

# Y u k o n *WARBLER*



Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club - Winter 1995

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*Winter Willow Ptarmigan at Fish Lake, Yukon. Photo by Cameron Eckert*

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**Winter Events ♦ McIntyre Wetlands Threatened! ♦ Christmas Bird Counts  
Home of the Bluethroat ♦ A Long Way to Long Point**

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## Winter Field Trips and Events

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:** Are you ready to brave the cold in search of winter birds this Christmas? **Dress warmly** and bring a thermos of something warm to drink. (There is a \$7 fee for the National Audubon Society) - For more details contact count coordinators listed below.

**M'Clintock Bay - Sunday 17 December.** Meet at the Yukon River bridge at 9:15 am. Late comers can rendezvous with the group at Swan Haven on M'Clintock Bay at 12:30 pm. For details contact Helmut Grünberg (667-6703).

**Kluane Lake- Thursday 21 December.** For details contact Todd Heakes (841-4561).

**Whitehorse - Tuesday 26 December.** For details contact Wendy Nixon (668-7572). A potluck supper will follow at Lee Kubica's (535 Grove St. in Porter Creek). Bring something for the table.

**Watson Lake -** For date and details contact Rob Florkiewicz (536-2157).

**WEEKEND DAY TRIPS:** Dress warmly, wear appropriate footwear, bring a lunch and binoculars. For more information or to arrange a ride call Stuart Alexander at 633-5193.

**Sunday 21 January. Tagish Birding Tour - Winter Edition.** Ducks in winter in the Yukon? With Helmut Grünberg as guide last year's winter waterfowl prowl boasted a score and more Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers! **Dress warmly**, bring a lunch, and **meet at the Airport Chalet parking lot (Mohawk station on the Alaska Hwy across from the airport) at 10:00 am.**

**Sunday 18 February. February Feeder Round-up.** Does winter birding freeze your cheeks? Well, not if you follow Wendy Nixon on her February feeder round-up, the birding event that warms you inside and out. Dress warmly and **meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 10:30 am.**

**Saturday 2 March. Winter Ptarmigan Quest.** Cameron Eckert leads you up the mountain toward Fish Lake in search of Rock and Willow Ptarmigan, the north's most elegant winter birds (see the cover for a photographic review of last year's success). **Dress warmly**, bring snowshoes, skis, or high winter boots, and a lunch. **Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 10:30 am.**

### **EVENING EVENTS**

**Thursday 11 January. A Bird in the Hand Identification Workshop!** Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn about bird identification with the help of study skins, a colourful collection of feathers and Pam Sinclair. **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

**Tuesday 23 January. A Bird's Eye View!** Join photographer Greg Kubica for an illustrated slide presentation exploring the myriad colours and forms of northern birds. **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

**Thursday 8 February. The Jewel of Yukon's Boreal Forest - the La Biche River Valley!** Cameron Eckert will guide us on a trip to a spectacular and unique Yukon ecosystem. The lush forests of the La Biche River Valley are home to an astonishing number of bird species found nowhere else in the Yukon. **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

**Wednesday 21 February. Birds of the Barrenlands!** Dennis Kuch will provide a 20 year retrospective on polar gas development and environmental assessment focusing on the Central Arctic birds of the Keewatin. **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

**More events ...**

## More Winter Events

**Thursday 14 March. Photo Exhibition and Social Get-together!** Jeanette McCrie's wonderful photographs will be displayed for our enjoyment during this social evening. Jeanette will offer a few pointers about bird photography! **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

**Wednesday 27 March. Banding Birds - Big and Small!** Biologist Wendy Nixon will explain the science of bird banding with examples from various Yukon bird banding projects. **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

**Wednesday 10 April. The Annual Gizz to Gee Whizz Identification Workshop!** In celebration of National Wildlife Week, Cameron Eckert will help us make sense of avian diversity with an illustrative and artful slide show presentation. **Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.**

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## YBC News and Notes

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### **AGM marks change**

The 1995 Annual General Meeting ushered in some new faces to the Board of Directors. Cameron Eckert retired as President. Thanks to Cameron for his spirited service as President for the past 2½ years. Cameron will continue as newsletter editor. Pam Sinclair was elected President and in turn passed on the Field Trip Coordinator's position to Stuart Alexander. Great thanks to Pam who organized 71 field trips in the past 2½ years! A truly remarkable effort! The Board shuffle continued as Dave Mossop passed on the Events Coordinator's position to Wendy Nixon who in turn passed on the Secretary's position to Mary Whitley. Thanks to Dave for organizing winter seminars. As well, thanks to Wendy for an excellent job as Secretary! Greg Kubica, now 17 had to relinquish the job of Youth Coordinator. Thanks to Greg, in particular for his fine work on the Whitehorse Checklist. Members returned to the Board were Jeremy Baumbach as Treasurer, Helmut Grünberg as Sightings Coordinator, Lee Kubica as Checklist Coordinator, Dennis Kuch as Projects Coordinator, and René Carlson as Birdathon Coordinator with the help of Sue Mueller.

### **Ski Club thanks YBC**

The Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club offers its thanks to YBC for supporting our proposal to develop a winter nature trail on the McIntyre ski trails. The project was approved in October and we have Randi Mulder working on it. She is preparing interpretive signs to be placed along the trail. Some of the signs will be about birds in winter and bird identification. As well, birdfeeders will be placed at sites along the trail in the hopes that skiers will get to see some of the birds they are reading and learning about!

The grand opening of the winter nature trail is expected to be on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Come up to the Chalet and join us for a ski of the nature trail! The opening will be postponed if temperatures are colder than -20 °C at noon. For more information call Rosanna (667-4672) or Karen (668-4477). Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,  
Rosanna White

### **Yukon Bird Club's Gift Membership!**

*This new special gift membership includes next year's membership (starting in April) plus this edition of the Yukon Warbler for only \$15! Recipients will also receive a letter of welcome from YBC's Prez, a nice card, and a couple of checklists!*



# Cranes above the Pelly

by Mary Whitley

*Many Yukoners were saddened by the death of YBC member and Faro resident Con Carlson this past fall. Mary Whitley recalls happy times with Con on the Pelly River. The Yukon Bird Club would like to thank Mary and Gerry Whitley for their generous contribution in memory of Con to YBC's library fund*



Sandhill Cranes. Photo by Jim Hawkings

The sky was dotted with skeins of shimmering grey and white birds and the sound of their calls could almost always be heard. Twice a year the spectacular Sandhill Crane migration occurs along the Tintina Trench above the Pelly River. They come like clockwork in late April and they go in the fall, in September during hunting season.

I was fortunate this fall to be present for this seasonal passage as the cranes flew south from their breeding grounds in Alaska and as far west as Siberia to their wintering grounds in the central U.S. On some days the head wind was strong. Then they seemed to fly closer to the ground, just above the mountain ridges. One small flock flew particularly low over our camp, battling the wind. In their efforts, the usual long straight line of birds was wavering. Their wings flashed white in the sun, then dark as the birds manoeuvred for the best position. It was like the curtaining of the northern lights as they dance and weave.

I was on the Pelly River for a moose hunt with Con Carlson, family friend and fellow birder. It was warm and sunny, idyllic days at the end of summer. As it turned out, this was the last crane migration Con was to witness as he died in October due to heart disease.

Unknown to most Yukon birders, Con, a resident at Little Salmon Lake, made a valuable contribution to information on Yukon birds over the years. He was a careful observer of the comings and going of waterfowl and other birds, especially the cranes. The information he has made available to the Canadian Wildlife Service for the upcoming "*Birds of the Yukon*" has filled in a big blank in their data base. Con's careful observations for more than a decade have shown that the first return of the Sandhill Cranes in the spring spans a three day period from April 27 to 29. Birds and birders alike have lost a true friend.

## Act Now!

# Residential development threatens McIntyre Creek wetlands

Of the many wetlands within Whitehorse city limits, none is probably better known to birders than those associated with McIntyre Creek as it flows from Fish Lake south of the City to its confluence with the Yukon River downtown. Recently, some of these city jewels have become the targets of development proposals. Yukon birders can help defend this critical bird habitat by getting informed about the plans and by informing the planners of the other values of these areas.

