

Yukon Warbler

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club

Spring 2011



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

YBC BIRDS: A free email information flyway with updates of sightings, events and issues. To subscribe email 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/

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Yukon Warbler editor: Ben Schonewille
Yukon Warbler - Spring 2011

Cover Photo

Greater Yellowlegs, by Jukka Jantunen
2010-07-08, Teslin area

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 .

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 !

2011 Board of Directors

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Yukon Bird Club News & Upcoming Events

Yukon Bird Club Annual General Meeting (AGM)

On February 22, 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 Shyloh van Delft from Tagish for her exemplary work in the promotion of public awareness of birds in the southern Yukon. In recent years, Shyloh has organized the Tagish Christmas Bird Count, participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count and contributed her sightings to eBird. In the summer of 2010, she also attended the Doug Tarry Young Ornithologist Workshop at Long Point Bird Observatory in southern Ontario after which she spent 10 days at the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory to receive additional training.
- Cameron reported that the recipient for the 2010 award is Shyloh van Delft for her work in organizing the Tagish Christmas Bird Count, contributions to the Great Backyard Bird Count in recent years, sightings contributions to E-bird, involvement with the Bird Observatories program, the Raptor nest box project and her contribution to the Long Point Young Ornithologists Workshop in Ontario this past summer.

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), Treasurer (Ted Murphy-Kelly), Betty Sutton (Events Co-ordinator), Cameron Eckert (Sightings/Checklist Co-ordinator), Devon Yacura (Youth Co-ordinator), Ben Schonewille (Newsletter Editor), Jenny Trapnell (Field Trip Co-ordinator) and Pam Sinclair (Special Projects). New board members include Jim Hawkings (Secretary, Birdathon Coordinator), Al Cushing (General Director) and Keith Williams (General Director). Outgoing directors included Clive Osborne, Wendy Boothroyd and Malcolm Boothroyd; the remaining board members thank these individuals for their contributions to the YBC.

2010 YUKON BIRDATHON

The Birdathon is a 24-hour event beginning at 5 pm on Friday, May 27th and ending at 5 pm on Saturday the 28th. 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 and click on Yukon Bird Club publications. Scroll to the bottom of the page and choose YBC Pledge Sheet or YBC Birdathon Pamphlet. 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. If you would like to sponsor someone for the Yukon Birdathon, please email the event co-ordinator Jim Hawkings (hawkingsATnorthwestel.net). Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$10.



YUKON BIRD CLUB 2011 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

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

NEW! Wednesday 13 April. Learn all about Yukon's migratory bird species at a bird identification workshop: "Birds of Spring or What is that LBJ??" with Lone Christensen and Lee Kubica, at the Whitehorse Public Library, 2071 Second Ave. 7:30 p.m.

April 16-April 24 : Celebration of Swans at Swan Haven Interpretation Centre. Biologist Interpreter on staff. For information contact Environment Yukon's Wildlife Viewing Program (667-8291)
<http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/wildlifebiodiversity/CelebrationofSwans.php>



Trumpeter Swan, 2-Apr-2010, Tagish Narrows, B. Schonewille

Tuesday 19 April: Explore spring at **Hidden Lakes** with Lone Christensen. Meet at 6:30 at the Whitehorse Fish Ladder, near the dam. (2 hrs)

Thursday 21 April: North Alaska Highway Shrike and Bluebird tour with Helmut Grünberg. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 6:30 pm. (~3 hours)

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

Friday 6 May: Carcross: Dusky Grouse hike at Nares Mountain near Carcross with Dan Kemble. Meet at Montana Services in Carcross at 6:30 p.m. (~3 hours). Some hiking involved. Please bring sturdy footwear. For info, phone Dan at 821-3461.

Friday-Sunday May 6-8: Faro: Crane and Sheep Viewing Festival Faro. Sponsored by the Town of Faro. For the complete Festival schedule contact the Faro Town Office, 994-2728 or see www.faroyukon.ca

Saturday 14 May: International Migratory Bird Day - Spring Migration Count. Participate in this annual "spring round-up" contact yukonbirdclub@gmail.com.

