

Yukon Warbler

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club

Fall 2011



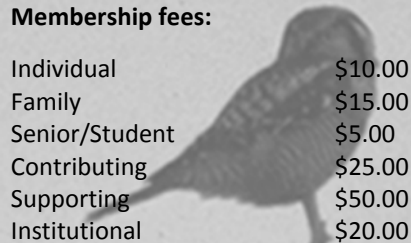
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS– SIGHTINGS REPORT – BIRD OBSERVATORY UPDATES

YUKON BIRD CLUB

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

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Yukon Warbler editor: Ben Schonewille
Yukon Warbler - Fall 2011

Cover Photo

American Coot, by Jukka Jantunen
2011-05-23, Albert Creek

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@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 !

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2011 YUKON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE

With a total of 13 Christmas Bird Counts scheduled for the Yukon, this is an excellent opportunity to get out birding this winter and take part in a continent wide bird monitoring project. The list of 2011 Yukon CBCs is shown below; please contact the count compiler before count day.

Whitehorse

December 26th, 2011

Compiler – Jim Hawkings

867-668-2639

Marsh Lake

December 18th, 2011

Compiler – Clive Osborne

867-667-5976

Watson Lake

December 26th, 2011

Compiler – Jenny Skelton

867-536-7488

Mayo

December 29th, 2011

Compiler – Mark O'Donoghue

867-996-2529

Tagish

December 26th, 2011

Compiler – Shyloh van Delft

867-399-3022

Kluane

December 18th, 2011

Compiler – Sarah Davidson

867-634-2884

Teslin

December 17th, 2011

Compiler – Ben Schonewille

867-334-2683

Johnson's Crossing

December 26th, 2011

Compiler – Minnie Clark/Ben Schonewille

timberpoint@northwestel.net

Skagway

December 17th, 2011

Compiler – Elaine Furbish

907-983-2049

Haines Junction

December 27th or 28th, 2011

Compiler – Julie Bauer

julie-ann-bauer@northwestel.net

Old Crow

December 26th, 2011 (approx)

Compiler – Birch Kuch

867-966-3033

Dawson City

December 18th, 2011

Compiler – Sebastian Jones

867-993-4430

Carcross

December 17th, 2011

Compiler – Dan Kemble

867-821-3461



2010 YUKON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SUMMARY

Submitted by Clive Osborne

Participation in the annual Christmas Bird Count was very good for 2010 with 12 counts conducted and posted on the Audubon Society's website. The Audubon Society is the official sponsor of the Christmas Bird Count throughout North America. This article summarizes the information collected by field observers only (feeder watch counts excluded). A total of 9165 birds comprising 37 species were counted by 118 participants during the period December 19 – January 3. Comparing the 2010 counts with the 2009 counts (see Warbler Fall 2010), there was a 2.6 fold increase in the total number of birds observed, comprising 3 more species, from 3 more counts and counted by 14 more participants. The location of the counts is shown in the map below and the counts are summarized in Table 1 to 3.

most unusual species (as determined by showing low numbers in only one count) were Trumpeter Swan (Johnson's Crossing), White-tailed Ptarmigan (Haines Junction), American Crow (Whitehorse), Rock Pigeon (Whitehorse), White-crowned Sparrow (Haines Junction), Snow Bunting (Teslin), Great Horned Owl (Carcross) and Pine Siskin (Whitehorse). Observations of interest from a climate perspective were made in the Whitehorse count: Mallard (60), Bohemian Waxwing (59), Bald Eagle (15), American Dipper (6) and House Sparrow (28).

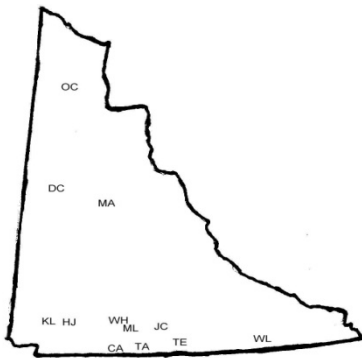


Table 1. Summary of 2011 counts.

