
9578 - 212B Street
Langley, B.C.
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All journal back issues are currently available, except for Volume 8 of *British Columbia Birds* which is out of print. Please pre-pay your order by cheque or money order made out to BC Field Ornithologists.

Journal Articles On-line All feature articles and notes published in Volumes 1 – 13 of *British Columbia Birds* are available from our website www.bcfo.ca Articles can be down-loaded individually as PDF files using Adobe Reader, version 5 or greater.

2009 Membership Dues Increase and e-Newsletter Option

Well it's that season again and time to consider renewing your BCFO membership for another year. Please take a few minutes and complete the membership renewal form enclosed with this newsletter. Also please note that our dues have been increased. For most of you this is an increase from \$25 to \$30/year. If you live outside of Canada the annual dues have been increased to \$35/year in U.S. funds. This increase was approved at our past Annual General Meeting and was necessary to cover our increased operating costs. If you had previously renewed your membership (before April 2008) for more than one year you will not need to pay this additional fee.

Much of membership revenue goes towards producing our quarterly newsletter *BC Birding* and our journal *British Columbia Birds*. To help us keep our costs down and reduce our carbon footprint we are asking all members to consider receiving their newsletters electronically. If you have access to the internet please consider this option and tick the electronic newsletter box on the renewal form. All issues of *BC Birding* are produced in PDF format and are about 2 MB in size.

BCFO RESEARCH GRANTS

BCFO encourages submissions of proposals for financial assistance for bird surveys and other ornithological research. It also wishes to foster greater connection between applicants and the society. Potential applicants are reminded that

1. Requests for funding must be for planned, rather than completed, projects.
2. Under normal circumstances, applicants should be, or be willing to become, members of BCFO.
3. Projects and their results are to be reported in BCFO's journal, *BC Birds*.
4. In order for BCFO directors to give a timely response to project proposals, deadlines for submission are January 1 and July 1.
5. All reasonable requests up to a \$1000 limit and within the financial strength of the organization will be considered, with any larger requests requiring approval at the AGM.
6. Applicants should obtain a copy of the grant policy and the application guidelines from a member of the executive before any submission.

Help Wanted

BCFO is searching for someone to maintain membership records. The job entails keeping membership records up-to-date, preparing and printing mailing labels for both the newsletter and journal, and writing a brief report for the AGM. The present membership coordinator Rita Wege will be glad to answer any questions. Give her a call at 250-359-7234 or contact Jim Ginns (ginnsj@shaw.ca or 250 492-9610).

NEW BCFO MEMBERS SINCE LAST ISSUE

Gord Dubois
Clearwater, BC

Ann Gibson
Oyama, BC

Andrew Bennet
Langley, BC



Social Studies: A daily miscellany of information by Michael Kesterton. (From the The Globe and Mail. Monday, April 2nd 2007)

Follow your beak

Birds may be able to fly vast distances without getting lost because of sensors in their beaks, according to a German study. Scientists at the University of Frankfurt said they found tiny iron-oxide crystals in the skin lining of the upper beak of homing pigeons, laid out in a three-dimensional pattern that might help the birds to read the Earth's magnetic field. "We expect that the pigeon-type receptor . . . might turn out to be a universal feature of all birds," writes Gerta Fleissner and colleagues in the journal *Naturwissenschaften*.

Gangsters

People have long wondered how cowbirds can get away with leaving their eggs in the nests of other species, who then raise the baby cowbirds, writes Randolph Schmid of The Associated Press. Why don't the hosts just toss the strange eggs out? Now researchers seem to have an answer -- if the host birds reject the strange eggs, the cowbirds come back and trash the place. "It's the female cowbirds who are running the mafia racket at our study site," says Jeffrey Hoover, of the Florida Museum of Natural History. "Our study shows many of them returned and ransacked the nest when we removed the parasitic egg." Scientists also found evidence of what they called "farming behaviour," in which cowbirds destroyed a nest to force the host bird to build another. The cowbird then synchronized its egg-laying with the hosts' "re-nest" attempt.

Translators

Red-breasted nuthatches respond to the alarm calls of black-capped chickadees and they tailor their response to the "threat level" the chickadees identify, reports The Christian Science Monitor. For instance, the chickadees give a less-worrisome warning about the presence of a lumbering great horned owl than about the appearance of a smaller, agile

pygmy owl. To test the nuthatches' language skills, Christopher Templeton of the University of Washington and colleagues placed speakers beneath trees with nuthatches but no chickadees. The nuthatches went ballistic when the team replayed chickadee calls warning of small predators. But they were much less worked up over the large-predator warning. "That one animal has cracked the code and extracted information from another species is pretty amazing," Mr. Templeton says. The results appear in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Always in the air

"Amazingly, young swifts may spend the first two or three years of their lives entirely in the air, feeding on flying insects and scooping water from lakes or rivers," writes Jon Howard in BBC Focus magazine. "If a swift lands on the ground it cannot take off because of its short legs. If you find an uninjured grounded swift, take it to an upstairs window and hold it out on the palm of your hand."