NEW! Saturday 14 May: Get your birdy at the **Mountain View Golf Club** and help celebrate **International Migratory Bird Day**. Short tour of several holes on the grounds. Meet Devon Yacura in front of the clubhouse at 9 a.m. For info, phone Devon at 667-7597. (2 hours)



Sunday 15 May: Take the **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 (pond at km 7 Tagish Road, Lewes March etc.) (5-6 hours)

Tuesday 17 May: Explore birds along the **Fish Lake Road** with Lone Christensen. Meet downtown at 6:00 p.m. the SS Klondike or at Porter Creek Super A at 6:30 p.m. (~2 hours)

Thursday 19 May: Enjoy an evening stroll and look for birds along the **Millennium Trail** with Jenny Trapnell. Meet at the Fish Ladder near the dam at 6:30 p.m. (~2 hours)

Sunday 22 May: Start your morning with a song! **McIntyre Creek bird songs and calls trip**, with Pam Sinclair. Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 7:30 a.m. (morning) (~3-4 hours)

Wednesday 25 May: Judas Creek. Check out this migratory hot spot with Jim Hawkings. Meet at SS Klondike at 5:30 p.m. Always an amazing array of birds! (~3 hrs)

Thursday 26 May: Hike around **Hidden Lake (Riverdale)** with Lone Christensen who knows these lakes like her backyard. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Fish Ladder (~ 2 hours)

Friday 27 May @ 5 p.m. to Saturday 28 May at 5 p.m.: ANNUAL YUKON BIRDATHON. Come out and have fun finding birds, and raise funds for bird conservation and education. Coordinated this year by Jim Hawkings.

Saturday 28 May: MAYO: Bird Identification Walk with Mark O'Donoghue. Meet at the Campground at 5-Mile Lake at 8:30 am. (~2-3 hours). For more info call 996-2529.

Tuesday 31 May: Join Mary Whitley on a birding trip to **Paddy's Pond in Hillcrest**. Meet outside the Sky hotel opposite the airport at 6:00 p.m. (~2 hours).

Friday-Sunday 3-5th June: Dempster Highway: Weekend on the Wing: Northern Birding Festival at Tombstone Territorial Park campground. Sponsored by Friends of the Dempster. A fantastic opportunity to learn about and view Dempster specialties. For more information see www.dempstercountry.ca

Friday 10 June: Come explore the **duck ponds near Takhini/Yukon College** with Katie Aitken. Meet at the Yukon Arts Centre parking lot at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Katie at 667-3909 or Katie.Aitken@ec.gc.ca (~1-2 hours)



Violet-green Swallow, 16-May-2010,
Whitehorse, C. Eckert



Saturday 2 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, contact Syd Cannings at 335-6633 days. (~ 2 hours)

Fall Trips

Sunday 4 September. Discover fall migration at **Schwatka Lake and Hidden Lakes**, with Lone Christensen. Meet at SS Klondike at 9:30 a.m. (~2-3 hours)

Sunday 11 September: See thousands of waterfowl and a few shorebirds at the **Whitehorse Sewage Lagoons** with Devon Yacura. Meet at the SS Klondike at 9:30 a.m. (~3-4 hours)

Sunday 25 September: Explore **Lake Laberge** with Lone Christensen. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A parking lot at 9:30 a.m. Dress warmly, wear boots and bring a lunch. (~5 hours)



Red-throated Loon, 11-Aug-2009, Teslin Lake, J. Jantunen

Bird Observatories

McIntyre Marsh: Bird Banding Demonstration Project. Site operating April 23 to May 30. Open week-ends and holidays 7 a.m. to noon (possibly later if bird activity is sufficient). Contact: Ben Schonewille at teslin.bird.banding@gmail.com

Albert Creek Observatory: Upper Liard - Site operating April 24- June 5 (may also be open in fall; late July to mid September). Contact Ted Murphy-Kelly at [867-456-7431](tel:867-456-7431)

Teslin Lake Observatory: Teslin, near Teslin Lake Government Campground - Site operating July 4 - September 21. Contact: Ben Schonewille at teslin.bird.banding@gmail.com



Rusty Blackbird, 25-Apr-2010, McIntyre Marsh, B. Schonewille



OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

Sightings Report – Summer 2010

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

WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

The Whitehorse sewage ponds are known to host high numbers of ducks in fall but there have been few summer counts; surveys there this season recorded some noteworthy totals including 145 Gadwall 10 Jun (DY), 400 Northern Shovelers 22 Jun (HG, DY, IW), and 77 Ruddy Ducks 28 Jul (BD, HG). A total of 330 American Wigeon was recorded at Coot L., 8 km s. of Pelly Crossing 18 Jun (AS). A male Cinnamon Teal at Albert Cr. 1 Jun (ph. SDr, JJ) provided a rare record for se. Yukon; another was at the Whitehorse sewage ponds 2 Jun (DY). A concentration of sea ducks along the flow ice at Herschel I. produced high counts of 65 King Eiders 16 Jun, 250 Common Eiders 15 Jun, 400 Surf Scoters 20 Jun, and 800 White-winged Scoters 15 Jun (CE).