Count	Date	No. of Field Observers	No. of Species Observed	No. of Birds Observed
Whitehorse	26/12/2010	42	25	3694
Tagish	26/12/2010	15	17	366
Haines	19/12/2010	14	21	1742
Marsh Lake	19/12/2010	9	16	646
Dawson	19/12/2010	9	9	381
Carcross	19/12/2010	8	18	391
Old Crow	26/12/2010	6	3	15
Teslin	20/12/2010	5	17	751
Johnson's	26/12/2010	4	11	109
Watson	26/12/2010	3	10	491
Kluane	03/01/2011	2	8	135
Mayo	29/12/2010	1	11	444

Table 2. Top 10 most abundant species on all counts.

Species	# of Birds	Rank
Common Raven	2475	1
Redpoll sp.*	2327	2
Crossbill sp.*	1743	3
Pine Grosbeak	840	4
Black-capped Chickadee	366	5
Boreal Chickadee	227	6
Black-billed Magpie	207	7
Dark-eyed Junco	195	8
Gray Jay	113	9
Bohemian Waxwing	64	10

* Includes both identified and unidentified counts

Table 3. Top eleven most widespread species.

Species	No. of Counts
Common Raven	12
Boreal Chickadee	11
Pine Grosbeak	10
Black-capped Chickadee	10
White-winged Crossbill	10
Redpoll sp.	9
Gray Jay	9
Black-billed Magpie	8
Hairy Woodpecker	8
Ruffed Grouse	7
Dark-eyed Junco	7



OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

Sightings Report – Winter 2010/2011

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

The Yukon's winter was relatively cold, reminiscent of decades ago, but still without much in the way of prolonged bitter cold. Late fall snowfalls in s. Yukon accounted for the season's relatively deep accumulation, even though snowfall through the rest of the winter seemed sparse.

WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Trumpeter Swan is now a regular wintering species at Johnson's Crossing; a flock of 8 was there through the season (ph. AS). A lone Mallard on the Dawson CBC 19 Dec (*fide* SJ) provided a rare winter record for cen. Yukon; a record-high count of 60 Mallards was recorded at McIntyre Cr., on the Whitehorse CBC 26 Dec (CE). The Region's highest winter count for Common Mergansers was 42 at Tagish 25 Jan (SvD). Four Ruffed Grouse were seen at Henderson's Corner, cen. Yukon 25 Jan (CE). Five Spruce Grouse were recorded on the Teslin CBC 18 Dec (*fide* BS), and 4 were seen near Swift R. 27 Dec (BS). Eight Willow and 1 White-tailed ptarmigan were tallied on the Haines Junction CBC 19 Dec (*fide* JuB). A winter trip to Tombstone Park, cen. Yukon recorded 80 Willow and 2 Rock ptarmigan 26-27 Jan (CE). Two White-tailed Ptarmigan, rarely reported in winter, were seen along Ptarmigan Cr., in the Swift R. area, se. Yukon 27 Dec, 1 Jan, & 12 Feb (BS). A lingering Horned Grebe, casual in s. Yukon in winter, was at Tagish 5 Dec (SvD). Wintering Bald Eagle numbers have been creeping ever higher in the Whitehorse area; this year, a new high of 15 was recorded on the 26 Dec CBC (CE). A Sharp-shinned Hawk, casual in winter, was reported from Haines Junction 22 Jan (LA).

GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

Northern Hawk Owls seemed somewhat scarce in the Region this winter; singles were reported from Silver Dollar L., s. Yukon 24 Dec (ph. AS), and Tombstone Territorial Park, cen. Yukon 26 Jan (CB, CE). Great Gray Owl is a highlight of any winter trip; one was seen near Rancheria 30 Jan (ph. CE). A roosting Boreal was a welcome yardbird in Whitehorse 1 Jan (ph. CE, PS). A

Northern Saw-whet Owl in Whitehorse 15 Feb (JG, LMa, ph. PS) furnished the Yukon's first live photograph. A Black-backed Woodpecker, rare in the Whitehorse area, was seen at Wolf Cr. 16 Jan (JH). Whitehorse recorded the Region's highest Black-billed Magpie count with 143 on 26 Dec (*fide* JH). A duo of **American Crows** in Whitehorse through the season (ph JeB, YL; ph. CE) provided a first winter record for the Region and is further evidence of the species' expanding population. Common Raven went unchallenged as the most abundant CBC species in the Region, with Whitehorse recording a total of 1964 on 26 Dec (*fide* JH). At Old Crow, the Yukon's most northerly CBC, Common Raven and redpoll, each with a count of 6, tied for the most common species (BC, LS). Tagish continues to produce the Region's highest Mountain Chickadee counts with 6 on 26 Dec (SvD).