The McIntyre Creek West country residential subdivision involves the building of 93 1-hectare lots on the bench between McIntyre Creek and the Fish Creek wetlands near the junction of Fish Lake Road and the Copper Haul Road, just south of the Alaska Highway. While City administration and some members of Council have reservations about building such a development off the highway, the territorial government contracted for and recently released a feasibility study for the subdivision.

There is some pressure to move quickly on the proposal in an election year, as country residential lots are limited and in demand. City Council must first amend the Official Community Plan however, as the area is designated Open Space (which unfortunately only means "open to development" and provides no protection whatsoever) and was not identified as residential in the plan.

The feasibility study makes no bones about its limitations. It was not intended to be an environmental assessment (which STILL are not

required in the Yukon) or even assess the "suitability" of the proposal, but merely pass on its engineering possibilities. Dissenting voices are heard in the report, notably from the City's Director of Planning Services and from the territorial Department of Renewable Resources. While the City's administration questions the costs of development of remote neighbourhoods and whether this is the best use of the land, Renewable Resources is more direct. Development in an area considered to be wilderness, and important wildlife habitat, "would be a detraction."

Unfortunately, Renewable Resources is also cited as commenting that "from available information, there do not appear to be any potential wildlife or habitat conflicts" with the proposal!! No indication is provided about what information is available.

The McIntyre Creek West subdivision proposal will be before City Council this winter. If supported, the process requires public consultation before amending the Community Plan. While far short of a proper environmental assessment, this is the only provision for assembling more "available information" for a more informed decision. Close your eyes and you won't see. Close your mouth and you won't be heard. If you have concerns about these wetlands and their inhabitants, please make them known directly to City Council, or, if you prefer, through the Yukon Bird Club.

Where would we go for our spring birdsong workshop?

**Please voice your concerns about the fate of one of Whitehorse's most valuable wetlands! Write or call the Mayor or a City Councilor today!**

**Call Mayor Cathy Watson - 668-8626**

**2121 2nd Ave, Whitehorse, Y1A 1C2**

**Fax: 668-8639**





# Fall field trip highlights!

*by Stuart Alexander and Pam Sinclair*

*Thanks goes to all the trip leaders who helped make the fall season such a success!*

## **Fall Migration at Swan Lake!**

Spectacular weather greeted 21 people who joined Helmut Grünberg for a tour of Swan Lake. Migration was in full swing with eight raptor species, including a Northern Hawk-Owl, a Peregrine Falcon, and a Northern Goshawk,! Numerous Yellow-rumped Warblers, American Tree Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos provided many good looks at these fast-flitting songbirds. A rare Black-backed Woodpecker moving along the forest edge did not stop for long, and two early Lapland Longspurs reminded us that winter was fast approaching. While we lounged at the traditional lunch spot, we were surprised by an almost constant procession of Spruce Grouse making a break for it and flying heavily across the wide expanse of marshes, presumably to reach the forest on the other side - at least a dozen made the hazardous flight (recall the number of lurking raptors)!.

## **Hiking up Stony Creek!**

Lee Kubica's Birding and Aerobics Club headed uphill once again this year along Stony Creek, on September 23. The hikers were rewarded with views of several majestic Golden Eagles soaring over the ridgetop. Ptarmigan were scarce, but the group enjoyed a vigorous and scenic walk featuring beautiful fall colours, fantastic scenery, and the invigorating sunshine and fall breezes.

## **The Second Annual Great Skagway Birding Adventure!**

Eleven hardy birders braved typical Skagway weather in order to view some of the promised coastal avian riches on October 7. Most of the coastal specialties cooperated, with spectacular showings from some. Several raucous Steller's Jays joined us for lunch, reminding Hillcrest residents of Stella! Two Marbled Murrelets, the tiny auk with such secretive breeding habits, were floating on calm seas in their handsome black and white winter plumage. Oregon Juncos posed briefly in full scope-view for a few observers. An unusually cooperative American Tree Sparrow was enjoyed by all eleven of us stepping up to the scope one by one, until the resident whose window the scope also appeared to be pointing at appeared with some concerns about what on earth we were looking at! On the way to Dyea we were all treated to a close view of five Harbour Porpoises frolicking in a bay. What a treat!

## **Yellow-billed Loons in October!**

Is it possible for 13 birders and a baby to just go out and find a Yellow-billed Loon in southern Yukon in October? Well, this was the objective of the October 21<sup>st</sup> trip, and it certainly was not a loon-less trip. First for the day was a Pacific Loon near the dam on Schwatka Lake. Common Loons were most abundant, with four in winter plumage and one still in breeding finery. A possible Red-throated Loon was observed by three people and identified with considerable dependance on gestalt. Even loon-like Horned and Red-necked grebes were tallied. But alas, Yellow-billed Loons were not to be found, although one had been seen at Army Beach, the last stop of the day, just the week before. Is it possible that one flew by while the crowd was distracted by some of the day's other sightings? More than once along Schwatka Lake, attention was turned landward to study woodpeckers, first a pair of Downies and later a lone Three-toed Woodpecker, or to compare the songs of the ever-sweet Black-capped Chickadee and the lusty Boreal Chickadee. And no one could escape the distraction and raucous commentary as a flock of 13 gulls, including one first-winter Glaucous Gull, jockeyed their way south. Other pleasant diversions included Buffleheads, two Bald Eagles, and the flowing synchronicity of 200 Bohemian Waxwings (an aurora of Waxwings, as one observer put it).

***Continued on page 7 ...***

## More fall field trip highlights

### November Feeder Round-up.

With the muffins, squares, fresh bread, and carrot cake offered during this year's November 25<sup>th</sup> feeder round-up, it seems quite fitting that a baker's-dozen birders saw a baker's-dozen species. Pine Grosbeaks topped the list with over 50 sightings. A Boreal Chickadee or two were at a few feeders. Two redpolls suspiciously white enough to be classified as possible Hoary were spotted among Common Redpolls. Crossbills were among the highlights of the trip; half a dozen White-winged Crossbills were seen at a Porter Creek feeder metropolis while a similar number of Red Crossbills were at two Pilot Mountain feeders. Other sightings of note included two Red-breasted Nuthatches (Pilot Mountain), one Dark-eyed Junco (Horse Creek), and one Bald Eagle (an incidental sighting on Schwatka Lake made between feeder stops). And to round the list to thirteen, add a lone Gray Jay, a few Black-billed Magpies, and some ever-present Common Raven. Honorary mention should also be made of one feeder stop where Ruffed Grouse are often seen; this year's group, however, had to be content with signs of their recent presence in the fresh snow. Thanks to Linda Cameron, Bob Murket, Lauren and Liz Bradley, and Kate Ostrom for welcoming a crowd of cold birders into their warm homes!

### Request for information

## Song dialects in Golden-crowned Sparrows

by **Glen Chilton**



The White-crowned Sparrow has been the subject of so many scientific studies that it has been called the lab rat of the bird world. Reasons for this are many. It has a wide breeding distribution, and is reasonably abundant over most of its range. The five subspecies differ in their behaviours. The single song of the male is relatively short and simple, and varies from one region to the next in a series of song "*dialects*".

For the past seven years, I have been studying the song dialects of White-crowned Sparrows in Alberta, British Columbia, and Washington. My colleagues and I have found that specific song dialects persist for many years, but that the boundaries between them move in unpredictable ways. Males apparently learn to sing the same song types as their fathers. The males sing to attract females, and females seem unconcerned about dialect differences.



Even though the White-crowned Sparrow is one of the best-studied songbird in the world, the biology of its closest relative, the Golden-crowned Sparrow, is virtually unknown. In an effort to address this gap in our knowledge, I plan to undertake a study of Golden-crowns in 1996. Do male Golden-crowned Sparrows sing one song type each, like White-crowns, or do they have a repertoire of songs like Harris' Sparrow, another close relative? Do they have song dialects? Do females sing?