Common Eider, Herschel Island, 17-Jun-2010, C. Eckert.

A male Black Scoter was at Chapman L., cen. Yukon 11-16 Jun (ph. CC; AS). An ad. Yellow-billed Loon, casual in cen. Yukon, was seen at Tombstone Territorial Park 26-27 Jul (CC; ph. SC). An ad. Eared Grebe, casual in s. Yukon, was at the Whitehorse sewage ponds 22 Jun (HG, IW, DY). Double-crested Cormorant is just beyond the outer reaches of its breeding range in sw. Yukon; one was at Pine L. 7 Jun (DD). Four large white birds flying overhead e. of Rancheria Falls, se. Yukon 28 Jul appeared to be Great Egrets (JK, MK); unfortunately the brevity of

the sighting meant that confirmation photos could not be obtained.

A ground-based raptor survey from Pauline Cove, Herschel I. 19 Jun recorded 4 Rough-legged Hawk nests (ph. CE, JHa, EM); unfortunately, coastal erosion saw all but one slide into the sea as the summer progressed (JHa, EM). A complete Peregrine Falcon raptor survey at Herschel I. 19 Jun recorded 5 nests (EM, DM). Two Sandhill Crane nests were found on Herschel I. 19 Jun (ph. CE, JHa, EM). An ad. Greater Yellowlegs with 2 young seen near Teslin 5 Jul (TH, JJ) provided the Yukon's second only confirmed breeding record. It seems quite plausible that 3 Whimbrel seen at Watson Lake, se. Yukon 4-5 Jun (JJ) were the same 3 that appeared the following day at Mayo (MOD).

GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

A Parasitic Jaeger nest with 2 eggs established a rare breeding record for Herschel I. 19 Jun (ph. CE, JHa, EM).



Parasitic Jaeger, Herschel Island, 19-Jun-2010, C. Eckert.

An ad. Glaucous-winged Gull provided a first local record for Mayo 10 Jun (ph. BS); another ad. was seen in Whitehorse 14 Jun (AS); and an ad. seen at Herschel I. 15-18 Jun had returned for its 6th consecutive summer (ph. CE).





Glaucous-winged Gull, Mayo, 10-Jun-2010, B. Schonewille.

A juv. Bonaparte Gull's stay at Pauline Cove, Herschel I. 21-26 Jul ended when it got snatched up by a Peregrine Falcon (ph. JHa, EM). An incursion of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in s. Yukon that began in spring continued with singles at Haines Junction 8 Jun (ph. NA); Whitehorse 16 Jun (ph. CO); Watson Lake 20 Jun (ph. JS), and Upper Liard 25 Jun (ph. LO).



Eurasian Collared-Dove, Watson Lake, 20-Jun-2010, J. Skelton.

Mourning Dove is no longer the default rare dove and all individuals should be closely scrutinized; one was at Watson Lake, se. Yukon 14 Jul (JJ). A fem. Rufous Hummingbird, rare in s. Yukon, was at the Watson R. 1 Jul (ph. JL, TL). A Pacific Wren, identified by song from a recording, was at Brook's Brook 16 Jun (vr. TH, JJ).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher is a bit of an enigma at the northern extent of its range; surveys near Teslin s. Yukon recorded clusters of 20 on 11 Jun, and 8 on 28 Jun (TH, JJ); 8 were recorded on the Mayo breeding bird survey 10 Jun (MOD); and singles were seen further n. at Gravel L. and the