Mountain Chickadee, Tagish, 17 Feb 2011, S. van Delft.

Single Northern Shrikes, rare but regular in winter, were reported from Haines Junction 18 Jan (JuB), Canyon Cr., sw. Yukon 24 Jan (RRH), and Marsh L., s. Yukon 26



Feb (JK). An American Robin eating May Day tree berries kicked off the winter birding season in Whitehorse 1 Dec (CC). A flock of 5 Bohemian Waxwings, casual in cen. Yukon in winter, were recorded on the Mayo CBC 29 Dec (MOD).

Snow Buntings, true wintering birds, were at White Mt., s. Yukon 11 Jan (CE); while a flock of 20 in Haines Junction 27 Feb (CD) may have been spring migrants. Single American Tree Sparrows, rare in s. Yukon in winter, were recorded at Morley Bay, 14-18 Dec (ph. CA, DH), and on the Marsh Lake CBC 19 Dec (*fide* CO).



American Tree Sparrow, Morley Bay, 15 Dec 2011, C. Allen.

Single tardy White-crowned Sparrows, rare in winter, were at Haines Junction feeders 1-2 Dec (CD), 15 Dec (WR), and 7 Feb (BL); and at a Takhini R. feeder 1-2 Dec (LG, JH). Impressive numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos were recorded on Yukon CBCs with 68 in Haines Junction 19 Dec (*fide* JuB), 37 in Carcross 19 Dec (*fide* DK), 35 in Tagish 26 Dec (*fide* SvD), 29 in Whitehorse 26 Dec (*fide* JH), 20 in Teslin 18 Dec (*fide* BS), 5 at Marsh L. 19 Dec (*fide* CO), and 1 in Dawson 19 Dec (*fide* SJ).



Dark-eyed Junco, Teslin, 18 Dec 2011, B. Schonewille.

A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, casual in winter, was at a Haines Junction feeder 14-20 Jan (LA). A banner White Spruce cone crop across s. Yukon produced good numbers of finches as evidenced by the Whitehorse CBC 26 Dec which recorded 221 Pine Grosbeaks, 141 Red Crossbills, 118 White-winged Crossbills, 328 Common Redpolls, 1 Hoary Redpoll, and 380 unidentified redpolls (*fide* JH). A flock of 150 White-winged Crossbills was seen at Wolf Cr., s. Yukon 21 Jan (JH), and a large flock of 400 Common Redpolls (and not a single Hoary!) was recorded in Whitehorse 3 Feb (CE). Six Hoary Redpolls were frequenting a Watson Lake feeder 30 Jan (CE). A Pine Siskin was among Common Redpolls at a Whitehorse feeder 29 Jan (BS); another hit a window at Destruction Bay in mid-Feb (MF). The small House Sparrow population in Whitehorse, tallied at 28 on 26 Dec (HG), has been stable for the past few years.



Pine Siskin, Whitehorse, 17 March 2011, B. Schonewille

Observers: Libby Anderson, Julie Bauer (JuB), Jeremy Baumbach (JeB), Cathy Brooke, Carolyn Couch, Claude Dulac, Cameron Eckert, Marsha Flumerfelt, Linda Gerrand, Jim Gilpin, Helmut Grünberg, Jim Hawkings, Jurg Hofer, Sebastian Jones, Jean Kapala, Dan Kemble, Birch Kuch, Yvette Lepage, Brent Liddle, Jerry Loomis, Mark Mallory, Laura Markle (LMa), John McKinnon, Mark O'Donoghue, Clive Osborne, Wolf Riedl, Robyn Rufiange-Holway, Heather Sayine-Crawford, Ben Schonewille, Pam Sinclair, Adam Skrutkowski, Mike Sutor, Leila Sumi, Shyloh van Delft.