The first step is to actually find the birds! I would be very grateful if Yukon Bird Club members could provide me with information about localities in which they have found Golden-crowns to be reasonably abundant. Perhaps your birding notes include details about spring arrival dates. ANY information is a good start! I can be reached at the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1N4, or by E-mail at: [gchilton@acs.ucalgary.ca](mailto:gchilton@acs.ucalgary.ca). Phone: 403-220-5102 or Fax: 403-289-9311.



# Learning more from silhouette

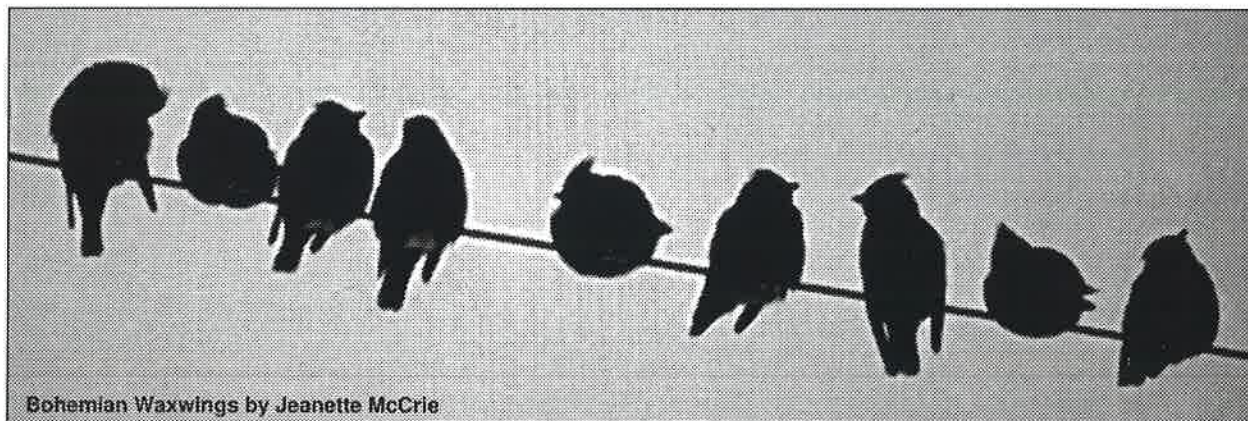
by *Jeremy Baumbach*

In my last column (*Yukon Warbler, Fall '95*) I suggested using a bird's silhouette, specifically its relative size and overall shape, as a starting point in identification efforts. These characteristics help to determine the bird's family (e.g., sparrow or warbler) and thus narrow the field, making identification a more manageable task. And there is still more we can glean from a bird's silhouette.

After relative size and overall body shape, the most important part of a bird's silhouette is its bill shape. This is another major clue to the bird's family. Look carefully at the bird's bill. Is it long or short? An easy-to-use benchmark is whether the bill is longer or shorter than the length of the bird's head. Sometimes this characteristic will even help to discriminate between two species in the same family (e.g., Downy versus Hairy Woodpeckers). Is the bill thick or thin? Does it curve down? Is the bill hooked at the tip? Birds' bills often reflect their eating habits, a good pointer to the bird's family: birds of prey have sharp hooked bills for tearing at flesh; warblers have slender bills for picking insects off of leaves; finches have conical bills for opening seeds. Beyond identifying the bird's family, bill characteristics often help to differentiate species: some species of sandpipers can be identified based on bill curvature. Similarly, as we learned on a fall field trip, whether a loon's bill is held horizontally or tilted

upwards is an important clue to differentiating between species of loon. In sum, a bird's bill is well worth attending to.

Finally, so far as silhouette is concerned, notice tail and wing shapes. These clues are especially important for identifying birds seen only in flight, often birds of prey. Does the bird have a shorter fan-shaped tail or is the tail long and narrow? The relative length of the bird's tail to its head is often a good measure to have in mind. By attending to the bird's tail you will be able to tell terns from gulls, and get a good start on distinguishing between hawks and telling Bald from Golden Eagles. Similarly, wing shape is worth noting. Are the wings pointed or rounded at the end (falcons versus hawks)? Are they bent at the elbow or straight (terns versus gulls)? How are the wings held out from the body - flat or in an upwards V-shape? Perhaps best of all, these aspects of silhouette do not require good light, or even, often, binoculars.



Bohemian Waxwings by Jeanette McCrie

## References and further reading

Dunne, P., Sibley, D., and C. Sutton. 1988. **Hawks in Flight**. Houghton Mifflin. Boston.

J.E. Lentz and J. Young. 1985. **Birdwatching: A Guide for Beginners**. Capra Press. Santa Barbara.



**Great Birding Moments****The Bluethroat of my dreams****by Wendy Nixon**

In June of 1980 I found myself working on a caribou study for the Canadian Wildlife Service in northern Yukon. Our camp was in the hills due south of Clarence Lagoon with a view of the Beaufort Sea to the north, the British Mountains to the south and the Alaskan border to the west. The low lying areas were covered in cotton grass tussocks, small shrubs and a rainbow of flowering plants. The wet draws and small drainages supported dense thickets of willow. We had been working in the area a few weeks when the late Bob Frisch (author of *Birds by the Dempster Highway*) came by to visit for a few days. Our focus turned from caribou to birds and more specifically to the legendary Bluethroat observed only once (1973) inside Canada's border. I went to bed late that night, with the sun still bright above the northern horizon, and had a dream about seeing a Bluethroat. The next morning at breakfast I exclaimed that I had seen a Bluethroat. . . but only in my dreams. (Later, when I left the cook tent, Bob's companion commented "*I'm here and she's dreaming about some bird?*").



**Male Bluethroat at Angel Creek, Yukon, June 14, 1980.  
Photo by Art Martell.**

Later that day, not 500 meters from our camp in a willowy draw Kate McEwan saw a bird that fit the description of a *male Bluethroat!* It was singing an elaborate song that should (in theory) have been irresistible to any female within range. Indeed there was a female Bluethroat observed briefly nearby. Art Martell and Bob Frisch confirmed Kate's finding. I joined the group later and watched the Bluethroat display for half an hour. The bird would fly up 10 or 15 meters above the willows and flutter down like a leaf singing a series of burry buzzes and warbling

chortles that could be heard at a distance even above the relentless wind. Seeing this bird with the dazzling blue throat put on such a theatrical display was indeed a dream come true.

**Got a birder's blooper? I want to hear from you!***Dear fellow birders,*

I am writing a story about the lighter side of birdwatching highlighting the comical pitfalls of bird identification. I want to hear your stories! Please give me a call (667-6703) or write me a note with the details of your own misadventures on the birding trail. Thanks!

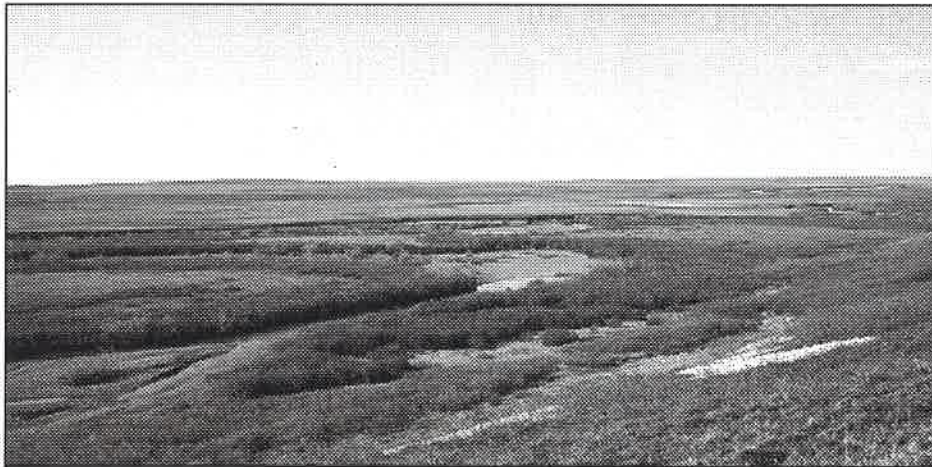
Helmut Grünberg  
807 Wheeler, Whitehorse, Y1A 2P8



# Home of the Bluethroat

by Cameron Eckert

In 1850, Edward Adams was a surgeon and naturalist aboard the British ship *Enterprise* which had been sent to the Bering Sea in search of the missing Franklin expedition. On June 5, 1851 Adams was traveling overland from Norton Sound to the Koupac River in northwestern Alaska when he discovered North America's first Bluethroat. It was 123 years later, on June 9, 1973, when P.S. Taylor and co-workers discovered Canada's first Bluethroat - a male singing in tall brush bordering a small lake along the upper Babbage River on the Yukon's North Slope.



