

# Yukon Warbler

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club

Spring 2010




**BIRDATHON PREVIEW– SIGHTINGS REPORTS – BIRD OBSERVATORY UPDATES**

## YUKON BIRD CLUB

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

The Yukon Bird Club is a registered non-profit, charitable organization.

### Membership fees:



Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Senior/Student	\$5.00
Contributing	\$25.00
Supporting	\$50.00
Institutional	\$20.00

Family memberships cover two or more people living at one address. Foreign members please pay with a Canadian dollar money order.

For more information contact:

**Yukon Bird Club, Box 31054, Whitehorse, Yukon,  
Canada, Y1A 5P7**

Email: [yukonbirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:yukonbirdclub@gmail.com)

**YBC BIRDS:** A free email information flyway with updates of sightings, events and issues. To subscribe email [yukonbirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:yukonbirdclub@gmail.com) with the message "subscribe YBC BIRDS". To cancel send "cancel YBC BIRDS".

### Yukon Bird Club Web Site:

[www.yukonweb.com/community/ybc/](http://www.yukonweb.com/community/ybc/)

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Yukon Warbler editor: Ben Schonewille  
Yukon Warbler - Spring 2009

### Cover Photo

Wandering Tattler, by Cameron Eckert  
2009-06-08, North Klondike River (Tombstone Park)

Back Cover Graphic  
From Jim Hawking Photo

## Submissions and Comments Wanted

Please send us your articles and photos. You can email the newsletter editor at:

[yukon.bird.club.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:yukon.bird.club.newsletter@gmail.com) .

Or send your regular mail to the Yukon Bird Club post box and put attention newsletter director.

Please include any additional information to accompany photographs including date and location.

We want your comments, good or bad !

## 2010 Board of Directors

<b>President:</b>	<b>Helmut Grünberg</b>
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## Yukon Bird Club News & Upcoming Events

### *Yukon Bird Club Annual General Meeting (AGM)*

On February 23, the YBC held its AGM at the Whitehorse Public Library. All directors gave a brief report on their portfolios and copies were distributed to those in attendance. The following items summarize other activities at the AGM;

- The annual Raven award was awarded to Sylvia Frisch of Dawson City for her exemplary work in the promotion of public awareness of birds and other wildlife in the Klondike region. Sylvia has organized a series of naturalist events (Weekend-On-The-Wing, Mammals Weekend, Insects Weekend, Geology Weekend, Plant Weekend etc.) centering on the Dempster Highway over the past 2 or 3 years.
- Support for a young birder (Shyloh van Delft) from Tagish to attend a young ornithologist workshop at Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario during August 2010. Shyloh has encouraged and organized bird related activities in Tagish including the Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count and the Tagish Birding Tour. Shyloh is the fourth young Yukoner to be sponsored by the YBC to attend this workshop.

The election of board of directors was also carried out at the AGM, the following individuals were re-elected to the Board of Directors; Helmut Grunberg (President), Clive Osbourne (Secretary), Treasurer (Ted Murphy-Kelly), Betty Sutton (Events Co-ordinator), Cameron Eckert (Sightings/Checklist Co-ordinator), Malkolm Boothroyd (Youth Co-ordinator), Ben Schonewille (Newsletter Editor), Jenny Trapnell (Field Trip Co-ordinator), Wendy Boothroyd (Birdathon Co-ordinator), Pam Sinclair (Special Projects) and Judy Klein (General Director). A single new board member (Devon Yacura) was also elected to the board. Outgoing directors included Jeanette McCrie and Robb Ellwood; the remaining board members thank these individuals for their contributions to the YBC.

### **2010 YUKON BIRDATHON**

*Wind through my feathers  
The rush of air around me  
Joy, the gift of flight.*

This Haiku was written by the Yukon Birdathon's 2010 Feature Birder, Shyloh van Delft. Shyloh, a Tagish teenager, celebrates birds in her poetry. We can all celebrate birds by participating in the Birdathon. The 2010 Yukon Birdathon will take place on May 28-29. This is a fun event for everyone who loves birds, enjoys springtime outings and/or wants to help raise money for conservation. **YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AN EXPERT BIRDER TO TAKE PART!**

The Birdathon is a 24-hour event beginning at 5 pm on Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> and ending at 5 pm on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup>. Some people try to see as many birds as possible during the 24 hours; others just spend a couple of hours on a walk, or looking at the birds that visit their yard. Some birders can identify every species in all plumages – others can barely distinguish a raven from a magpie. It doesn't matter. The fundraising part of the Birdathon is easy. Ask your friends to sponsor you – the money will be shared by the Yukon Bird Club and Yukon Conservation Society, and used for bird conservation. If you are shy about asking others to sponsor you, sponsor yourself!



If you are holding a paper copy of the Warbler, there is a sponsorship form tucked in to it. If you are reading your Warbler on your computer, you can download a form from the Bird Club website. Go to [www.yukonweb.com/community/ybc](http://www.yukonweb.com/community/ybc) and click on Yukon Bird Club publications. Scroll to the bottom of the page and choose YBC Pledge Sheet or YBC Birdathon Pamphlet \*\*\*. You can also pick up sponsorship forms at the YCS office at 302 Hawkins St in Whitehorse. We encourage participants to limit their use of fossil fuels during the Birdathon. Walk, cycle, paddle, use public transport or car-pool. We will offer prizes for various categories – these will be announced closer to the event. Short bird identification walks will be offered before the Birdathon.

The Bluebird Cup (actually a framed Mountain Bluebird photograph by Yukon photographer Ken Quong) will be awarded again this year to the nonprofit society whose members raise the most money in the Birdathon. Last year the Birdathon raised \$5126, and the Bird Club won the Bluebird Cup. If you are a Bird Club member who is unable to participate in the Birdathon this year but you want to contribute, sponsor Shyloh Van Delft.

\*\*\*The Bird Club will be updating its website and these instructions may be outdated by now.

### 2010 FEATURE BIRDER — SHYLOH van DELFT



Shyloh van Delft is a mover and shaker in the Tagish birding scene. She organized Tagish's first-ever Christmas Bird Count in 2009 and also promoted the Great Backyard Bird Count—all at the tender age of fifteen. It was no simple feat to organize Tagish's Christmas Bird Count. First, Shyloh lined up people to scrutinize feeders. To help inexperienced birders, she marked the pages in a bird book so they could identify the expected winter birds easily. Shyloh also led a group in a birding walk through Tagish. Her highlight of the day was finding birds that she did not know came to Tagish in winter: "We were on the bridge and there were some ducks a long way away. Luckily someone had brought a spotting scope. They were

Common Mergansers, twenty of them." Shyloh loves living in Tagish, which she describes as having the "perfect mix of trees, birds and people". She is home-schooled and incorporates her love of birds into her schooling. She wrote this Haiku for English class:

*Wind through my feathers  
The rush of air around me  
Joy, the gift of flight*

Shyloh will start her Birdathon by cycling around Tagish. To finish the 24 hour event, she will get a ride to Whitehorse and continue birding on foot. If you don't encounter Shyloh out on the trails, she will be at the barbeque at Robert Service campground on Saturday evening, starting at 6 pm.