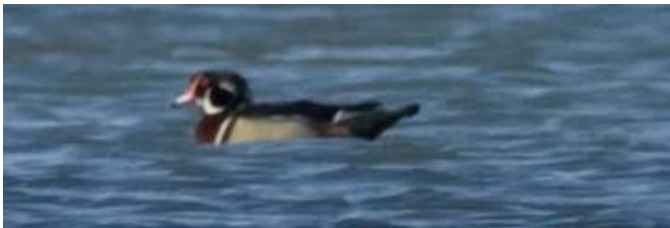
Sightings Report – Spring 2011

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

A late spring was observed across the Region with some species arriving a week or ten days behind schedule. However, when the weather finally did improve towards the end of May the migration seemed to catch up rather quickly. Waterfowl and shorebirds did not appear to be affected with good numbers noted for some species.

WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Snow Goose is an uncommon migrant in s. Yukon; reports this season included 68 at L. Laberge 11 May (CE), 33 at Tagish 15 May (SVD), and 7 at Watson Lake 10 May (SD). Trumpeter Swan migration in the Yukon Southern Lakes area peaked 25 Apr with counts of 1191 (1061 ads., 130 juv.) at M'Clintock Bay, and 1100 at Tagish (JJ). A male **Wood Duck**, casual in the Yukon, first seen at Shallow Bay 16 May (ph. JJ, CE) continued at the s. end of L. Laberge through May (m.obs.).



Wood Duck, Shallow Bay, 16 May 2011, J. Jantunen.

A male Cinnamon Teal, rare in s. Yukon, seen at L. Laberge 9 May managed to find a mate by the time it was seen again 14 May (ph. CE). Four White-tailed Ptarmigan were seen near St. Elias L., sw. Yukon 16 Mar (TS). A lone Sharp-tailed Grouse was at von Wilczek Cr., s. Yukon 28 Apr (BS). A Pied-billed Grebe, rare anywhere in the Region, was at Shallow Bay 16 May (CE, JJ). Three dark-morph Swainson's Hawks, a rare spring migrant in the Yukon Southern Lakes, were seen over Whitehorse 28 Apr (ph. JJ). A total of **48,000** Sandhill Cranes, just a small portion of the migration movement, was recorded at Faro, cen. Yukon 6-7 May (SB). American Golden-Plover numbers have been low in s. Yukon for many years; a count of 140 at Lake Laberge 14 May (CE) was exceptional. Pacific Golden-Plover is a rare but regular spring migrant in s. Yukon; 4 were at L. Laberge 11-14 May (CE), and one was at Shallow Bay 16 May (JJ). A colour-banded Hudsonian Godwit seen at L. Laberge 24

May (ph. CE) had been banded in January 2011 at Isla Chiloe, Chile. A **Bar-tailed Godwit**, the Yukon's 4th record, at Deep Cr., on L. Laberge 28-29 May (AP; ph. CE; BD) was the headline rarity on the Yukon Birdathon. Shorebird migration was in full swing at L. Laberge 14 May as evidenced by counts of 500 Pectoral Sandpipers and 300 Long-billed Dowitchers (CE). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper, casual in s. Yukon, was at Judas Cr. 22 May (CE, PS).



Bar-tailed Godwit, Deep Creek-Lake Laberge, 28 May 2011, B. Dobrowsky.

GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

An ad. Long-tailed Jaeger, a very rare s. Yukon migrant, was seen at M'Clintock Bay 13 May (BUK). An ad. **Little Gull**, casual in the Yukon, was a delightful find at L. Laberge 12 May (ph. CE).



Little Gull (left) with Bonaparte's Gulls, Horse Creek-Lake Laberge, 12 May 2011, C. Eckert.