'It's a living dodo'

A wetland bird that eluded scientists for nearly 130 years has been rediscovered at a wastewater treatment plant in Thailand. Little is known about the large-billed reed warbler because it had not been seen since its discovery in 1867 in India. Because it was so rare, scientists had long debated whether it represented a true species or was an aberrant individual of a more common species. That debate appears to be settled after Philip Round of Bangkok's Mahidol University captured one of the birds in March of last year. "[O]ne of the birds I caught that morning struck me as very odd, something about it didn't quite add up," he told The Associated Press. "Then, it dawned on me I was probably holding a large-billed reed-warbler. I was dumbstruck. It felt as if I was holding a living dodo."

Changhua Wild Bird Society

To: BC Field Ornithologists

Dear BCFO Members;

Our two societies have been partners since November 2003. Some of our members visited your meeting in Tumbler Ridge in 2004. Now, it is our turn to invite you. The biggest event of our year is the Bagua Mountain Bird Fair, marking the return of the Grey-faced Buzzard-Eagle as it migrates over Taiwan on its way to Japan and beyond to nest. The CHWBS members invite BCFO members to visit us on 21 March, 2009 to see the spectacle of so many raptors in our skies. This would be a small part of a birding tour in Taiwan; you would see many more Taiwan birds on our beautiful island. The International Taiwan Birding Association can give more information.

We look forward to welcoming you to our Bird Fair and the birds of Taiwan.

Liao Tsu-ciang, President,
Changhua Wild Bird Society

Wenmin Wang, Secretary,
Changhua Wild Bird Society

May 5, 2008

For further information please
contact Jo Ann MacKenzie at
j.a.mackenzie@telus.net

理事長 廖自強



Upcoming Meetings and Events

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl and Wayne C. Weber

The following meetings and other events are those that take place in B.C. and immediately adjacent areas or that potentially include information on birds that occur in B.C. Information on additional meetings is listed in the bimonthly *Ornithological Newsletter* and, for readers with inter-net access, on BIRDNET at www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/BIRDMEET.html.

- November 5-8 2008 32nd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WATERBIRD SOCIETY, South Padre Island, TX. Contact details not yet published. Internet information: URL:<http://www.bio.txstate.edu/wbs2008/>.
- November 10-14 2008 THIRD NORTH AMERICAN SEA DUCK CONFERENCE, Quebec, Que. Contact: Jean-Sebastien Guenette, Regroupement Quebec Oiseaux, 4545 avenue Pierre-De Coubertin, Box 1000, succ. M., Montreal, QC H1V 3R2; phone: toll free 1-868-583-4846 or (514) 252-2190; e-mail: info@quebecoiseaux.org.
- January 8-12 2009 FOURTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BIOGEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Merida, Mexico. Contact details not yet published. Internet information: <http://www.biogeography.org/>.
- February 18-21 2009 SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY & WASHINGTON CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, Stevenson, WA. Contact: Aimee McIntyre [address and phone number not yet announced]; e-mail: mcintam@dfw.wa.gov.
- February 22-25 2009 36TH PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP MEETING, Hakodate, Hokkaido, Japan. Contact details not yet published. Internet information: URL:<http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org/>
- March 27-30 2009 43rd SEABIRD GROUP AGM & TENTH INTERNATIONAL SEABIRD GROUP CONFERENCE, Bruges (Brugge), Belgium. Contact: Jan Says or Eric Stienen [addresses and phone numbers not yet published]; e-mail: seabirdconf2009@vliz.be.
- April 8-12 2009 2009 ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY & ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Todd Katzner, Dept. Conservation & Field Res., National Aviary, 700 Arch St., Allegheny Commons West, Pittsburgh, PA 16212; phone (412) 323-7235 x 210; e-mail: todd.katzner@aviary.org.
- April 15-18 2009 79TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Tucson, AZ. Contact details not yet published. Internet information: <http://www.cooper.org>.
- August 11-15 2009 127th MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, Philadelphia, PA. Contact details not yet published.
- September 29-October 4 2009 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Pitlochry, Scotland. Contact: Ruth Tingay [address and phone number not yet published], e-mail: dimlylit100@hotmail.com.
- August 22-28 2010 25TH INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Campos do Jordao, Brazil. Contact: Prof. Dr. Cristina Yumi Miyaki [no address or phone number announced]. e-mail: ioc2010@ib.usp.br.

Thanks to Ken H. Morgan for contributing to this issue of this compilation.



B.C. Birding News Briefs

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

Cannings Honoured –While standing in the registration line at this year’s B.C.F.O. annual meeting in Creston, I heard several people congratulate Richard J. (Dick) Cannings for a recent honour bestowed on him and his brothers, Robert and Sydney by Okanagan College. The three brothers were made Honorary Fellows of the college on 7 June for their many contributions and dedication to extending nature appreciation to the B.C. public. –based partly on Anonymous. 2008. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 16 May 2008:3 and Anonymous. 2008. *B.C. Nature* 46(2):6.