If you would like to sponsor Shyloh, fill out this form and mail it to:  
Yukon Bird Club Treasurer, Box 31054, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 4B6.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount pledged (per species, or flat amount). Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$10.





## YUKON BIRD CLUB 2010 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

**Non-members, visiting birders and beginners welcome!** Dress for the weather, wear appropriate footwear, and bring binoculars if you have them. For more information contact Jenny Trapnell at 668-3918.

**April 17-25: Celebration of Swans at Swan Haven Interpretation Centre.** Interpreter on site. For information contact Environment Yukon's Wildlife Viewing Program (667-8291) or [environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/wildlifebiodiversity/CelebrationofSwans.php](http://environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/wildlifebiodiversity/CelebrationofSwans.php)

**Wednesday 21 April: North Alaska Highway Shrike and Bluebird tour** with Boris Dobrowolsky. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 6:30 pm. (~3 hours). For more info call 633-6404.

**Friday 30 April: Carcross: Dusky Grouse hike at Nares Mountain** with Dan Kemble. Meet at Montana Services in Carcross at 6:30 p.m. (~3 hours). Some hiking involved. Please wear sturdy footwear. For more info call 821-3461.

**Sunday May 2: Tagish Birding Tour** with Clive Osborne. Bring lunch and meet at the SS Klondike at 9 a.m. Carcross birders meet at 10 a.m. at Montana Services; and Tagish birders meet at 12:30 p.m. at the rest stop west of the Tagish Bridge. Other areas en route may also be explored (~5-6 hours).

**Thursday 6 May:** Join Cameron Eckert in scoping out the ducks and shorebirds at the **Quartz Road Wetland**. Meet at Boston Pizza parking lot at 5:30 pm. (~1 hour).

**Friday-Sunday May 7-10: Faro: Crane and Sheep Viewing Festival Faro.** Join a tour with Mary Whitley, Sunday. For more info contact the Faro Town Office (994-2728) or [www.faroyukon.ca](http://www.faroyukon.ca)

**Saturday 8 May: International Migratory Bird Day - Spring Migration Count.** Participate in this annual spring round-up contact [yukonbirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:yukonbirdclub@gmail.com).

**Wednesday 12 May: Beginners' Bird Walk** with Wendy Boothroyd and Ken Madsen. Meet at Rotary Peace Park at 6:30 p.m. For more info call 668-7370.

**Tuesday 18 May:** Explore the **Fish Lake Road** with Lone Christensen. Meet at the SS Klondike at 6:00 p.m., or at the Porter Creek Super A at 6:20 p.m. (~2 hours). Carpooling encouraged!

**Thursday 20 May:** Meander for birds along the **Millennium Trail**, with Malkolm Boothroyd. Meet at the Fish Ladder near the dam at 6:30 p.m. (~2 hours).

**Saturday 22 May: Mayo: Bird Identification Walk** with Mark O'Donoghue. Meet at the at the 5-Mile Lake campground at 8:30 am. (~3 hours). For more info call 996-2529.

**Saturday 22 May: Watson Lake: Bird banding at the Albert Creek bird observatory** with Ted Murphy-Kelly. Meet at the Upper Liard Lodge at 8 am. (~3-4 hours or until the station closes for the day). Please phone Ted ahead of time because the nets may not be opened if weather conditions are bad. For more info call 867-456-7431 or 250-218-1169.

**Sunday 23 May:** Start your morning with a song! **McIntyre Creek bird songs and calls** with Pam Sinclair. Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 7:30 a.m. (morning) (~3 hours)

**Wednesday 26 May: Judas Creek Migration Finale!** Check out this migratory hotspot with Jim Hawkings. Meet at SS Klondike at 5:30 p.m. (~3 hours).



**Thursday 27 May:** Hike around **Hidden Lake (Riverdale)** with Lone Christensen. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Fish Ladder in Riverdale (~2 hours).

**Friday May 28 @ 5 p.m. to Saturday May 29 @ 5 p.m.: ANNUAL YUKON BIRDATHON.** Come out and have fun finding birds, and raise funds for bird conservation and education. Join us for the Birdathon BBQ on Saturday, 6:00 p.m. at Robert Service Campground. For more info contact Birdathon Coordinator Wendy Boothroyd (668-7370).

**Saturday 29 May: Haines Junction: Dezadeash River Trail Trip** with Sarah Davidson, Meet at the day use area by the Dezadeash River Bridge at 7:30 a.m. (~2 hours).

**Tuesday 1 June:** Participate in a trip to **Paddy's Pond in Hillcrest** with Mary Whitley. Meet outside the Skyy hotel opposite the airport at 6:00 p.m. (~2 hours).

**Friday-Sunday June 4-6: Dempster Highway: Weekend on the Wing: Northern Birding Festival** at Tombstone Territorial Park. A fantastic opportunity to learn about and view Dempster specialties. For more information contact [friendsofdempster@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdempster@gmail.com)

**Friday 11 June:** Come explore the duck ponds near **Takhini/Yukon College** with bird biologist Katie Aitken. Meet at the Yukon Arts Centre parking lot at 7 p.m. Part of the Festival celebrating McIntyre Creek and wetlands. For more info call Katie at 335-0573 or [kaitken@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:kaitken@interchange.ubc.ca). (~2 hours).

**Saturday 3 July:** Explore a **special wetland "fen"** near Granger to look for birds and dragonflies. Meet at the Canada Games Centre on Saturday at noon. Bring high rubber boots – prepare to get your feet wet. *Involves a safe but steep ascent/descent down a rolling, grassy slope.* For info call Syd Cannings 393-7979 days. (~2 hours).

### Fall Trips

**Sunday 12 September:** See thousands of waterbirds at the **Whitehorse Sewage Ponds** with Helmut Grünberg. Meet at the SS Klondike at 9:30 a.m. (~3-4 hours).

**Sunday 26 September:** Explore **Lake Laberge** with Lone Christensen. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A parking lot at 9:30 a.m. (~4-5 hours).

### Bird Observatories

**Albert Creek Bird Observatory:** Upper Liard – Site operating April 24 – June 5. For more info contact Ted Murphy-Kelly at 456-7431.