Nares Lake is known as a key staging point for migrant Mew Gulls; a count of 800 was recorded there 7 May (CE). A Eurasian Collared-Dove, now rare but regular in s. Yukon, returned for its second season to a farm along Little Atlin L. 22 May (ph. KG). Southern Yukon owl surveys recorded 9 Great Horned Owls along the Kusawa L. Rd 6 Apr (BD, HG); 11 Great Horned and 5 Boreal owls along Marsh L. 7 Apr (JJ, SVD); 5 Great Horned and a remarkable 21 Boreals s. of Teslin 11 Apr (JJ, SVD); and 6 Great Horned, 4 Boreals, and a Northern Saw-whet (rare in s. Yukon) along Little Atlin L. 15 Apr (JJ, SVD). A Northern Saw-whet Owl, rare in s. Yukon, seen at Marsh L. 1 May (MT, ph. CE, JJ, JM) continued through the season. Cold spring conditions can be problematic for migrant swallows; a flock of 200 Tree Swallows appeared to be in a state of semi-torpor in Whitehorse 14 May (KW). The ranges of the two “Winter” wrens will take time to clarify in the north; this far only Pacific Wren has been documented in the Yukon – one was heard along Cosh Cr. 28 May (JJ, TMK, BS). A brilliant male Smith’s Longspur, rare on migration, was at L. Laberge 14 May (ph. CE); another was at M’Clintock Bay 17 May (JJ; HG). A Yellow-rumped Warbler was an early arrival at Mayo, cen. Yukon 25 Apr (MOD). A pocket of Ovenbirds discovered 5 years ago at the nw. edge of their range singing in Trembling Aspen along Cosh Cr., se. Yukon has persisted; two were singing in those very same aspen stands 28 May (JJ, TMK, BS). An American Redstart, rare in the Whitehorse area, was at Judas Cr. 29 May (SVD).

A Watson Lake feeder hosted 25 Fox Sparrows 3-4 May (SD). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak provided a first local record for Teslin 25-26 May (ph. JS, HS).



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Teslin, 25 May 2011, J. Schonewille.

A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, casual in the Yukon, was at Albert Cr. 21 May (JJ, TMK), while another male was at Little Atlin L. 22-24 May (ph. KG).



Yellow-headed Blackbird, Albert Creek, 21 May 2011, J. Jantunen.

A flock of 100 Rusty Blackbirds was reported from Watson Lake 4 May (SD). A flock of over 200 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches first found at Tutshi L. along the B.C. section of the South Klondike Hwy. 26 Mar (SVD) triggered a subsequent Yukon-twitch as the flock moved n. a few kilometres (JJ; BS). A small flock of up to 15 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches was seen in Whitehorse 28-30 Mar (ph. KW). Purple Finch is at the edge of its range at Mayo, cen. Yukon; the first male and fem. appeared there 3 & 4 May respectively (MOD). Unusually early and abundant wide- spread nesting by Common Redpolls in low- land areas across southern and central Yukon may have been triggered by last summer’s bumper White Spruce cone crop combined with a cold spring that made conditions less favorable for the birds to continue their northward migration, or move to higher elevations.

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): Selena Boothroyd, Boris Dobrowolsky, Susan Drury, Cameron Eckert, Ken Gabb, Helmut Grünberg, Jukka Jantunen, Tonya Makletzoff, John Meikle, Ted Murphy-Kelly, Mark O’Donoghue, Adam Perrier, Ben Schonewille, Henderien Schonewille, John Schonewille, Pam Sinclair, Terry Skjonsberg, Malcolm Taggart, Brian Uher-Koch, Shyloh van Delft, Keith Williams.



YOUR PICTURES

This is your space. We want your photos !

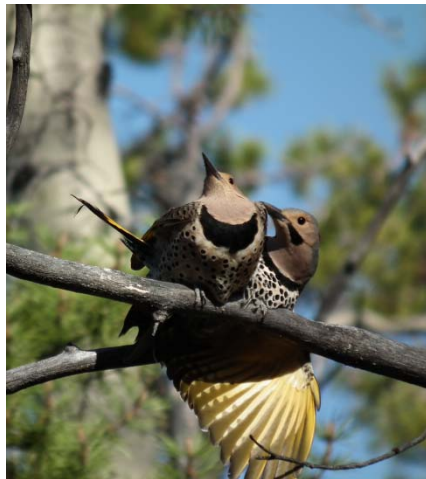
Send them to the newsletter editor at yukon.bird.club@gmail.com



Dark-eyed Junco nest, Dawson, July 2011, C. Cartwright



Hermit Thrush nest, Dawson, July 2011, C. Cartwright



Copulating Northern Flickers, Teslin, June 2011, A. Skrutkowski.