Tintina Trench lookout 18 Jun (AS). A total of 10 Dusky Flycatchers was tallied at Gray Mt., S Yukon 5 Jun (AS); and 8 were recorded on the Mount McIntyre breeding bird survey 10 Jun (CE). A **Western Kingbird**, the Yukon's third, was at McIntyre Cr. in Whitehorse 16 Jun (ph. MB). The expansion of American Crows across s. Yukon reached Haines Junction in the sw. with one seen there 6 Jun (RC, SDa). Wright Pass at the Yukon/NWT border along the Dempster Hwy. is one of the most accessible North American locations for breeding Northern Wheatears; 2 were seen there 11 Jun (AS). It was a case of 'build it and they will come' for a pair of Mountain Bluebirds at the outer margin of the species' range that claimed a nest box at Henderson's Corner 26 Jun (*fide* CC). A brilliant male Eastern Yellow Wagtail touched down at Pauline Cove on Herschel I. 17 Jun (ph. CE); another was seen at Shingle Pt. 12 Jul (GP, BS).



Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Herschel Island, 17-Jun-2010, C. Eckert.

Reports of Cape May Warbler from s. Yukon included 3 at Albert Cr. 2 June (JJ et al), and 1 at Lake Laberge 15 Jun (BL, AS).



Cape May Warbler, Albert Creek, 2-Jun-2010, J. Jantunen.



A hatch-year Bay-breasted Warbler was banded at Albert Cr., se. Yukon 28 Jul (ph. JJ). An Ovenbird singing at the Mush Lake Rd., sw. Yukon 20 Jun (SDa) was well w. of its range. A Clay-colored Sparrow, casual in s. Yukon, was banded at Albert Cr. 1 Jun (ph. JJ, TMK). Observations of Smith's Longspur, a highlight of any trip North, included 4 singing below Surfbird Mt. in Tombstone Territorial Park 10 Jun (AS), and 2 there 16 Jun (TM); and a high count of 10 at Sheep Cr., Ivvavik NP 22 Jun (*fide* LN). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, just beyond the w. edge of its range, was singing at Albert Cr. se. Yukon 4 Jun (ph. JJ).



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Albert Creek, 4-Jun-2010, J. Jantunen.

Observers: Neal Allison, Michael Biro, Corey Cartwright, Syd Cannings, Richard Cherepak, Sarah Davidson (SDa), Boris Dobrowolsky, Dan Drummond, Susan Drury (SDr), Cameron Eckert, Helmut Grünberg, Glen Guthrie (GGu), Jeremy Hansen (JHa), Todd Heakes, James Hodson (JHo), David Hussell, Jukka Jantunen, John Kaye, Molly Kaye, Brian Lendrum, Joel Luet (JL), Trish Luet, Thor Manson, Edward McLeod, Dave Mossop, Ted Murphy-Kelly, Lauraine Oakes, Mark O'Donoghue, Linh Nguyen, Clive Osborne, Graham Pelchat, Ben Schonewille, Jenny Skelton, Andy Stepniewski, Alasdair Veitch, Iain Walkley, Devon Yacura.



Sightings Report – Fall 2010

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

WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Fall migration watches (24 Jul – 23 Oct) at Teslin L. recorded a total of 9439 geese including 8060 Greater White-fronted, 188 Snow, 830 Canada, an unid. Bean-Goose 18 Oct (wd. JJ), and 361 unid. geese (JJ, BS, et al.). A flock of 212 Brant migrated w. past Herschel I. 25 Aug (CE, JJ). Five Cackling Geese, the Yukon's first fall record for the species, were among 57 Canada Geese in Whitehorse 11 Oct (ph. CE). An impressive 3000 Canada Geese were at Nisutlin R. Delta 17 Sept (CE, JJ). Swans were recorded in good numbers during fall migration watches at Teslin L. with 1063 Trumpeters, 8182 Tundras, 1 Bewick's 17 Oct (ph. JJ), and 1770 unid. swans (JJ, BS, et al.). Tundra Swan migration in the North generally peaks in early to mid Oct; about 600 swans, likely Tundras by date, were counted from a flight over the s. end of Lake Laberge 19 Oct (GW, MW). Eurasian Wigeon is fairly common spring migrant, but only casually seen in fall; one in Whitehorse 11 Oct (CE) provided the season's only report. A flock of 3000 Mallards was taking advantage of the rich feeding grounds at Nisutlin R. delta 3 Oct (CE, JJ). The season's waterfowl high counts from the Whitehorse sewage ponds included 400 Gadwall 11 Oct (CE); 3000-3500 American Wigeon 3-11 Oct (DY; CE); 800 Mallards 11-19 Oct (CE); 800 Northern Shovelers 3 Oct (DY); 400 Bufflehead 18 Aug (HG); and 130 Ruddy Ducks 2 Oct (HG). Migration counts from Pauline Cove on Herschel I. recorded 328 King Eiders and 234 Pacific Loons, all westbound, 24-25 Aug (CE, JJ).