**Teslin Lake Bird Observatory:** Site operating in August – September. For more info contact Ben Schonewille ([teslin.bird.banding@gmail.com](mailto:teslin.bird.banding@gmail.com)).

**McIntyre Marsh Bird Banding Demonstration Project:** Site located at about km 4 along the Fish Lake Road operating April 24 to May 30. Open week-ends and holidays 7 a.m. to Noon (possibly later if bird activity is sufficient). For more info contact Ben Schonewille ([teslin.bird.banding@gmail.com](mailto:teslin.bird.banding@gmail.com)).



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

The following anecdote was published as a general note in *The Auk* (an ornithology academic journal) during 1945. Note that this record was prior to the identification of the Surfbird's breeding range in the central and northern Yukon.

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General Notes

[Auk  
April

arose, flew to a near-by tree and proceeded to devour its prey.—FREDERICK C. SCHMID, *Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

**Surf Bird in Yukon Territory.**—On August 14, 1945, while I was stationed at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada, with the Army Air Forces, my attention was directed to some "snipe" that were wandering around one of the hangars. On examination I found three of these "snipe" inside the partly closed hangar doors and five on the outside. They were Surf Birds (*Aphriza virgata*), and quite reluctant to take wing. They would occasionally pick some minutiae from the crevices in the concrete. One picked up and swallowed a beetle about three-quarters of an inch long. Later in the afternoon they were observed walking along a retaining wall at head height and allowed one to approach as closely as two feet.

I know of no other records of this bird in the interior. However, I think this is due to lack of continuous observation by interested persons in those parts. It is quite likely that this species nests above timberline in the vicinity of the numerous lakes to the north of Whitehorse.—FREDERICK C. SCHMID, *Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

Tombstone Territorial Park on the Dempster Highway is one of the best places in the world to see Surfbirds on their breeding grounds. This past summer, a flock of 10 individuals was seen on Adney Mountain; this is the largest group ever seen in the Yukon.



Adney Mountain, 27 June 2009, Photo: Cameron Eckert.





## OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

### Sightings Report – Summer 2009

Compiled by YBC Sightings Coordinator Cameron D. Eckert (*cdeckert AT northwesterl.net*)

#### WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A lone Brant, a late spring migrant, was at Tagish L. 3 Jun (ph SvD); another was with Canada Geese at Dawson 10 Jun (CE). The Yukon's 3rd **Tufted Duck**, an ad. male, was seen on Two Moose L. 20 Jun to 13 Jul (ph. CE; HH, LH).



**Tufted Duck (front)**, Two Moose Lake, 25 Jun 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

A male King Eider at Gravel L., cen Yukon 1 Jun was nicely photo-documented by a visiting birder (ph. BW). This is apparently only the 3rd interior North American spring record; the previous two were also from the Yukon.



**King Eider**, Gravel Lake, 1 Jun 09, Photo: Bill Wilson.

A Double-crested Cormorant, rare in s. Yukon, was on the Yukon R. in Whitehorse 8 Jun (ph. MM). A dark-morph ad. Swainson's Hawk was seen hunting over open tundra along the Dempster Hwy., just s.

of Eagle Plains 24 Jul (RC, SC); the species was found nesting in this area in 2005. A total of 13 Gyrfalcons was tallied on a trip down the Firth R. 18-30 Jul (HH, LH). A late Black-bellied Plover was at Coot L., s. of Pelly Crossing 9-10 Jun (HG). Wandering Tattler reports, all from the Yukon, included 2 along the N. Klondike R., and one along the Blackstone R., Tombstone Park 8 Jun (ph. CE; HG, PSp), one along Fox Cr. and another along Lil Cr. in Tombstone 9 Jun (OH; HG, GW, MW), and one along the Firth R. 27 Jul (HH, LH). Tombstone Park continues to be the best place in the Region for viewing breeding Surfbirds; 2 were displaying on Charcoal Ridge 7 Jun (ph. CE, PB, MH, SJ); and an amazing 10 were seen in the snow on Adney Mt. 27 Jun (ph. CE, CFB, SJ).



**Surfbird**, Adney Mtn. (Tombstone Territorial Park), 27 Jun 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

#### GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

An ad. Glaucous-winged Gull returned for its 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive summer on Herschel I. 12 Jul (ph. DR). Despite deep snow conditions, a couple of Boreal Owls were found nesting near Whitehorse in early Jun; one pair occupied a nest box near the Takhini R. (LG, ph. JuH); and a trio of owlettes fledged from an old flicker hole in the side of a house on about 1 Jun (NJ, ph. CE, NSE). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher,





with a total of 17, was the second most common flycatcher on Yukon Breeding Bird Surveys (11 routes) this summer (CWS); this is a change from a decade ago when this species was considered the Yukon's rarest breeding flycatcher. Eastern Kingbird is well-known as an extralimital wanderer; reports this season included one at Burwash, sw. Yukon 5 Jun (ph. PSi).



**Eastern Kingbird**, Burwash, 5 Jun 09, Photo: Pam Sinclair.

A Philadelphia Vireo at Teslin 11 Jun (ph. vr. DH, THa, THe) established the Yukon's western-most record.



**Philadelphia Vireo**, Teslin, 11 Jun 09, Photo: Dawn Hansen.

Also well w. of its normal range was a Red-eyed Vireo at Porter Creek 11 Jun (PSi). The occurrence of Barn Swallows tends to be somewhat erratic at the n. edge of their range; one at Two Moose L. 27 Jun (CE) established the first record for Tombstone Park. Northern Wheatear is one of the Region's most sought-after breeding birds by visiting birders; reports this summer included one seen just e. of Wright Pass in NWT in early Jun (BW), a

male seen along Charcoal Ridge in Tombstone Park, cen Yukon 7 Jun (ph. OH), and 4 seen on a mountain hike from the Firth R. 23 Jul (HH, LH). Single Western Tanagers, both singing males, w. of their range in s. Yukon were seen at Teslin 9 Jun (THe), and Tagish 30 Jun (ph. SvD). A Timberline Brewer's Sparrow was singing in the alpine shrubs above Kusawa L. 18 Jun (CE). A **Lark Sparrow**, the Yukon's 4th, was at Watson Lake 29-31 May (ph. RS). Two White-throated Sparrows, well w. of their range, were singing at Fish L. 1 Jul (PKu). Sightings of Lapland Longspurs at the s. edge of the species' breeding range in Tombstone Park included a fem. on Charcoal Ridge 7 Jun (CE), and 2 on Adney Mt. 27 Jun (CE). Tombstone Park is perhaps the best place in North America to view Smith's Longspurs on their nesting grounds; 3 were on territory at km 96 along the Dempster Hwy. 9-12 Jun (HG; CE).