A closer look at Bluethroat country on the upper Running River, Yukon.  
June 19, 1992. Photo by Cameron Eckert

The Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) is an old world thrush which breeds in most of northern and central Europe and across northern Asia to eastern Siberia and Manchuria. It winters from northern Africa across India to southeast Asia. Several races are recognized including *cyaneacula* (white throat patch), *magna* (wholly blue throat) and *svecica* (red

throat patch) which breeds across northern Siberia, northern Alaska to the Yukon. Despite the Bluethroat's regular occurrence in Alaska and the Yukon this species has never been documented elsewhere in North America - the Yukon is home to Canada's only Bluethroats!

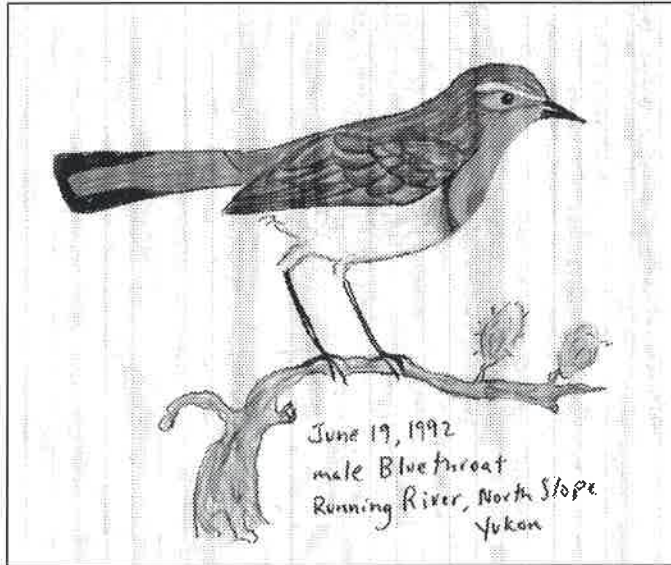
The Bluethroat is one of the Yukon's most stunning and rarely seen songbirds. While many birders have traveled the Yukon's North Coast in hopes of observing this species, few have been lucky enough to find this elusive bird. Those who have seen the Bluethroat do not soon forget the experience. The adult male is a striking bird which gets its name from its iridescent blue throat. The blue throat is set off from the white breast and belly by a black and rust chest band. Like a hummingbird's, the iridescent throat is most striking when viewed straight on. The upperparts are earthy brown. A bold white eye brow and rusty-red tail base which flashes boldly during song displays are also distinctive field marks. The female is similar to the male but has a greyish white throat rather than an iridescent blue throat.

The Bluethroat's song is complex, fascinating and absolutely inspiring. The Bluethroat has an extraordinary ability to mimic other birds and will string together in one long song the unlikely combination of Fox Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, American Golden-Plover and Arctic Tern! Males often sing while performing aerial flight displays - fanning their tails and flashing bold rusty-red feathers.

Since the discovery of the Yukon's first Bluethroat in 1973 there have been relatively few sightings. On June 14, 1980 Kate McEwan discovered a singing male in a willow draw near Angel Creek in the foothills of the British Mountains. To date, the only female reported was one observed briefly near Angel Creek on June 14, 1980. On July 18, 1986, Wendy Nixon and Don Russell observed a single male in an alder thicket along the upper Blow River. On June 19, 1992 Cheryl Bell, Cameron Eckert and Pam Sinclair observed two males singing in low willows along the upper Running River.



## More to discover about Yukon's Bluethroats



**Male Bluethroat, upper Running River, Yukon.  
June 19, 1992. Field sketch by Cameron Eckert**

On June 9, 1993 Mark Connor, Cameron Eckert, Dwayne Semple and Pam Sinclair discovered two singing males in low willows along the upper Babbage River. From June 9 to 19, 1993, a total of nine male Bluethroats were tallied by Marc Boulerice, Jim Hawkings, Nancy Hughes, and Joyce Majiski in similarly shrubby habitat along the upper Clarence River.

Bluethroats do not appear to occur on the outer Yukon coast. While a variety of habitats along the coast have been well explored, Bluethroats have only been observed further inland along rivers, generally in areas less traveled by birders. The occurrence of Bluethroats away from the easily accessed coastal habitats helps explain why this species went undiscovered for so long and is still rarely observed. As well, when not singing,

the Bluethroat is a difficult to observe skulker which spends most of its time quietly foraging deep in the tangles of low shrub. This may explain why only one female has been observed in the Yukon.

Despite the scarcity of observations, a pattern of habitat preference has emerged from the 16 observations of singing males on the North Slope. All birds were observed in low shrubs, either alder or willows, along rivers or drainages. In one case (1973) a bird was observed at a lake edge. The Bluethroat has been better studied on the Seward Peninsula of northwestern Alaska. While its primary breeding habitat is low shrub thicket, a study of Bluethroats along the upper Noatak River of the Seward Peninsula found that adjacent tussock tundra was a critical habitat component.

**Bluethroat observations in the Yukon: 1973-1993**

Date	Sex	Count	Location
June 9, 1973	M	1	upper Babbage River
June 14, 1980	M	1	Angel Creek
June 14, 1980	F	1	Angel Creek
July 18, 1986	M	1	upper Blow River
June 19, 1992	M	2	upper Running River
June 9, 1993	M	2	upper Babbage River
June 9, 1993	M	3	upper Clarence River
June 15, 1993	M	1	upper Clarence River
June 16, 1993	M	3	upper Clarence River
June 19, 1993	M	2	upper Clarence River

The timing of migration of Bluethroats in the Yukon is not known. The three earliest records, all on June 9, may have had more to do with the arrival of the observers than the arrival of the Bluethroats. In Alaska, the first spring migrants reach the Seward Peninsula in late May but movements of birds have been noted through mid-June. The latest Yukon observation, July 18, indicates that male Bluethroats spend the summer on the North Slope but the timing of their departure is not known. In Alaska, most individuals depart in early August with the latest observations in the last few days of August.

Breeding status remains the largest gap in our knowledge of Bluethroats in the Yukon. The single observation of a female in 1980 is very exciting as it indicates that the Bluethroats found along Yukon's North Slope are not just males singing in vain at the edge of their range. The single observation of a female indicates that Bluethroats have likely bred in the Yukon. Confirmation of their breeding status would be an extremely exciting discovery - the perfect quest for someone with a desire to experience a remarkable landscape while learning more about one of Canada's most extraordinary birds!



# Birding in Canada's Deep South

by Greg Kubica

I first heard about the Doug Tarry Award when my dad returned from a trip to Victoria. He had picked up a Victoria Field Naturalist and voilà. Almost as soon as he got home I had a letter sent off for an application form. After completing my resume and the application form, the decision was out of my hands and all I could do was wait. As May rolled around, I became a bit impatient but like they say: "*Patience is a virtue*" and on May 15 I was informed that I would be one of six recipients of the Doug Tarry award. After all that waiting I was ecstatic at this news and I knew where I would be spending that first week in July.

The flight to Toronto was a little nerve wracking but I made it. At the Toronto International Airport I was met by Peter Burke and after a long drive we finally made it to the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO). The program began with supper and a slide show about the LPBO and the research projects that were in progress.



A Northern Cardinal in the hand is better than ...?  
Photo by Greg Kubica

The first full day began at 3:30 a.m. when we were required to set the mist nets. Brown-headed Cowbirds, Gray Catbirds and House Wrens dominated the morning. The birds were weighed, measured and banded before being released. The afternoon was spent with artist Peter Burke who provided instruction in the art of field sketching. The drawings of Tree Swallows improved with each try.