A hike to 4700ft along the Donjek R., sw. Yukon 10 Oct produced 4 Willow and 9 White-tailed ptarmigan (TS). An ad. Yellow-billed Loon was at Herschel I. 25 Aug (CE, JJ). An unprecedented fall-out of Yellow-billed Loons in s. Yukon from early Oct through Nov included reports from most of the

large lakes and rivers including a flock of 4 at Army Beach on Marsh L., 24 Oct (BD, CE, JJ). Marsh L. hosts the Territory's highest numbers of grebes during fall migration; counts this season included 150 Horned Grebes 24 & 26 Oct (BD, CE, JJ); and 178 Red-necked Grebes 21 Sept (JJ).



Yellow-billed Loon, Carcross, 24-Oct-2010, C. Eckert.

A Double-crested Cormorant, rare in s. Yukon, was at Bove I. on Tagish L. from late Jul through 16 Aug (JBo). It's not clear how many individuals were involved in a spate of Great Blue Heron reports from the Yukon Southern Lakes area which included singles at Carcross 15 Aug (ph. JCR) which was subsequently found dead 20 Aug (LK); McIntyre Cr., 16 Aug (MB); Whitehorse fish ladder 23 Aug (ph. PD); and two at Tagish 27 Aug (RS, MVD, ph. SVD).



Great Blue Heron, Carcross, 16 Aug, J. Rushant.



Herschel I. saw 2 new raptor species this season with a fem-type Sharp-shinned Hawk 24 Aug (ph. CE, JJ, MS); and an American Kestrel 9-10 Aug (ph. LJM, SM) which, unfortunately, was found dead later in the month (JeH).

Unusual in sw. Yukon was a flock of about 200 Sandhill Cranes over Haines Junction 28 Sept (JBa). Noteworthy shorebirds at Herschel I. included single juv. Western Sandpipers 14 & 21 Aug; a juv. White-rumped Sandpiper 21 Aug; and a juv. A flock of 7 juv. Sanderlings, an uncommon s. Yukon fall migrant, was at Teslin L. 3 Sept (ph. AS). The shorebird season in Whitehorse closed out with a juv. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 16-17 Oct (ph. CE); 3 juv. Pectoral Sandpipers 19 Oct (CE); 1-2 Dunlin 11-19 Oct (ph. CE); 4 Wilson's Snipe 5 Nov (JiH); an ad. Spotted Sandpiper 14-15 Nov (PS; ph. CE) which was the latest fall shorebird ever recorded in the Yukon.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Whitehorse, 16-Oct-2010, C. Eckert.

GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

A juv. **Little Gull** at Teslin L. 15-16 Oct (ph. JJ) established the Yukon's first fall record for the species. A small incursion of California Gulls was noted in s. Yukon with a high count of 4 at Teslin L. 15 Oct (ph. JJ); and one in Whitehorse 15-23 Oct (ph. CE). A flock of 8 Black-legged Kittiwakes, casual in the Yukon, was following a boat about 10km ne. of Herschel I. 25 Aug (ph. JeH, EM); and a lone ad. was seen on Teslin L. 25 Sept (JJ). An ad. **Ross's Gull**, a s. Yukon first, seen 23 Oct on Marsh L. (wd.

JJ) coincided with a record movement at Pt. Barrow, AK and a subsequent smattering of fall records to the south. Thick-billed Murre had not been reported in the Yukon for nearly 20 years, and so a tally of 10 individuals flying w. past Herschel I. 24-25 Aug (CE, ph. JJ) was exciting. Black Guillemot monitoring on Herschel I. recorded 59 ads., and a total of 21 nests which produced 29 surviving chicks (CE, JeH, LJM, EM, SM); it seems likely that the additional 5 chicks found dead at the colony succumbed when adults were unable to feed during a severe storm in early August.