**Smith's Longspur**, Tombstone Territorial Park, 9 Jun 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

Seven Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were seen on a hike along Charcoal Ridge in Tombstone Park 7 Jun (CE; ph. OH); one was seen near Margaret L. 18 Jul (HH, LH).

**Observers:** Pamela Brown, Canadian Wildlife Service, Rob Cannings, Syd Cannings, Ron Doctor, Cameron Eckert, Cathy Finlay-Brook, Linda Gerrand, Helmut Grünberg, Dawn Hansen, Tami Hamilton (TaH), Miriam Havemann, Todd Heakes (ToH), Howard Heffler, Lyn Heffler, Olivia Hell, Jurg Hofer (JuH), Niels Jacobsen, Sebastian Jones, Piia Kukka (PKu), Murray Munn, Don Reid, Pam Sinclair (PSi), Nigel Sinclair-Eckert, Patricia Spencer (PSP), Robert Stitt, Shyloh van Delft, Gerry Whitley, Mary Whitley, Bill Wilson.



## Sightings Report – Fall 2009

Compiled by YBC Sightings Coordinator Cameron D. Eckert (*cdeckert AT northwestern.net*)

Relatively mild conditions prevailed this fall without any of the cold snaps that often grip southern parts of the Region late in the season. It's not clear whether a lack-luster fall shorebirding season in southern Yukon was due to high water levels at the local shorebirding hotspot, or poor nesting success in the far north this past summer. Yukon birders did some checklist housekeeping returning a previously "lost" species to the territory's checklist. Once again the two Yukon Bird Observatories, at Albert Creek and Teslin Lake, collected a wealth of interesting observation with many highlights shared here.

### WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A flock of about 1000 Canada Geese were at Shallow Bay 18 Sept (BD, HG, YS). Documenting staging locations for migrating swans in the Yukon Southern Lakes is always of interest; an aerial survey 20 Oct recorded 25 swans at Rose L., 48 at Primrose L., and 44 at Judas Cr. (JM). A flock of 30 King Eiders, a rare fall migrant along the Yukon's North Coast, was recorded at Herschel I. 17 Aug (CE). A survey of Pauline Cove and Workboat Passage off the Yukon's North Coast recorded 900 Surf Scoters and 450 Long-tailed Ducks 19 Aug (CE). A lone White-tailed Ptarmigan, uncommon in sw. Yukon but rarely reported in fall, was seen at 4000 ft off the Aishihik Rd 27 Oct (TS). A male Dusky Grouse was an unexpected visitor to a Whitehorse backyard 25 Sept (ph. GW, MW); while this species is uncommon at treeline in s. Yukon, there are very few lowland records.



**Dusky Grouse**, Whitehorse, 25 September 09, Photo: Mary Whitley.

Notable movements of Pacific Loons were noted at Teslin Lake Bird Observatory with counts of 215 and 100 on 23 & 24 Sept respectively (JJa, JJo, SM). As concern for Horned Grebe populations rises so too does interest in notable migration counts: a flock of 70 was recorded at Tagish Narrows 3 Sept (JJa). High counts for Red-necked Grebes this season were 210 at Tagish Narrows 3 Sept, and 397 at Marsh L. 27 Sept (JJa).



**Red-necked Grebe**, Teslin Lake Bird Observatory, 6 September 09, Photo: Jukka Jantunen.

An Osprey nest atop of an old crane along Highet Cr., near Mayo produced two chicks this summer (LB); it is notable that the nearest fish-bearing body of water of any size is Minto L. about 5 km from the nest. Visual migration watches at the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory yielded impressive raptor totals including 50 Osprey, 105 Bald Eagles, 271 Northern Harriers, 411 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 20 Northern Goshawks, 21 Swainson's Hawks, 404 Red-tailed Hawks, 179 Rough-legged Hawks, 109 Golden Eagles, 85 American Kestrels, 47 Merlins, 1 Gyrfalcon, and 34 Peregrine Falcons (JJa et al.). The tally of 21 Swainson's Hawks, with a one-day





high count of 13 on 5 Sept, is especially noteworthy as this species remains enigmatic in the North where its only known nesting area is Eagle Plains and little is known about the timing or pattern of migration. Further west, a dark-morph Swainson's Hawk was seen at Watson Lake 1 Sept (ph. JJo).



'Harlans' Red-tailed Hawk, Teslin Lake Bird Observatory, 2 October 09, Photo: Jukka Jantunen.

A flock of 30 Sandhill Cranes, part of the regular fall migration through the Yukon, was noted over Ft. Selkirk 26 Aug (GW, MW). While Wandering Tattler is an uncommon breeder in the Yukon, there are very few fall records; a migrant juv. was seen at Teslin L. 20 Aug (ph. JJa). A juv. Western Sandpiper seen at Watson Lake 28 Aug (ph. JJo) provided a rare record for se. Yukon. Two juv. Western Sandpipers and an ad. White-rumped Sandpiper, both casual along the Yukon's North Coast, were at Herschel I. 16 & 17 Aug respectively (ph. CE).

#### GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

Parasitic Jaegers were seen at the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory on 11 days during 24 Aug to 25 Sept with a high count of 3 on 30 Aug (JJa). An ad. Glaucous-winged Gull, returning for its 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive summer, was seen at Herschel I. 15-18 Aug (ph. CE). Two Sabine's Gulls, a rare s. Yukon migrant, were seen at Teslin L. 27 & 29 Aug (JJa). This year's annual monitoring of the Black Guillemot colony at Herschel I. recorded a total of 59 adult guillemots, along with 17 nests with 31 chicks (CE, RG) – this is the highest nesting productivity recorded since the late 1990s. A **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, the Yukon's 3<sup>rd</sup>, first reported in Whitehorse 22 Aug was seen by local

residents through the season (LC; ph. CE; ph. DH; ph. CW).



**Eurasian Collared Dove**, Whitehorse, 4 October 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

A lone Mourning Dove, a rare wanderer to the Region, died in a window-strike at a ranch n. of Whitehorse 7 Oct (ph. VL). A Northern Hawk Owl took up its regular post along Two Mile Hill in Whitehorse 21 Oct (LC). Late reports of Short-eared Owls included one near Pelly Crossing, and another near Stewart Crossing 17 Nov (MOD); and one at Shallow Bay until 26 Nov (MB, PB). A relatively high number of Rufous Hummingbirds, all but one being fem-types, reported this season from s. Yukon included one at Wolf Creek 1-21 Aug (ph. SR); one at Tagish 4 Sept (ph. JD, PD); one in Whitehorse 5-7 Sept (RM); one at Pineridge 5-7 Sept (SL); the only male reported at Haines Junction 11 Sept (CD); and one in Riverdale which lingered to 25 Sept (DJa, ph. CE, ph. HG).