Horned Lark, May 2011. A. Skrutkowski.



Bald Eagle, April 2011, R. Dawson



PHOTOGRATPHS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

The photos below were submitted by Yukon Bird Club member Catherine Millar from a recent trip to the Philippines.



Female Olive-backed Sunbird, C. Millar.



Male Olive-backed Sunbird, C. Millar.



White-collared Kingfisher, C. Millar.



Albert Creek Bird Observatory Spring 2011 Report

Submitted by Station Manager Ted Murphy-Kelly

Albert Creek Bird Observatory completed its 11 consecutive spring season on June 5th, 2011 thanks to the efforts of staff, dedicated volunteers and many generous funders.

This spring will definitely go down as a season “out of sorts”. In a nutshell, many typically early migrants were late while other later migrants showed up earlier than usual.

Migration monitoring began at SOYBO’s southeast Yukon station on April 23rd. The marsh was still frozen solid during the first week and this gave us a great opportunity to get good views of Tundra Swans and White-fronted Geese as we took advantage of the wide panoramic view that was gained once we walked out onto the ice. The spring sparrow movement was very late this year and once they did show up the numbers were below average. Due to our late spring the bulk of these temperate migrants such as American Tree Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow and Slate-colored Junco showed up 10 to 14 days later than normal. When looking at the neotropical guild of species such as Least Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and Blackpoll Warbler, many actually showed up earlier than usual. With 40 days of operation, a total of 1,917 birds of 46 species were banded.

We did record many previously banded birds at the station, reinforcing the fact that many of the birds banded at the site are local breeders. Sightings of the Yukon’s least common woodpecker occurred this spring at the site after being absent in 2010. A single Pileated Woodpeckers were recorded on 8 days from May 6th to June 4th. A male Yellow-headed Blackbird, a new species for the station’s checklist, was observed and photographed on May 21st. New for the species banded list, two Buffleheads were also banded.

The observatory welcomed back volunteers Mario Benassi and Pam Randles of Haines, Alaska who braved the early season for five days. Long time volunteers Sarah Davidson, Julie Bauer, Terry Skjonsberg, Jessica Condon, Susan Drury and Megan Cohoon also returned to help out. We were very fortunate to have two young men volunteer for two weeks each. Bryn White of the U.K. and Brad Bloemendal of Ontario were a welcome addition to our team. Building on our outreach programming the station hosted a field trip from the Lower Post school on May 10th. The bander in charge chair was occupied this season by Jukka Jantunen and myself.



Yellow Warbler was the top species banded in 2011, with 334 banded.



Blackpoll Warbler; over 120 were banded in 2011.



Bufflehead, a new species banded at the station.



Book Review: *Birds of Canada*

Submitted by Youth Birder and Yukon Bird Club Member Shyloh van Delft

Birds of Canada is a new field guide published by Lone Pine Publishing, and written by Tyler L. Hoar, Ken de Smet, R. Wayne Campbell, and Gregory Kennedy. It focuses specifically on birds that live in or migrate through Canada, making it easier for identification.