An ad. Snowy Owl was seen at Herschel I. 18 Aug (CE, JeH, JJ, EM). Single Northern Hawk Owls were reported from Burwash, sw. Yukon 7 Oct (TS), and Watson Lake 11 Nov (SD). A Great Gray Owl was seen about 22 km n. of Watson Lake 11 Nov (SD). The Yukon's first and Canada's 4th **Lesser Nighthawk**, a juv. female, was a stunning discovery in Whitehorse, 25 Oct (ph. SJ, RW); a detailed comparison of the photo to museum specimens conducted by Peter Pyle ruled out the possibility that this bird was one of the similar Common Nighthawk subspecies (ie. *Chordeiles minor howelli*). Up to 40 Common Nighthawks were seen aerial foraging along the Alaska Hwy. between Pelly Crossing and Steward Crossing 16 Aug (HW). The highlight of the season at the Teslin L. bird observatory was a **Fork-tailed Swift**, a first for mainland North America, seen flying n. 28 Sept (wd. JJ).



Lesser Nighthawk, Whitehorse, 25-Oct-2010, S. Jenner.



Three Cliff Swallows, casual on Herschel I. were flying along Collinson Head 16 Aug (CE). An impressive 40 Mountain Bluebirds were tallied at the Rodeo Grounds along the N. Klondike Hwy, near Whitehorse 29 Sept (BD, HG). Cedar Waxwings staged a pronounced invasion across s. Yukon this past summer with larger flocks being seen in fall; a report of Cedar Waxwings at Partridge Cr., cen. Yukon (DB, VB), was well past the nw. edge of the species' range. Banders at Teslin L. did not detect a major southbound movement of Boreal Chickadees this year (*fide* BS); however, some sizable flocks were observed elsewhere including about 30 along the Donjek R., sw. Yukon 7 Oct (TS), and 20 at Wolf Cr., in Whitehorse 10 Oct (JiH). Flocks of Bohemian Waxwings numbering upwards of 1000 birds were scouring the Mountain Ash trees in Whitehorse through Nov (m.ob.). An Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler, casual in fall in s. Yukon, was at Teslin L. 10 Oct (ph. JJ). The Yukon's first **Lark Bunting**, an

ad. male, was nicely documented at a fire-tower near Rancheria 29-30 Jun (ph. ML).



Lark Bunting, Rancheria, 29-Jun-2010, M. Lenzin.

An ad. **Harris's Sparrow** seen daily at Herschel I. 14-26 Aug (ph. CE, JJ) established the Yukon's third (and the island's second) well-documented record. A **meadowlark**, likely a Western which is casual in the Beaufort Sea region, flushed and disappeared into the rolling tundra on Collinson Head at Herschel I. 18 Aug (wd. CE). A male House Finch, casual in s. Yukon was in Whitehorse 27-28 Nov (LC, ph. CE).

Observers: Michael Bendall, Julie Bauer (JBa), Del Berguie, Virginia Berguie, Jim Borisenko (JBo), Linda Cameron, Janet Constable Rushant (JCR), Paul Davis, Boris Dobrowolsky, Susan Drury, Cameron Eckert, Helmut Grünberg, Jeremy Hansen (JeH), Jim Hawkings (JiH), Jukka Jantunen, Shannon Jenner, Leslie Kerr, Markus Lenzin, Edward McLeod, Sam McLeod, LeeJohn Meyook, Ben Schonewille, Pam Sinclair, Terry Skjonsberg, Adam Skrutkowski, Merran Smith (MS), Rene Smith, Moya van Delft, Shyloh van Delft, Randy Wagner, Hilary Wilkinson, Gerry Whitley, Mary Whitley, Devon Yacura.



YOUR PICTURES

This is your space. We want your photos !