**Rufous Hummingbird**, Whitehorse, 25 September 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.



Alder Flycatcher was again recorded in very high numbers (631 banded) at the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory this fall (*fide* BS); other Empids banded there were 8 Yellow-bellied, 1 Least, 12 Hammond's, and 6 Dusky. Albert Creek Bird Observatory banded 6 Yellow-bellied, 92 Alder, 7 Least, 4 Hammond's, and 2 Dusky (*fide* TMK).



**Alder Flycatcher**, Teslin Lake Bird Observatory, 18 August 09, Photo: Jukka Jantunen.

Steller's Jays have once again become scarce in s. Yukon since their grand invasion in 2006; one was at Tagish 12 Nov (CT). American Crows appeared to have had another successful nesting season in Whitehorse where a flock of up to 16 was seen through early Oct (CE; HG). Nine American Crows were at Albert Creek 8 Sept (JJo). A mixed flock of swallows at M'Clintock Bay 11 Aug was comprised of 300 Bank, 100 Cliff, and 20 Barn Swallows (JJa, IP). Single Tree and Bank Swallows at Herschel I. 15 Aug (ph. CE) were beyond their range. In fall 2009 the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory recorded dazzling numbers of chickadees and this year the banding totals were equally impressive with 831 Boreals (all but one being hatch-year), 26 Black-capped, and 11 Mountain (*fide* BS); these numbers are indicative of a significant post-breeding movement of hatch-year chickadees in the north. A Brown Creeper, perhaps annual in sw. Yukon but very rare in the Yukon Southern Lakes, was seen in Porter Creek 19 Oct (CE, NSE, MSE, RSE). A flock of about 50 Mountain Bluebirds was noted at the rodeo grounds n. of Whitehorse 18 Sept (HG et al.). A late Varied Thrush was feeding on Saskatoon berries in

Whitehorse 19 Nov (LC). A flock of about 200 Bohemian Waxwings was noted in Haines Junction 10 Nov (WR). Cedar Waxwing is sporadic in s. Yukon with notable incursions in some years; a flock of 12 was recorded at Albert Cr. 13 Aug (JJo), and a flock of 17 (a mix of ads. and juvs.) was at Teslin L. 18-19 Aug (JJa). Albert Creek Bird Observatory's seasonal total of 137 Tennessee Warblers included an amazing one-net catch of 37 Tennessee Warblers 11 Aug (*fide* TMK) – which is a bit of a mind-bender considering that a “flock” of Tennessee Warblers had never before been reported in the Yukon. An imm. **Clay-coloured Sparrow** seen with American Tree Sparrows in Whitehorse 5-6 Oct (ph. CE) established the first fall record for the territory.



**Clay-colored Sparrow**, Whitehorse, 5 October 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

A hatch-year Brewer's Sparrow, only rarely seen in the lowlands, was banded at the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory 26 Aug (ph. JJa). A White-throated Sparrow, a first for sw. Yukon, was at a Haines Junction feeder from 11 Nov through the season (ph. WR). An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow lingered at a Whitehorse feeder 28 Oct to 8 Nov (ph. KW). Smith's Longspur is rarely reported during fall migration and so a fly-bye at Teslin L. 27 Aug (JJa) was noteworthy. This fall, the ongoing monitoring of Rusty Blackbird populations colour-banded 121 birds in Whitehorse (PS), 30 at Teslin L. (*fide* BS), and 10 at Albert Cr. (*fide* TMK). Of interest is that a hatch-year Rusty Blackbird banded 2 Sept 2008 in Whitehorse was found dead in North Dakota 2 Nov 2009 (*fide* PS). The season's high count of Rusties at the Whitehorse banding site was 150 in early Sept (PS). A flock of 37





Rusty Blackbirds was at a Marsh L. feeder 19 Sept (JK). A House Finch, casual in s. Yukon, was heard singing in Whitehorse 18 Sept (SC). **American Goldfinch** took a hiatus from the Yukon Checklist since photos of a male from the early 1990s were lost. Nearly 20 years later another finally showed up long enough to be photo-documented and added to the territory's checklist. On 22 Jun this past summer a male American Goldfinch was reported from Tagish but was not photographed (DJo, LJ); though fortunately a male (likely the same bird) subsequently appeared and was photographed at a nearby Marsh Lake feeder 20-21 Sept (JK, BB, ph. CE, BD, HG).



**American Goldfinch**, Marsh Lake, 20 September 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

A fem-type Evening Grosbeak, rare in the Whitehorse area, was seen in Hillcrest 10 Sept (GW, MW). The Yukon's only population of House Sparrows, first established in Whitehorse in 2007,

continues to grow; a high count of 40 was recorded 6 Oct (CE).



**House Sparrow**, Whitehorse, 6 October 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.

**Observers:** Mary Beattie, Pete Beattie, Bruce Beaton, Lowell Bleiler, Linda Cameron, Syd Cannings, Judy Dabbs, Paul Dabbs, Boris Dobrowolsky, Claude Dulac, Cameron Eckert, Richard Gordon, Helmut Grünberg, Jannik Hansen, Debbie Higgins, Donna Jager (DJa), Jukka Jantunen (JJa), Jillian Johnston (JJo), Darci Johnstone (DJo), Larry Johnstone, Jean Kapala, Virginia LaPrairie, Sherry Lindley, Robbie Mackay, Sergio Marrocoli, John Meikle, Ted Murphy-Kelly, Mark O'Donoghue, Ingrid Pollet, Sandra Richardson, Wolf Riedl, Ben Schonewille, Pam Sinclair, Maren Sinclair-Eckert, Nigel Sinclair-Eckert, Rory Sinclair-Eckert, Terry Skjonsberg, Yammy Stote, Cathy Turner, Christopher Wheeler, Gerry Whitley, Mary Whitley, Keith Williams.



## WHITEHORSE SEWAGE LAGOON PROJECT

Devon Yacura, in collaboration with the Yukon Bird Club is planning to conduct a six-month project investigating bird use of the Whitehorse sewage lagoons. The predominant focus of the project will be on the long-term storage pond. The project will begin May 2010 and will finish November 2010.