Thanks, Phil –I am sure that virtually all B.C.F.O. members will share my regrets that Phillip S. Henderson has decided to step down as Editor of *B.C. Birding* after his excellent performance of this undertaking since taking over from Andy and Marilyn Buhler in 2003. Thanks, Phil, for the many hours devoted to this important contribution to B.C.’s birding and ornithological communities.

Paul Jones Profiled –B.C.F.O. member Paul Jones is best known to Sunshine Coast and Vancouver area members, as his substantial contributions to B.C. conservation and ornithology are focused primarily in those parts of the province. Those who have read his book on Marbled Murrelets and his successful search for their nests were also aware of his childhood in India. More details on his rich, interesting life in various parts of our planet to date have recently been summarized by his wife, Mavis R. Jones, as the latest in a series of biographical profiles in *Discovery* 37:10-15, 2008.

Coues Award to Hobson –The 2007 Elliott Coues Award of the American Ornithologists’ Union for “extraordinary contributions to ornithological research” went to Saskatoon’s Keith A. Hodson, currently outgoing Editor of *Waterbirds*. Although most of his research has been conducted in the prairie provinces, Keith’s ornithological research career started with B.C. studies on Pelagic Cormorants –based on Anonymous. 2008. *Auk* 125:239-240.

Fenwick Lansdowne –Canada lost one its outstanding wildlife painters with the passing of J. Fenwick Lansdowne in Victoria on 26 July 2008 (CBC News report and *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 8 Aug./08:1). His paintings were well known to the public at large, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, when they were featured in various magazines, greeting cards, small cards in packets of tea and a series a books, with text by John A. Livingston. Honours included his appointment to the Order of Canada –based partly on personal memory and partly on B. Penn. 2004. *Focus* 17(3):16-21.

Vancouver Area Awards –The much-awarded Daphne Solecki received two more much-deserved awards during the 2008 annual general meeting of the Vancouver Natural History Society. Her efforts in founding and promoting the Young Naturalists’ Club, first within the Vancouver club, then expanding to other B.C. naturalist clubs and eventually other provinces netted her the Kay Beamish Award for Nature Education. In addition, she was awarded the Ney (Lifetime Achievement) Award for her roles in the conception, development and/or running of numerous Federation of B.C. Naturalists, Stanley Park Ecology Society and VNHS projects and ongoing programs, several of which are primarily about birds and others which involve birds among other organisms. *B.C. Birds* Associate Editor Dr. Mary I. Taitt was one of two recipients of the Frank Sanford Award for Community Service for her role as co-chair of the Boundary Bay Conservation Committee and Chair of the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust. Two other B.C.F.O. members, Glenda MacPherson and Istvan Orosi, were presented with 2008 volunteer awards, Glenda for her work on membership and Istvan for leading numerous field trips. – based on. A. Grant Duff. 2008. *Vancouver Nat.* 10(2): 16 and J. McCall. 2008. *Vancouver Nat.* 10(2):18.



BIRDING IN TAIWAN

NEXT TRIPS:

2008: Nov. 4~16: Endemics, Black-faced Spoonbill

2009: **March 19-April 1: SPECIAL TOUR FOR BCFO MEMBERS...**
at reduced price. Visit the home area of BCFO's partner society in
Changhua, Taiwan. Endemics, Lanyu Island; 14 days,
FROM VANCOUVER, INCLUDING AIR, \$4590 (sharing),
\$5090 (single). Ask for itinerary.

July. 18~19: Matsu; Chinese Crested Tern;

July. 20~26: Extension; endemics

Nov. 10~22: Endemics, Black-faced Spoonbill

PRICE: 13 days: From Taipei, Taiwan: \$4000 (sharing); \$4500 (single)
July, 9 days: Contact us for details and price

EARLY BOOKING DISCOUNT for regularly scheduled tours:

Register at least 60 days before tour start date; get 5% off tour price.

GROUP SIZE: 1~10, with 2 leaders, Simon Liao and Jo Ann MacKenzie
Private tours can be arranged.

www.birdingintaiwan.org

Collared Bush Robin, Formosan Whistling-Thrush, Steere's Liocichla, Taiwan Barwing, White-eared Sibia, Taiwan Yuhina, Yellow Tit, Flamecrest, Formosan Magpie, White-whiskered Laughingthrush, Swinhoe's and Mikado Pheasants are 12 of Taiwan's 15 generally recognized endemics. (Some authors recognize up to 29.) There are over 60 endemic sub-species such as *Black-browed [Taiwan] Barbet* and *[Taiwan] Hwamei*. Other birds include *Malayan Night-Heron*, *Pheasant-tailed Jacana* and *Collared Finchbill*. *Fairy Pitta* is present only during the breeding season. In spring, visit Lanyu Island with 6 bird specialties of its own, including an endemic subspecies of *Ryukyu Scops-Owl*. The globally threatened *Black-faced Spoonbill* winters in the Tsengwen Estuary.

Want to see one of the rarest birds in the world? *Chinese Crested Tern*, *Thalasseus bernsteini* nests in very small numbers in the tern reserve in the Matsu Archipelago.

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The Taiwan Specialists
ITBA is exclusive agent for Birding in Taiwan