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



Boreal Owl in nest box, Whitehorse, late May 2010, N. Degraf



Barn Swallow juveniles, Watson Lake, 5-Aug-2010, M. Cohoon



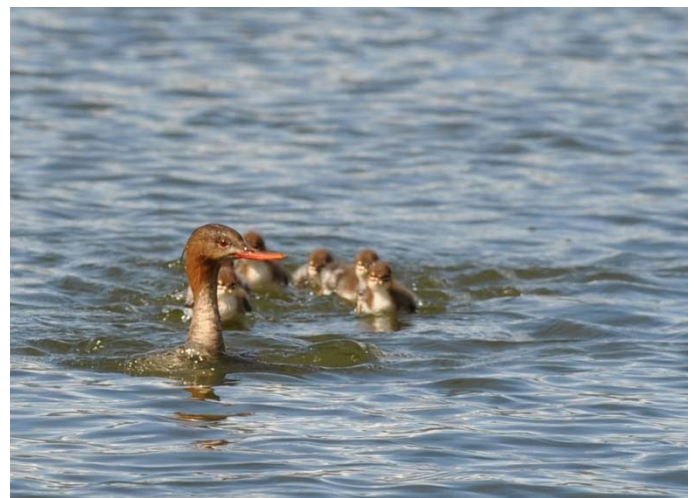
Sandhill Cranes, Swan Lake, 15-Jun-2010, K. Williams



Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Teslin, 15-Jun-2010, A. Skrutkowski



Common Redpoll, Dawson, 27-Jun-2010, C. Cartwright



Red-breasted Mergansers, Dawson, 30-Jun-2010, C. Cartwright



PHOTOGRATPHS FROM THE SOUTHEAST

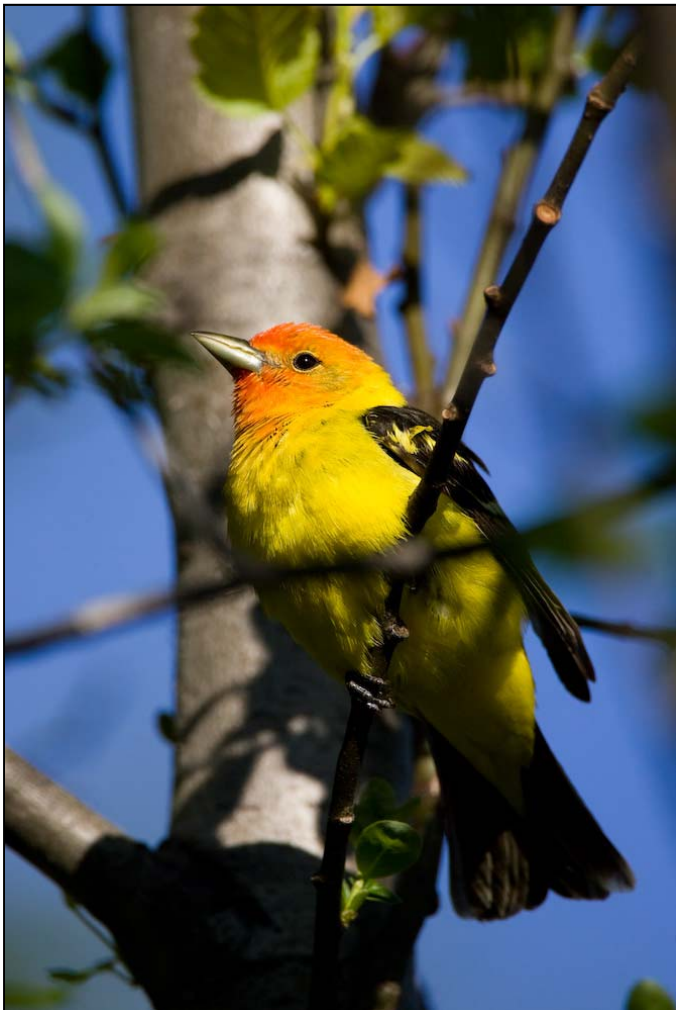
The photos below were taken by Jukka Jantunen in the Watson Lake area while working at the Albert Creek Bird Observatory in late May and June.