Whitehorse biologists have found that the sewage lagoon is now among the most heavily-used summer moulting and fall staging area for water birds in the Yukon Southern Lakes region. This project will investigate the biological, chemical, and physical features of the lagoon that makes it so attractive to birds. Three biological surveys will be completed during the project: a nesting bird survey, a terrestrial and aquatic plant survey, and an aquatic macro-invertebrate survey. Collection and documentation of this information has not been done at the lagoons and it may provide insights as to why these ponds are so productive. Water chemistry data evaluated includes water temperature, pH, nitrates, phosphates, DO, conductivity, and any other parameters measured at the lagoons. Physical features that will be studied include the site location in reference to the major migratory flyways of North America, and the proximity of the lagoons to other productive bird habitats. The new biological data collected will be integrated with the existing (1996-2009) biological and chemical data measured at the lagoons. One comprehensive report will be produced and made publicly available in hard copy and on-line. This report will include a framework for future biological studies at other sewage lagoons. Furthermore, the project will identify future projects that could be done to enhance the role of the lagoons as wetland habitat without compromising its sewage treatment function. Lastly, this project will involve the help of one First Nation student in a Whitehorse secondary school. The student will be involved with conducting the aquatic macro-invertebrate survey, providing this student with valuable hands-on fieldwork experience in the environmental sciences.



**American Golden Plover**, Whitehorse Sewage Lagoons, 27 Aug 2007, Photo Cameron Eckert.



**Baird's Sandpiper**, Whitehorse Sewage Lagoons, 29 Aug 2008, Photo Cameron Eckert.





## YOUR PICTURES

This is your space. We want your photos !

Send them to the newsletter editor at [yukon.bird.club.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:yukon.bird.club.newsletter@gmail.com)



**Boreal Owl**, Whitehorse, 16 Jun 09, Photo: Linda Gerrand



**Yellow-rumped Warbler**, Haircut Lake, Photo: Adam Skrutkowski



**American Robin nest**, Teslin, Photo: Adam Skrutkowski



**American Pipit nest**, Tombstone Park, 27 Jun 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert



**American Tree Sparrow (left) and Savannah Sparrow (right)**, Two Moose Lake, 27 Jun 09, Photo: Cameron Eckert.





## Teslin Lake Bird Observatory Fall 2009 Report

*Submitted by Station Manager Ben Schonewille*

During 2009, the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory completed its second consecutive year of operation during the fall migration season. Using an established monitoring protocol, the observatory uses mist netting/banding, visual migration counts and points to collect standardized bird migration monitoring data. The observatory operated for 58 days from July 30 to October 4; during this time 3,956 birds of 53 species were banded and 139 species were observed. In terms of birds banded, this season was the productive season to date at the Yukon Bird Observatories. During the winter 2009, we received some very interesting information regarding band recoveries associated with the observatory. A banded adult male Yellow Warbler recaptured at the observatory on September 9 was originally banded in central Texas on May 12, 2009. A juvenile Alder Flycatcher banded at the observatory on August 25, 2008 was recovered (found dead) in southwest Saskatchewan on June 12, 2009.

This year, we were once again fortunate enough to have experienced field ornithologist Jukka Jantunen as our Bander In Charge. We also had numerous volunteers assisting with operations this year, most notably, Sergio Marrocoli of Wales who volunteered at the observatory for the entire fall season. Other volunteers who spent notable hours onsite included Tami & Shayla Hamilton (Whitehorse), Julie Bauer (Haines Junction), Carolyn Allen (Teslin), Ted Murphy-Kelly (Whitehorse) and Phil Gaddis (Portland, OR).



**Bander In Charge, Jukka Jantunen**



**Volunteers (L to R); Tami Hamilton, Carolyn Allen, Sergio Marrocoli, Shayla Hamilton.**

The following sections provide an overview synopsis of the various groups of birds observed and banded at the observatory during the fall 2009 season. Note that references to DSTs (Daily Species Totals) represent the total number of individuals encountered on any given day using a combination of counting methods (banding, observations, etc). All bird photos included in this summary were provided courtesy of Jukka Jantunen.

Due to the close proximity to Teslin Lake, numerous loons and grebes were observed on the lake during the migration counts. Three species of loon were encountered (Common, Red-throated and Pacific) with Pacific Loon being the most common (a high count of 215 individuals were observed on September 23). Horned and Red-necked Grebes were also encountered, with the latter being much more common (sum of DSTs = 943).







Red-throated Loon, August 11



Red-necked Grebe, September 6

Waterfowl (swans, geese and ducks) are observed at the observatory primarily during the visual migration counts. Twenty waterfowl species were observed during 2009, including the following species (in order of the total DSTs, the most common species presented first); Greater White-fronted Goose, Tundra Swan, Canada Goose, Lesser Scaup, Northern Pintail, Mallard Red-breasted Merganser, American Wigeon, Common Merganser, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Surf Scoter, Canvasback, White-winged Scoter, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Trumpeter Swan, Redhead, Barrow's Goldeneye and **Hooded Merganser**. The Hooded Merganser was the most notable species, as a single individual observed in migration on August 28 was the first record of this species at the observatory.



Tundra Swans, October 4



Red-breasted Mergansers, September 8

Raptors are another group of bird species most often observed during the visual migration counts. Thirteen raptor species (1,737 individuals) were observed during 2009 (ranked from most to least common); Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Osprey, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, **Swainson's Hawk**, Northern Goshawk and **Gyrfalcon**. Swainson's Hawk is a relatively uncommon species in the Yukon; a total of 21 individuals were observed on 3 days from August 20 to September 5 including a daily high count of 13 individuals of September 5. A first for the observatory, a single Gyrfalcon was observed on September 6. Sharp-shinned Hawk is the only raptor species typically banded at the observatory and a record 23 individuals were banded during 2009.





Rough-legged Hawk, October 2



Gyrfalcon, September 6

Ruffed Grouse was once again common at the observatory, with up to 6 individuals observed daily. Spruce Grouse is uncommon at the site; a single individual was observed on September 24. Sandhill Cranes were observed in record high numbers during 2009; 4414 birds were observed in migration on 6 days from September 6 to October 2. Through a combination of point counts, migration counts and incidental observations, 15 shorebird species were encountered (ranked from most to least common); Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, **Sanderling**, Wilson's Snipe, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Lesser Yellowlegs, Baird's Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, **Upland Sandpiper**, **Wandering Tattler**. The Upland Sandpiper and Wandering Tattler observed on August 10 and August 20, respectively, were new species for the observatory. Shorebirds banded included 5 Solitary Sandpiper and 1 Wilson's Snipe.



Wandering Tattler, August 20



Arctic Tern, August 13

Given the close proximity to Teslin Lake, gulls and terns are a common site at the observatory. Early in the season, the majority of individuals observed were feeding and staying within the count area; however, individuals seen later in the season were more frequently in migration. Eight gull species were encountered (ranked from most to least common); Herring Gull, Arctic Tern, Bonaparte's Gull, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull, **Parasitic Jaeger**, **Sabine's Gull** and Glaucous Gull. Sabine's Gull are relatively uncommon in the Yukon, 4 individuals were observed this fall; 2 on August 27 and 2 on August 28. Parasitic Jaeger is not often encountered in the southern Yukon as well, this species was encountered on 11 days from August 24 to September 25 with a high count of 3 on August 30.