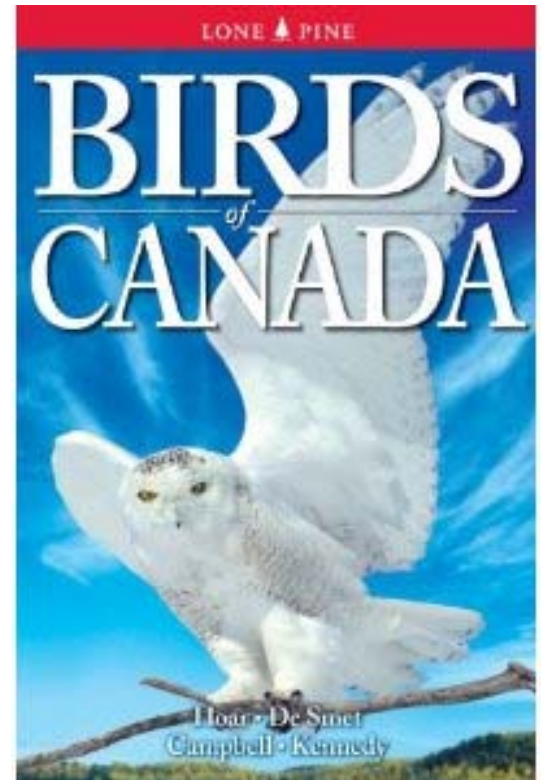
It starts off with a colour-coded reference guide that can be used to quickly find the species that you are looking for, and then goes on to the introduction. The introduction provides information on how to use the guide, a little bit on the ecoregions of Canada, how, when, and where to find different kinds of birds, as well as what you need to get started birdwatching. The bird identification guide is split into two parts: nonpasserines and passerines, with explanations on what they are. A checklist, the index, appendix, and photo credits are included at the end.

Each species in the guide is beautifully illustrated, usually in their spring plumage, with a photo included to show what they look like in their natural habitat. A map of Canada accompanies each species showing its range in the summer, winter, during migration, and year-round. Information on the birds is also included, giving colourful descriptions on their behaviour. Basic information includes: identification, size, habitat, voice, nesting and foraging habits, as well as comparisons with similar species.

Birds of Canada is a great book for people just starting to birdwatch, providing them with all of the information needed to set out on an expedition or just feeder watch out of their windows. The colourful descriptions and breathtaking illustrations will have you itching to take wing and search for the amazing bird species that can be found across Canada.

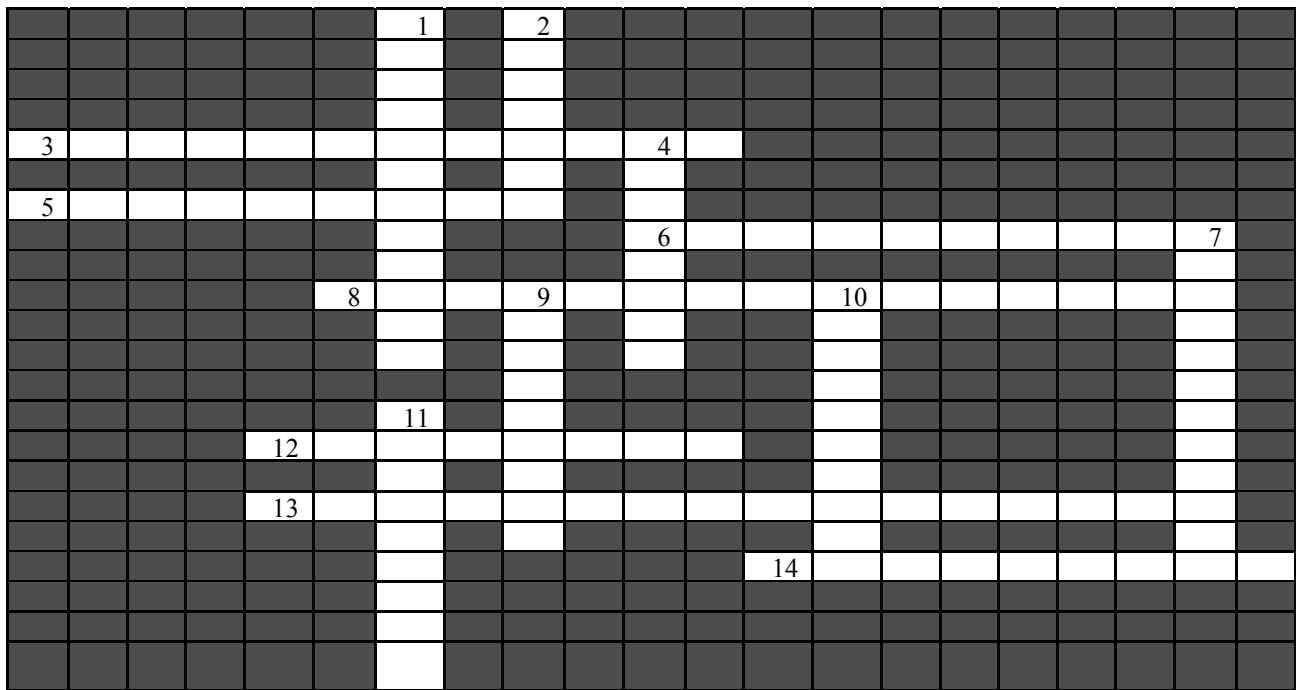
I found the illustrations very helpful to distinguish one species from another similar species, since markings and characteristics are more defined than in photos. The photos included are very clear, and well composed. I also like the wording in the VOICE part; turning birds' songs into words helps to identify those confusing songs you hear high up in a tree or in the thick undergrowth. I found some of the maps showing birds that migrate through or breed in the Yukon and Northern B.C. were inaccurate and erroneously indicated that some common Yukon / B.C. birds do not exist there. That is my only critique for the book, and it is common in most field guides.