Day two was as early as day one and the banding continued. Two of the highlights were my first ever Field Sparrow and the almost caught American Woodcock which was also a life lister. Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, House Finches, Willow Flycatchers and Red-winged Blackbirds added to the morning's entertainment. The afternoon was spent at a Tree Swallow research site where the group aided in the post-breeding clean-up (removal of old nests, eggs and dead birds). While we were in the field, new additions to the life list included Indigo Bunting, Bobolink and Carolina Wren. The evening entertainment included a

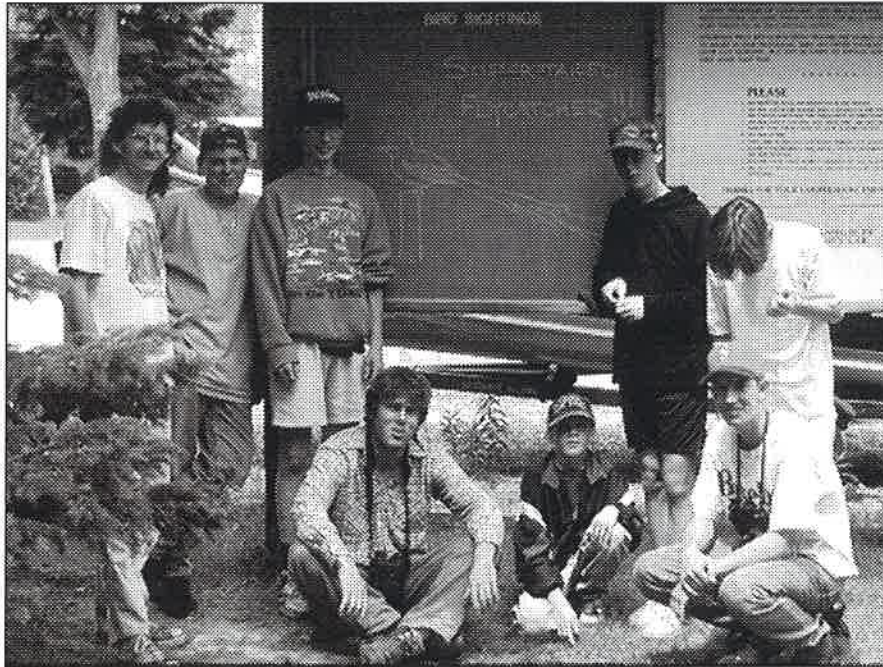
King Rail dike walk without the King Rail. As darkness approached, hundreds of Tree Swallows, Bank Swallows and Common Grackles filled the air.

**Continued on page 13 ...**



## From Acadian Flycatchers to Common Moorhens ...

Wilson Tract, local birding hotspot and bug capital of the universe, was our destination on day three. In one morning we identified 19 species that were new to my life list, including Wood Thrush, Pine Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Hooded Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Veery, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Great-crested Flycatcher, Ovenbird, Cerulean Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-billed Cuckoo, Mourning Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk and an Eastern Bluebird.



Happy bird banders ponder life after the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher!  
(Author standing third from left)

The afternoon was spent mutilating an adult Veery. The production of museum specimens that have lifelike qualities takes much time, patience and practice. We six were missing at least two of the three. That evening we participated in a research project which was involved in the censusing of marsh birds. The biologist played a species tape and we listened for 10 minutes counting all the birds during that time. Marsh Wrens, Common Yellowthroats and Swamp Sparrows were the most common birds in the area. Between census spots we heard a Sandhill Crane, Great Blue Heron and a new bird for the trip - Common

Moorhen.

On day four the banding was becoming routine but the early mornings were taking their toll. Our first Carolina Wren was caught early that morning. My first experience at banding the incredibly vicious Common Grackle took place. My fingers are recovering nicely. In the afternoon, we participated in a second censusing project. Mary Gartshore is revegetating an area with native plants and is trying to determine the bird species which will become associated with this new vegetation. The area was dominated by sparrows - Field, Grasshopper, Chipping, Savannah and Song Sparrows.

Day five was the highlight of the trip. A return to Mary's study area to see nesting Hooded Warblers was successful. An added bonus was a rare sighting of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. This sighting was recorded in the Ontario rare bird report for July. That night an expedition to find Chuck-Will's-Widow was successful in that they were both seen and heard.

The all work and no play mode was broken on day six when the group went mini-golfing. We also managed to see Eastern Meadowlarks, Wood Ducks, Gadwalls, and Least Sandpipers on the way to the course. The evening Barred Owl trip resulted in hearing a Whip-Poor-Will.

On the final day, new friends from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and the Yukon prepared to depart from Long Point to carry with them new found enthusiasm for birding, body surfing and traveling.





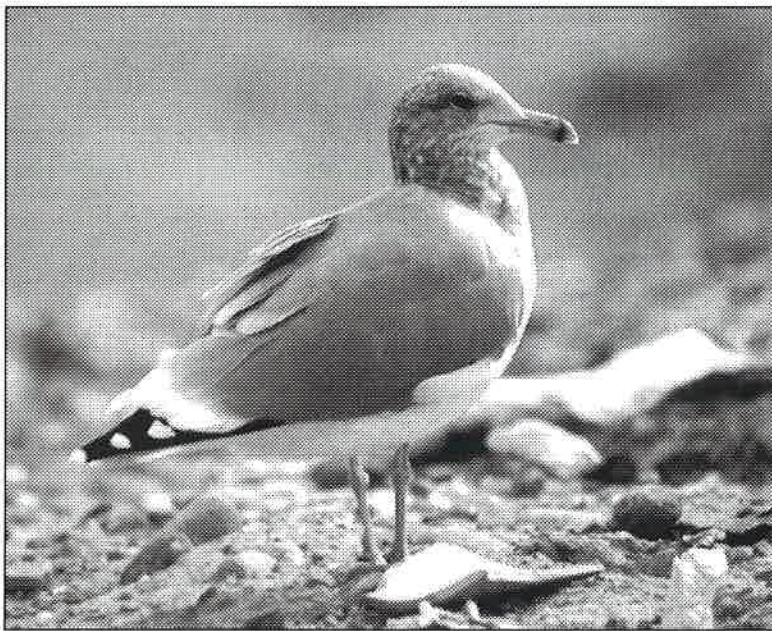
*Yukon Gallery presents*

## California Gulls visit Whitehorse

*by Cameron Eckert*



Second-winter California Gull, Whitehorse, Sept. 20, 1995.  
Photo by Cameron Eckert



Winter plumage adult California Gull, Whitehorse, Sept. 20, 1995  
Photo by Cameron Eckert

This past fall gull enthusiasts had the rare opportunity to observe two California Gulls, an adult and second-winter bird, in Whitehorse - only the second and third documented occurrence of this species in the Yukon!

Both birds appeared noticeably smaller than adjacent Herring Gulls. Their rather pencil-shaped bill looked very slender compared to the Herring Gull. As well, their long narrow wings and effortless lift-off gave the impression of much more graceful flyers compared to the Herring Gull's heavy flight.

The second-winter California Gull (top left) was discovered on September 20<sup>th</sup> and lingered until October 4<sup>th</sup>, providing an excellent chance to study its striking plumage and delicate presentation. The bicoloured bill showed a clean distinction between the black tip and the dull pinkish base. In flight the bold white rump contrasted with the black tail. Its leg colour was intermediate between that of a juvenile (pink) and that of an adult (yellow): it showed pinkish feet and greenish-yellow legs.

The adult California Gull (bottom left) was first discovered on September 20<sup>th</sup> and only remained three days, but was enjoyed by many. The muddy grey hood was characteristic of winter plumage. Its leg colour was dull yellow which stood out among the many pink legged Herring and Thayer's Gulls. The darker grey mantle colour of the adult California Gull was particularly striking as it flew among the Herring Gulls.

The gulls have departed for the winter, but spring is really not that far away!