Owls are not often encountered at the observatory, although two species were encountered in 2009. A single



Great Horned Owl was heard calling on September 3 and 2 Northern Hawk Owls were observed in migration on September 12.

Common Nighthawk (a species designated as Threatened in Canada) was observed in migration on two days, August 28 and 30, with single birds seen each day. Belted Kingfishers were once again a common species with up to 5 individuals observed on 46 days between July 30 and October 2 and 6 individuals banded. Six woodpecker species were encountered (ranked from most to least common); Northern Flicker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Downy Woodpecker. Small numbers of "resident" woodpeckers such as three-toeds were observed in migration during 2009. The lone woodpecker banded was a Downy Woodpecker on August 11.

Flycatchers were once again well represented at the observatory with 8 species encountered (ranked from most to least common, number banded in brackets); Alder Flycatcher (631), Hammond's Flycatcher (12), Western Wood-Pewee (6), Say's Phoebe (1), **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (8)**, Olive-sided Flycatcher, **Dusky Flycatcher (6)** and Least Flycatcher (1). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were banded on 7 days from August 4 to 23 and Dusky Flycatcher was banded on 6 days from August 8 to 28.



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, August 8



Dusky Flycatcher, August 8

Northern Shrikes were observed in migration on 4 days from September 12 to October 2, including a high count of 3 on September 27. Warbling Vireo is a relatively early migrant, and this is demonstrated by the timing of observations; 12 days from July 30 to September 8 (high of 7 on August 1) and 10 individuals were banded.

Common Raven is a species observed on a daily basis at the observatory, and for the first time, an individual was captured and banded on September 7. Gray Jays were also observed frequently (48 days) and 5 individuals were banded. Black-billed Magpie was encountered on 20 days from September 2 to October 4. Horned Lark is seldom observed at the site during fall and during 2009, a single individual flew over the site on October 1. Four species of swallows were observed (primarily in migration) including the following species (ranked from most to least common); Barn Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow and Tree Swallow. Swallows are infrequently captured in mist nets; the lone swallow captured during 2009 was a new species for the observatory, a Barn Swallow.

Chickadees are a group of species which are year round residents in the Yukon; however, for the second consecutive fall season, chickadees were captured and observed in very high numbers. Boreal Chickadee was the number one species banded this season (831 individuals), of which all but one bird were young birds (hatch year). An astonishing 1,612 Boreal Chickadees were counted migration past/through the site during





2009. The highest daily count was 143 individuals on August 31. A total of 26 Black-capped Chickadees were banded and a total of 221 individuals were counted. The least common chickadee species in southern Yukon, 11 **Mountain Chickadees** were banded at the species was encountered on 8 days from September 5 to 27 with a high count of 10 on September 19. Small number of Red-breasted Nuthatches were also observed in migration and 2 were banded.



Boreal Chickadee, August 18



Mountain Chickadee, September 5

A total of 175 Ruby-crowned Kinglets were banded and the species was encountered on 58 days from July 30 to October 4 with a high count of 46 on September 4. For the first time at the observatory, 10 **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were banded during late September. Seven species of thrush were encountered at the observatory including (ranked from most to least common, number banded in brackets); American Robin (27), Varied Thrush (12), Swainson's Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire (1), Hermit Thrush (7), Mountain Bluebird and Gray-cheeked Thrush (2). The majority of American Robins and Varied Thrush observed were seen in migrating flocks; a combined high count for these species was 766 individuals on September 28. The observatory's first ever Townsend's Solitaire was banded on September 5. American Pipit is a species which was encountered throughout much of the fall season (45 days) including a high count of 51 on September 2; 3 individuals were also banded.



Townsend's Solitaire, September 5



Hermit Thrush, September 2

The more common Yukon species of waxwing, the Bohemian Waxwing, was observed in modest numbers (26 days) with a high count of 63 individuals on September 6, although none were banded. The much less common waxwing, the Cedar Waxwing was observed almost daily during August with up to 17 individuals





observed daily. Both adult and juvenile plumaged birds were observed, suggesting that local breeding may have occurred at the site during 2009.

The warblers once again constituted a large portion (33%) of the birds banded at the observatory. As most warblers are nocturnal migrants, relatively few individuals were observed in migration. Difficulties associated with identifying high flying warblers in flight also limited the positive identification of migrating warblers. As a result, the majority of warblers encountered were captured in mist nets, observed on point counts or incidentally. Warblers banded during 2009 included (# banded in brackets); Yellow Warbler (325), Yellow-rumped Warbler (284), Orange-crowned Warbler (180), Wilson's Warbler (161), Common Yellowthroat (113), Blackpoll Warbler (107), Northern Waterthrush (53), **American Redstart (43)**, Tennessee Warbler (9), Townsend's Warbler (8) and **MacGillivray's Warbler (3)**. The American Redstart is a relatively uncommon species in the Teslin area and the numbers banded were notable. MacGillivray's Warbler is at the extreme northern extent of its breeding range in the Teslin area, and the 3 individuals captured during 2009 were the highest seasonal banding total to date at the observatory.



Tennessee Warbler, August 13



Townsend's Warbler, August 28



American Redstart, August 8



MacGillivray's Warbler, August 5

Western Tanager is a species which has been encountered irregularly in the Teslin region. A hatch year individual banded on August 11 was the second individual banded to date at the observatory. Similar to the warblers, sparrows constituted a large portion (21%) of the birds banded during 2009. The following eight species of sparrows were banded during 2009 (# banded in brackets); Dark-eyed Junco (582), American Tree Sparrow (54), White-crowned Sparrow (33), Fox Sparrow (28), Chipping Sparrow (24), Savannah Sparrow (18), Lincoln's Sparrow (16) and **Brewer's Sparrow (1)**. Any record of Brewer's Sparrow in migration is notable,



and the hatch year individual banded on August 26 was the second individual to date at the observatory. Other sparrow species encountered at the observatory included Lapland Longspur and **Smith's Longspur** of which a single individual observed on August 27 was a first for the observatory.



Savannah Sparrow, September 9



Brewer's Sparrow, August 26

Red-winged Blackbird is an uncommon species at the observatory; a single individual was observed on August 29. Rusty Blackbird is much more common at the observatory and individuals were observed in migration and captured in the mist nets. A total of 30 individuals were captured and color banded (light blue) in coordination with a larger color banding/feather collection project with Pam Sinclair of the Canadian Wildlife Service in Whitehorse. Finches were not particularly common at the observatory during 2009 and the majority of individuals were observed flying over the site. Six finch species were encountered including (ranked from most to least common, number banded in brackets); White-winged Crossbill (2), Pine Siskin (1), Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, Purple Finch and Red Crossbill.