I recommend this book to any person getting interested in birds. It is a great book for people just learning to identify the different species, or looking for information on a specific species. Don't forget to keep track of the birds you see using the checklist at the back!



Yukon Birds Crossword Puzzle

This version of the crossword puzzle is provided by YBC member, Ruth McCullough. This version's theme is winter birds in the Yukon.



Across:

- 3. Common in coniferous forests, has a dark tail with rusty tips.
- 5. This bird's call is often confused with a winnowing snipe.
- 6. Common group of birds that have especially long tongues and reinforced tail feathers.
- 8. This bird uses its specialized bill to open coniferous tree cones.
- 12. Migrates irregularly, short tailed, tree climbing bird usually climbing head first down the tree.
- 13. Occasionally seen in winter at feeders, this small bird nests on the ground, often beneath something.
- 14. Occasionally seen in winter at open water areas.

Down:

- 1. A large finch that favors sunflower seeds when at feeders.
- 2. An owl seen hunting during the middle of the day.
- 4. Rare wanderer to the southern Yukon, breeds in the Arctic.
- 7. Common in the Yukon; two color phases, gray and red, known for drumming in spring
- 9. Very familiar group of birds commonly seen at feeding stations.
- 10. Old name of a grouse often seen on Grey Mountain.
- 11. All white alpine dweller.

Key to Spring 2011 Crossword Puzzle

						1H												2C	L	A	Y
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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, August 2011
Photo – Ben Schonewille



Horse Creek, May 2010
Photo – Ben Schonewille



Teslin Lake, August 2011
Photo – Ben Schonewille



ANSWERS TO THE PREVIOUS BIRD ID CHALLENGE

Prepared by Ben Schonewille



Willow Ptarmigan (Tombstone Park) – January 2011

Photo – Cameron Eckert

The overall stocky build, white plumage and feathered legs indicate that this bird is a ptarmigan in non-breeding (winter) plumage. There are three species of ptarmigan in the Yukon; willow, rock and white-tailed. Rock Ptarmigan can be ruled out by the lack of black lores (between the beak and eyes). White-tailed Ptarmigan is completely white and relatively small whereas Willow Ptarmigan has black in the tail feathers and is relatively large. The bird in this photo is relatively large and a small amount of black can be seen in the underside of the tail; therefore, this bird is the common and widespread Willow Ptarmigan.



Least Sandpiper (Teslin Lake) – August 2010

Photo – Jukka Jantunen

At first glance, this small bird can be identified as a shorebird by the long legs and beak. The small size of this shorebird, indicate it is a 'peep' sandpiper; the most likely Yukon species are Least and Semipalmated. A useful tip for distinguishing these species is leg colour; Least has yellowish legs and Semipalmated has blackish legs. The yellowish legs combined with the more brownish plumage overall indicate this bird is a Least Sandpiper.



Glaucous Gull (Teslin Lake) – October 2010

Photo – Jukka Jantunen

This gull appears relatively large and lightly colored overall. This bird also has a uniform color overall with the wing tips being a similar color to the rest of the body. Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of this bird is the pink bill with a black tip ('ink dipped'). These characteristics point towards a juvenile Glaucous Gull, the most distinctive juvenile gull found regularly in the Yukon.



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