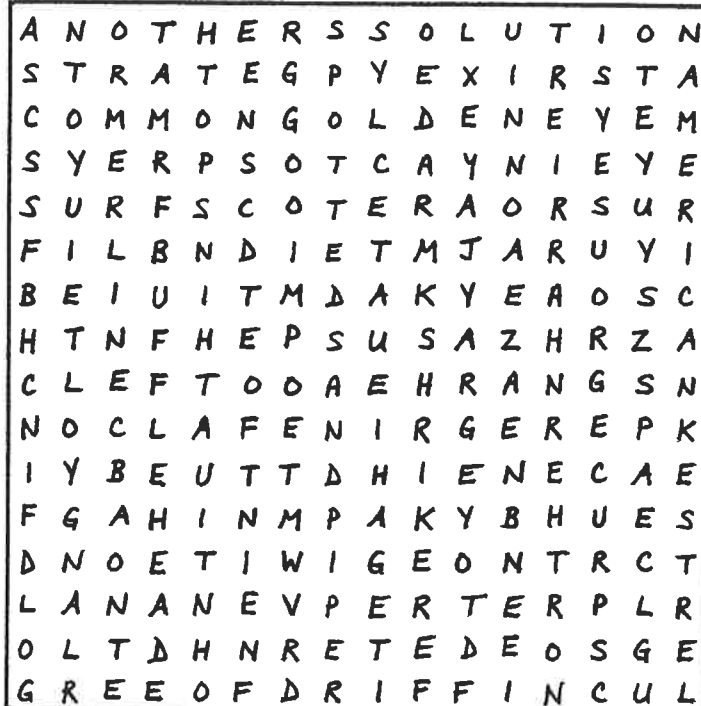


# A bird finder's word finder!

by *Jeremy Baumbach*

Many birds have been called by different names in the past or have descriptive colloquial names. What are the current common names for the birds listed below. Try to find the common names in the word-find puzzle to the right. Answers are only on the vertical or horizontal (no diagonals), but may be backwards or upside-down (solution on page 20). Good Luck!

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. whiskey-jack | 9. sparrow hawk |
| 2. pigeon hawk  | 10. butterball  |
| 3. butcher bird | 11. wild canary |
| 4. marsh hawk   | 12. skunk head  |
| 5. whistler     | 13. teeter-tail |
| 6. fool hen     | 14. bald pate   |
| 7. fish hawk    | 15. duck hawk   |
| 8. sea swallow  |                 |



## Yukon Birdlife Project promotes birding!

by *Frances Naylen*

To promote birdwatching throughout the year and throughout the territory, the *Yukon Birdlife Resource Package* is being created. The brainstorm behind this idea is Wendy Nixon who thought it would be a great idea for each community in the Yukon to have access to field guides and cassette tapes of bird songs, so folks could identify the birds they see and hear. Seeing this as an excellent educational opportunity, the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS) became involved to help expand this idea and bring a number of partners into the picture.

Libraries in ten Yukon communities will receive resource material on birds and next winter, YBC members and local bird biologists will conduct bird workshops throughout the territory. To complement the resource material and workshops, a collection of bird study skins

provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service and YTG's Department of Renewable Resources will be permanently housed at Yukon College for educators, biologists and the Yukon Bird Club to use for teaching purposes.

Last March, YCS submitted a proposal to the Yukon Environmental Action Program of DIAND's Arctic Environmental Strategy. The project has received funding and the distribution of the resource package to the community libraries will happen this winter! Initial response from community libraries has been very positive. Schools throughout the territory will also be informed of the Yukon Birdlife Resource Package and notified that it will be available from their local library, so teachers can incorporate birdwatching into their science or art curriculums.



## FieldNotes: Observations from the Field



Please send your sightings to Helmut Grünberg, (807 Wheeler, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2P8). Whenever possible include details such as date, location, number of birds, sex and age, and observers' names. Highlight interesting observations and include descriptions of rare species. This report contains documented and undocumented sightings. Please send your sightings according to the following seasonal schedule:

Winter (December 1 - February 29)

Spring (March 1 - May 31)

Summer (June 1 - July 31)

Fall (August 1 - November 30)

### The Fall Season

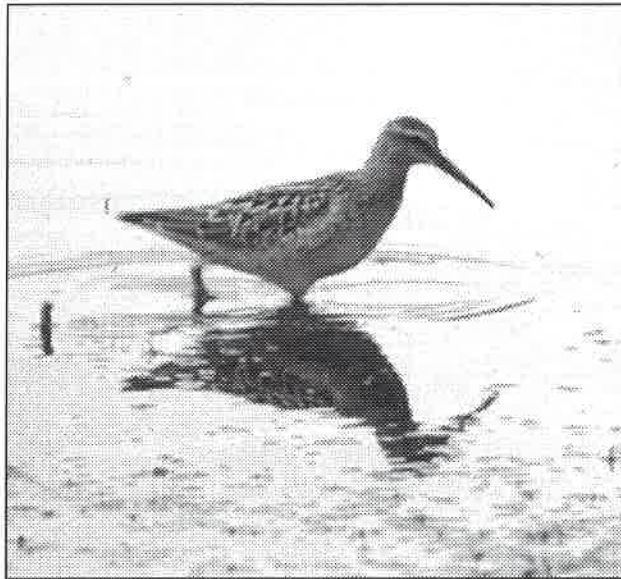
Three **Red-throated Loons**, rare in fall, were spotted on Lake Laberge on Oct. 16 (CE), and one was there on Oct. 29 (HG). Two **Pacific Loons** could be found on Schwatka Lake through October (CE,HG,PSi), and one was seen near Ross River on Aug. 17 (GK,LK). **Common Loons** were observed regularly on Schwatka Lake and Marsh Lake (m.ob.). One stayed at Caribou Lake till Oct. 30, the day before freeze-up (SW). A **Yellow-billed Loon** was sighted at Army Beach on Oct. 15 (CE,HG,PSi), and again on Oct. 29 (CE,PSi). Very late were three **Red-necked Grebes** spotted on Kluane Lake on Nov. 18 (GK,LK). It was not clear that more than one bird was involved in a spate of **Great Blue Heron** sightings including a single bird at Hidden Lake on Aug. 22 (GK,LK), one at the Whitehorse fish ladder on Aug. 23 (BaS), and a bird in flight over Porter Creek on Aug. 24 (CE,PSi).

A group of at least 15 **Tundra Swans** was on a pond south of Carmacks Sept. 15 (JM). A flock of 24 adult and 5 immature **Trumpeter Swans** was on a lake near Klukshu on Oct. 9 (LC,CE,HG,PSi). A flock was heard flying over in the Whitehorse area on Nov. 13 (BB,RMd). At Schwatka Lake, 26 swans were observed on Oct. 22 (JP); hundreds were flying south at Teslin, the last five on Oct. 28 (MGI). Forty **Greater White-fronted Geese** were flying over Swan Lake on Aug. 19 (HG). A very late **Green-winged Teal** was spotted along the Yukon River in Whitehorse on Nov. 18 (BaS,BoS). In October, four to six **Mallards** "backsides turned upside down" frequented a pond near Schwatka Lake, (JP). Five **Canvasback** were encountered at the Takhini Ponds on Aug. 27 (JM). A male **Redhead** was observed at Shallow Bay on Sept. 12 (PSi), and one was at Jackfish Bay on Oct. 29 (CE). Three female **Harlequin Ducks** were observed on the Yukon River in Whitehorse on Sept. 10, and one female was here on Oct. 9 (JB). Three male **Oldsquaw** were on Schwatka Lake on Oct. 10 (CE,HG). Over 100 **Bufflehead** were counted in Whitehorse on Oct. 29 (JM,PN). A female **Common Merganser** with six young was observed at Marsh Lake on Aug. 12 (RMI). Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** were reported from the Yukon River in Whitehorse on Sept. 24 (JM). Six **Ruddy Ducks** were seen near Pelly Crossing on Sept. 12 (GK,LK).