Rusty Blackbird, September



## Albert Creek Bird Observatory Fall 2009 Report

*Submitted by Station Manager Ted Murphy-Kelly*

During 2009, the Albert Creek Bird Observatory completed its ninth consecutive year of fall migration monitoring in the Liard River valley near Watson Lake. Although the observatory operated slightly later than normal (August 8 as compared to July 21), valuable data was collected once again this year. With this project, it is important to have a continuation of monitoring events over the long term.

Over the period of August 11 to September 22, 2,024 birds of 40 species were banded (see following table) and 86 species were banded. This brings the all time banding total for the observatory to an impressive total of 30,340 birds of 83 species. The 30,000 bird milestone was reached on September 11 and the bird banded was an adult male Rusty Blackbird. As is typically the case at Albert Creek, wetland associated species were prolific at the station this year. Species such as Yellow Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat and Lincoln's Sparrow were very well represented in the banding totals. The number of Tennessee Warblers banded (137) was the highest number banded at the observatory to date. The observatory also continues to collect valuable migration monitoring data from species at the northern extent of their range, such as Magnolia Warbler.

Species	#	Species	#	Species	#
Sharp Shinned hawk	4	Hermit Thrush	10	Wilson's Warbler	158
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5	Varied Thrush	5	American-tree Sparrow	117
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	6	American Pipit	1	Savannah Sparrow	28
Alder Flycatcher	93	Cedar Waxwing	1	Fox Sparrow	54
Least Flycatcher	7	Tennessee Warbler	137	Lincoln's Sparrow	99
Hammond's Flycatcher	4	Orange-crowned Warbler	97	Swamp Sparrow	17
Dusky Flycatcher	2	Yellow Warbler	157	White-throated Sparrow	22
Northern Shrike	1	Magnolia Warbler	27	White-crowned Sparrow	26
Warbling Vireo	14	Yellow-rumped Myrtle Warbler	90	Dark-eyed Junco	96
Black-capped Chickadee	8	Townsend's Warbler	2	Rusty Blackbird	10
Boreal Chickadee	27	Blackpoll Warbler	36	White-winged Crossbill	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	121	American Redstart	38	TOTAL	2024
Gray-cheeked Thrush	10	Northern Waterthrush	202		
Swainson's Thrush	43	Common Yellowthroat	233		

Aside from collect bird migration monitoring data, the observatory also continues to provide education and training opportunities for students and volunteers. Once again in 2009, the observatory hosted a summer STEP student with Yukon Environment in Watson Lake and also a Y2C2 (Yukon Youth Conservation Corps) group. Volunteers also continue to be integral in the success of the observatory and this individuals assisted extensively with field operations.

A series of photos from the 2009 fall season at Albert Creek are presented on the following page.







From left to right, Tennessee Warbler, Hammond's Flycatcher, Rusty Blackbird



Clockwise from top left, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow.





## Birding in Maui

*Submitted by YBC Member Lone Christiansen*

The great thing about birding is that no matter where you travel in the world, as long as you have a pair of binoculars, you are set to go. You can do it anywhere; of course a camera and a book on local birds are helpful, or even better, a group of local birder can make for a much more enjoyable experience. We go to Maui almost every year and I have yet to find other birders in the area. I always try to add to my list of Maui birds which is now up to 24 species, but I have not been able to capture them all on camera.

The fun thing about Hawaiian birds is that they have all been brought to the islands from some other place and now make Hawaii their home. Due to the distance from other land masses, most birds (other than seabirds) were either brought here by people and blown here by accident. Two birds of my Hawaii list may be familiar to Yukon birders, the Nene (Canada Goose gone native) and the Pacific Golden Plover which spends its winters in Hawaii and during the spring heads across the Pacific to the Yukon and Alaska. It takes me 5 hours to fly there, I wonder how long the poor little plover takes? The following are some example pictures from birding in Maui.



**Pacific Golden Plover** – common winter visitor



**liwi** – a native species to Hawaii



**Red-crested Cardinal** – introduced from Brazil during the 1930s, and can now be seen in parks and beaches



**Spotted Dove** – introduced from India/Southern Asia during the 1800s





**Java Sparrow** – introduced from Indonesia, very shy birds but they are very fond of feeders.



**Nene** – evolved from Canada Geese, this species has adapted a land based existence and is now an endangered species.



**Black-crowned Night Heron** – a species which arrived in Hawaii on its own and is now well established.



**Cattle Egret** – imported from the 1950s by state officials to control insects on cattle ranches.







## Bird Identification Challenge

Time to test your bird identification skills ! A rationale for the identification will be provided in the next edition of The Warbler (see the following page for answers to the previous challenge). The goal is to provide a variety of difficulty levels. If you have suitable (difficult) photos for future challenges, please email the newsletter editor. Good Luck !



Teslin Lake Bird Observatory, September 2009  
Photo: Jukka Jantunen.



Albert Creek Bird Observatory, May 2008, Photo: Ted  
Murphy –Kelly.



Fox Lake, April 2010, Photo: Ben Schonewille.



## ANSWERS TO THE PREVIOUS BIRD ID CHALLENGE

Prepared by Ben Schonewille



**Bohemian Waxwing (Whitehorse)** – November 2009

Photo – Malcolm Boothroyd

The overall grayish coloration with a head crest and an overall smooth appearance indicates that this is a waxwing. The key diagnostic features for this bird which indicate Bohemian Waxwing are; chestnut brown undertail coverts, yellowish white edging on the primary feather tips, gray flanks, large black chin patch, reduced black eye patch and chestnut wash on the face.



**Cedar Waxwing (Teslin Lake)** – August 2009

Photo – Jukka Jantunen

The overall grayish coloration with a head crest and an overall smooth appearance indicates that this is a waxwing. The key diagnostic features for this bird which indicate Cedar Waxwing are; white undertail coverts, no edging on the primary feather tips, yellowish flanks, faint chin patch, large black eye patch and lack of chestnut wash on the face.



**Smith's Longspur (Watson Lake)** – May 2009

Photo – Jukka Jantunen

The drab plumage and chunky body indicate that this bird is a sparrow. In fact, this bird is a female Smith's Longspur as identified by the following characteristics; dark crown and cheek outline, dark tail with white outer feathers, short conical bill, pale supercilium and face, streaked back and buffy streaked underparts. Another key diagnostic feature of this species is the white shoulder; however, this is not visible in this photo.





**Yukon Bird Club**

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