An **Osprey** was flying over Shallow Bay on Sept. 12 (PSi). A **Bald Eagle** was seen near the Yukon River in Whitehorse Oct. 29 (JM,PN), one showed up in Hillcrest on Nov. 12 (LC), and one sat on a tree overlooking Teslin Lake near Teslin on Nov. 21 (MGI). A pair of **Sharp-shinned Hawks** was at km 90 of the Dempster Hwy. on Aug. 1 (RMI); a single bird was observed at the Takhini Ponds on Aug. 28 (GK,LK), and one was encountered 70 km west of Whitehorse on Sept. 28 (BB,RMd). **Northern Goshawk** sightings included one along the North Canol Rd. on Aug. 16 (GK,LK), one with prey in its talons at the Dezadeash River on Aug. 26 (RMI); one at the Takhini Ponds on Oct. 9 (GK,LK), and one along the Tagish Rd. on Oct. 15 (CE,PSi). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was flying over Porter Creek on Oct. 3, and two were soaring over Whitehorse the same day (CE,PSi). **Golden Eagle** sightings included one at km 90 along the Dempster Hwy. on Aug. 1-2 (RMI), one 95 km north of Eagle Plains Lodge on Aug. 22 (BB,RMd), three at the Pelly River on Aug. 27 (BB,RMd), an adult soaring over Shallow Bay on Sept. 17 (CE,PSi), one at Haines Junction on Oct. 8 (BaS), and one apparently hunting **ptarmigan** at Geona Creek near Finlayson Lake on Nov. 15 (SW). One **Merlin** was observed at Quiet Lake on Aug. 15 (GK,LK), two at the Takhini Ponds on Aug. 26 (GK,LK), one at km 440 Dempster Hwy. on Aug. 22 (BB,RMd), one at Swan Lake on Sept. 3 (HG), and one at Chadburn Lake, Whitehorse on Sept. 23 (JM). A **Peregrine Falcon** hit a male **American Wigeon** twice knocking it into the river but not killing it at the Yukon River near the Indian River on Aug. 31 (BB,RMd); one was spotted in Porter Creek on Aug. 31 (GK,LK), and an adult was seen here on Sept. 26 (CE,PSi).



## More observations from the field



Stilt Sandpiper at Drury's Pond, Aug. 21, 1995.  
Photo by Greg Kubica

A **Spruce Grouse** hen leading nine chicks was at Marsh Lake Campground in August (PSw), and four birds spent several hours in a garden in Teslin on Sept. 25-26 (MGI). Nine **Willow Ptarmigan** were encountered near km 90 Dempster Hwy. July 31 (RMI). A female **White-tailed Ptarmigan** with five young were seen on Montana Mt. on Aug. 6 (CE,PSi), two were observed at Goldenside Mt., km 76 Dempster Hwy. Aug. 20 (BB,RMd), and 16 were counted at Sheep Mt. on Aug. 23 (RC). Three **Ruffed Grouse** were encountered in the woods near Schwatka Lake in September (PSw). Eight **Sharp-tailed Grouse** were seen at km 4 Dempster Hwy. on Aug. 24 (BB,RMd). Three adult and 25 immature American Coots were counted at "Coot Lake" near Pelly Crossing on Aug. 8 (AB), and one was swimming at the edge of Swan Lake on Oct. 1 (HG). 500 **Sandhill Cranes** were seen at Pelly River near Gull Rocks on Aug. 26 (BB,RMd).

A **Wandering Tattler** was observed along the North Canol Rd. on Aug. 16 (GK,LK), and a **Whimbrel** was spotted at Christmas Creek, near Kluane Lake on Aug.

18 (RC). Two **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were an exciting find at Drury's Ponds on Aug. 21; three **Western**, one **Pectoral**, two **Stilt Sandpipers** and five **Red-necked Phalaropes** were also present (GK,LK). A **Long-billed Dowitcher** was seen at Drury's Ponds on Aug. 26-28, and four juveniles were at Shallow Bay on Sept. 30 (CE,PSi). A **Red-necked Phalarope** in winter plumage did a lot of spinning in the water to bring up food from the bottom of Drury's Ponds on Aug. 17 (JM).

A **Long-tailed Jaeger** was seen at km 90 Dempster Hwy. July 31 (RMI). The start of the regular fall passage of **Thayer's Gulls** through southern Yukon was noted with one adult gull in Whitehorse on Aug. 16 (CE). A count of 15 adults was made on Sept. 13 (CE,PSi), and the overall highest count was 2 adults and 75 1st-winter immatures on Oct. 10 (CE). Two **California Gulls**, an adult and a 2nd-winter bird, first discovered in Whitehorse on Sept. 20 (CE), provided only the second fall record for this species in the Yukon; the adult was last seen on September 22, and the 2nd-winter bird stayed until Oct. 4 (CE). An adult **Glaucous Gull** was first seen on Aug. 25 (CE); up to three adults and four 1st-winter immatures were observed throughout September and October, with the last sighting of three adults on Nov. 3 (CE).



Immature Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Drury's Pond, Aug. 21, 1995.  
Photo by Cameron Eckert

One of two **Great Horned Owls** at the Dezadeash River was repeatedly harassed by a **Northern Goshawk** on Aug. 26 (RMI). One was heard at Pilot Mountain on Nov. 2 (BM), and one was at Sheep Mt. on Nov. 18 (GK,LK). A **Northern Hawk-Owl** was at Swan Lake on Oct. 10 (HG), and three were at Sheep Mt. on Nov. 18 (GK,LK).



## Even more observations from the field - Fall 1995

A **Short-eared Owl** was flying along the North Canal Rd. on Aug. 16 (GK,LK). A **hummingbird** visited a flower garden near Whitehorse twice on July 31 and once on Aug. 5 (BoC,EC). **Downy Woodpecker** sightings included one at a Watson Lake feeder on Oct. 24 (LE), a male at a Wolf Creek feeder on Nov. 9 (WN), a male at a Teslin feeder in November (MGI), and a female at a Horse Creek feeder near Lake Laberge in November (KO). A female **Downy Woodpecker** fed on standing dead sunflowers in Dawson through November (DM). **Hairy Woodpecker** sightings included up to two at a Whitehorse feeder through November (BaS,BoS), one near the Yukon River in Whitehorse on Oct. 29 (JM,PN), one female at a Whitehorse feeder from Nov. 7 (BoC,EC), a male and a female each at a Horse Creek feeder (KO) and a Teslin feeder (MGI) in November, and one at a Pilot Mountain feeder in November (BM). Two **Three-toed Woodpeckers** were observed at Marsh Lake Campground in August (PSw) and on Oct. 1 (BaS); one frequented dead pines in Whitehorse through November (JB); a female foraged on dead fir in Dawson on Nov. 21 (DM); and one frequented a Pilot Mountain feeder in November (BM). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was a prize find for birders in Watson Lake; present for a week in early November the bird was last seen on November 11 (MT,JW).

A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was sighted in Porter Creek on Aug. 22 (CE,PSi), a **Dusky Flycatcher** was observed on Montana Mt. on Aug. 6 (CE,PSi), and five **Alder Flycatchers** were tallied at Swan Lake on Aug. 20 (CE,HG,PSi). A late gathering of swallows at Carcross on Aug. 26 included many **Tree Swallows**, a **Violet-green Swallow**, a **Bank Swallow**, eight **Cliff Swallows** and eight **Barn Swallows** (HG). Two **Gray Jays** visited a Watson Lake feeder on Oct. 24 (LE), and three were at a Teslin feeder daily in November (MGI). A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was heard at Chadburn Lake on Sept. 23 (JM), and one was heard from the cliffs in Whitehorse on Sept. 24 (JB). An amazing seven birds were tallied at Jakes Corner on Oct. 21 (GK,LK). An **American Dipper** was at McIntyre Creek on Nov. 19 (BaS,BoS), and three were along the Yukon River in Whitehorse on Nov. 26 (BB,RMd).

The only **Golden-crowned Kinglet** reported was a bird in Porter Creek on Aug. 26 (CE,PSi). A record late male **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was spotted in a Carraghana hedge in Whitehorse on Nov. 14 (BaS,BoS). **American Robins** were feeding their young at a nest in Whitehorse in August (PSw). A flock of 20 robins was seen at the Dezadeash River on Aug. 26 (RMI), and a group of eight was still at the Dome in Dawson on Sept. 16 (JM). There was a late observation of a single bird in Teslin on Oct. 31 (HB,MB). A **Varied Thrush** was observed at Chadburn Lake on Sept. 23 (JM), and one was calling at the late date of Oct. 29 at Lake Laberge (HG).



Bohemian Waxwings in Riverdale, Nov. 11, 1995.  
Photo by Jeanette McCrie

Two flocks of 100 **Bohemian Waxwings** each were counted at Snafu Lake on Sept. 23, and at Marsh Lake on Sept. 20 and on Nov. 7 (RMI). The high numbers of **Bohemian Waxwings** in Whitehorse through the fall was a great thrill for many birders. High counts included 300 in Whitehorse on Nov. 8 (CE,DS) and at least 300 in Riverdale on Nov. 11 (JM). Flocks of Bohemians were also observed in Teslin from Oct. 5-7 (MGI). **Northern Shrike** sightings included an immature bird in Porter Creek on Aug. 9 (CE,PSi), one at Quiet Lake on Aug. 15 (GK,LK), one in Porter Creek on Sept. 23 and on Oct. 10 (CE,PSi), three at the Takhini Ponds on Oct. 14 (GK,LK,PK), and an immature bird at the Whitehorse airport on Oct. 18 (CE). Two **European Starlings** discovered in Whitehorse on Nov. 6 (LC,BaC,DC) were seen again about a week later (LC).



## Just a few more Fall observations ...



A Yellow-rumped Warbler rides the migrant wave at Drury's Pond. August 21, 1995. Photo by Cameron Eckert

Three **Warbling Vireos** were observed at Quiet Lake on Aug. 15 (GK,LK). A **Tennessee Warbler** was noted at Quiet Lake on Aug. 15 (GK,LK), and an immature bird seen in Porter Creek on Aug. 21 was only the second fall record for this species in the Whitehorse area (CE,PSi). Twenty **Yellow Warblers** were seen at Old Crow Flats on Aug. 10 (BB,RMd). A spectacular foraging flock of 200 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Drury's Ponds on Aug. 21-22 was one of the highest counts on record (CE,GK,LK). Among the latest **Yellow-rumped Warblers** of fall were two in Whitehorse on Oct. 15 (BaS), two at Schwatka Lake on Oct. 27 (CE), one at Shallow Bay on Oct. 29 (HG). An adult female **American Redstart** was banded at Kluane Lake on Aug. 26 (RC). A late immature **Chipping Sparrow** appeared at a Porter Creek feeder on Sept. 2 (CE,PSi). A late immature **White-crowned Sparrow** was in Watson Lake on Nov. 12 (RF). Another immature **White-crowned Sparrow** was at a Hillcrest feeder through November (LC,HG). On Sept. 3, 130 **Dark-eyed Juncos** were tallied at Swan Lake (HG); two were observed at a Watson Lake feeder on Oct. 24 (LE); one was seen in Whitehorse on

Oct. 29 (BaS); one was at a Horse Creek feeder through the season (KO); two were seen at a Marsh Lake feeder on Nov. 18-23 (RMI). A **juncto** seen at a Hillcrest feeder, on Nov. 12-16 was described as an **Oregon Junco** (LC). Six **Snow Buntings** were at Lake Laberge on Oct. 16 (CE); a flock was seen near Horse Creek in late November (KO).

**Pine Grosbeaks** were reported from many feeders in the Yukon: a high of 30 in Hillcrest on Nov. 25 (LC), six from a Watson Lake feeder on Oct. 24 (LE), 11 from a Pilot Mountain feeder on Nov. 15 (BM), 12 from a Teslin feeder daily in November (MGI). However, they were also encountered away from feeders: three at Mt. McIntyre (SM) and three at Swan Lake on Nov. 26 (HG,SM). A male and a female **House Finch**, very rare in the Yukon, frequenting a Whitehorse feeder through the summer were last seen on Aug. 17 (JB); two female-type birds (possibly juveniles) at the same location on Aug. 31 suggested that the pair may have bred (CE). **White-winged Crossbills** were confirmed breeding in the Whitehorse area with the observation of an adult feeding a short-tailed fledgling at Wolf Creek Campground on Aug. 13 (CE,PSi). One male and two female **White-wings** were at a Hillcrest feeder on Nov. 19 (LC). Nine **Red Crossbills** were seen at a Pilot Mountain feeder on Nov. 22 (BM). Twenty **Common Redpolls** each were observed at Watson Lake on Nov. 5 as well as km 1070 and km 1092 Alaska Hwy. near Rancheria on Nov. 6 (WN). The last **Pine Siskins** of the season were eight seen in Porter Creek on Oct. 1 (CE,PSi). For the fourth winter in a row, **Evening Grosbeaks** were seen at Watson Lake feeders (LE,RF,MGb): A count of 6 males and 14 females was made on Oct. 24 (LE), and 40 were seen on Nov. 5 (WN). A small flock of three male and two female **Evening Grosbeaks** visited a Teslin feeder through November (DD).

**Observers:** Jeremy Baumbach, Bruce Bennett, Hank Bergen, Mona Bergen, Lauren Bradley, Linda Cameron, Richard Cannings, Bas Charman (BaC), Daphne Charman, Bob Church (BoC), Evelyn Church, Denny Denison, Cameron Eckert, Lois Everett, Rob Florkiewicz, Mary Gamberg (MGb), Margaret Garolitz (MGI), Helmut Grünberg, Greg Kubica, Lee Kubica, Paula Kubica, Jeanette McCrie, Dawne Mitchell, Richard Mueller (RMI), Susan Mueller, Randi Mulder (RMd), Bob Murkett, Patty Nash, Wendy Nixon, Kate Ostrom, Joyce Pratt, Pamela Sinclair, Dan Steele, Barbara Studds (BaS), Bob Studds (BoS), Pat Swainson (PSw), Micky Thomas, Jamie Westmark, Stu Withers, Many Observers (m.ob.).



**THE YUKON BIRD CLUB**

*Promoting awareness, appreciation, and conservation of Yukon birds and their habitats.*

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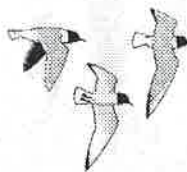
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**Complete your set!**

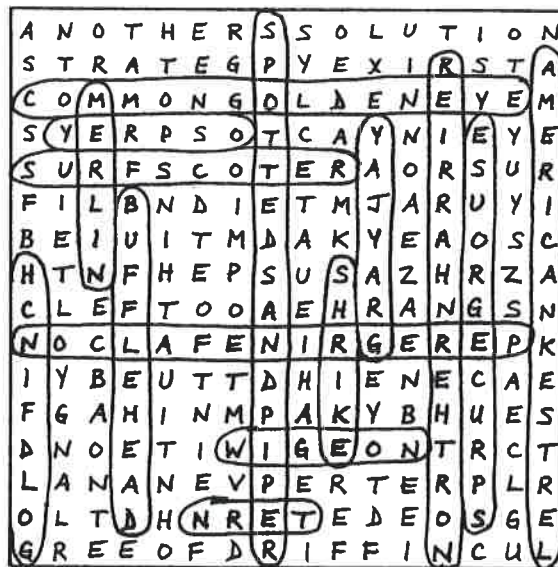


A startling discovery of five issues of the very rare *Summer '93 Yukon Warbler* was made recently - don't miss this chance to

add it to your life list. Other back-issues available are Winter-93 (rare); Winter-94; Fall-94; Spring-95; Summer-95; Fall-95; Please send \$2.50 per issue to the Yukon Bird Club.

**Solution to Word Finder**

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Gray Jay         | American Kestrel  |
| Merlin           | Bufflehead        |
| Shrike           | Goldfinch         |
| Northern Harrier | Surf Scoter       |
| Common Goldeneye | Spotted Sandpiper |
| Spruce Grouse    | Wigeon            |
| Osprey           | Peregrine Falcon  |
| Tern             |                   |



**Birders are invited to submit articles, stories, or drawings to the Yukon Warbler.**

**Please send your submissions to:  
 Cameron Eckert, 1402 Elm Street  
 Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 4B6  
 Phone/Fax: 403-667-4630  
 E-mail: ceckert@yknet.yk.ca**