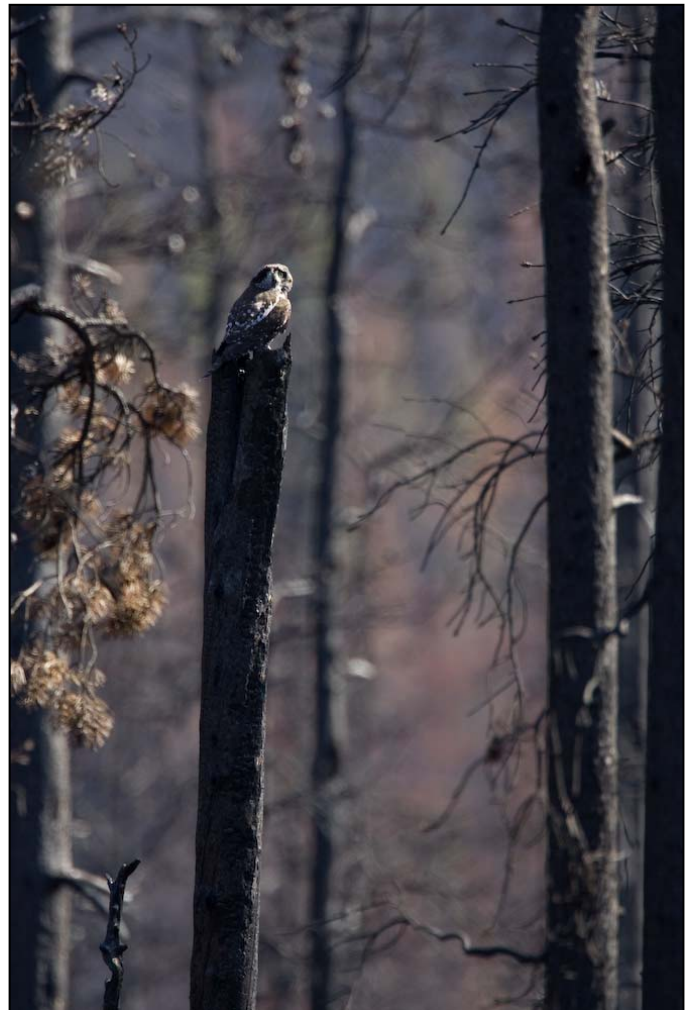
Clay-colored Sparrow, Albert Creek, 1-Jun-2010, J.Jantunen



Sora, Albert Creek, 28-May-2010, J.Jantunen



Western Tanager, 2-Jun-2010, J. Jantunen



Northern Hawk-Owl, Rancheria area, 28-May-2010, J. Jantunen



Teslin Lake Bird Observatory Fall 2010 Report

Submitted by Station Manager Ben Schonewille

During 2010, the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory (TLBO) completed its third 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. This year the observatory operated for an extended season; 91 days from July 24 to October 29. During this time, 3,706 birds of 52 species were banded and 151 species were observed. This past winter, we received some very interesting information regarding yet another band recovery associated with the observatory. A hatch year male Sharp-shinned Hawk banded at TLBO on August 14, 2009 was trapped and released at Idaho Bird Observatory (Boise, Idaho, USA) on October 9, 2010.

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 including; Julie Bauer, Jillian Johnston, Shyloh van Delft, Adam Skrutkowski, Mary Whitley, Gerry Whitley, Tami Hamilton, Gwen Baluss, Ammanda Partridge, Todd Heakes and Helmut Grunberg.



Bander In Charge Jukka Jantunen scans the skies during a visual migration watch (L) and photographs a White-winged Crossbill (R)

The following sections provide an overview synopsis of the various groups of birds observed and banded at the observatory during the fall 2010 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, visual migration counts, etc). The term `bird days` represents the cumulative number of birds encountered for a specific species; for example, if two Common Ravens were seen on day #1 and then one was seen on day #2, this would equal three bird days. All bird photos included in this summary were provided by Ben Schonewille and Jukka Jantunen.

The close proximity to Teslin Lake allows us to collect monitoring data for a variety of species of loons and grebes were observed on the lake during the migration counts. Four species of loon were encountered (Common, Red-throated, Pacific and Yellow-billed) with Pacific Loon being the most common (871 bird days). Three Yellow-billed Loons were seen; 1 on October 6 and 2 on October 21. Horned and Red-necked Grebes were also encountered, with the latter being much more common (773 bird days).



Waterfowl species were well represented within the visual migration counts and lake observations. The three regular species of goose were seen; Greater White-fronted, Snow and Canada. White-fronts were most common with a total of 8,060 bird days including a daily high count of 4,030 on August 24. A Bean Goose (a Eurasian species) flew by the station on October 20 and provides the second documented record for the Yukon. Trumpeter and Tundra swans were seen in relatively high numbers with Tundras being the most common; total of 8,214 bird days including a high daily count of 3,605 on October 14. A single Bewick's Swan (Eurasian sub-species of Tundra Swan) was also seen on October 17.



Bewick's Swan

Among the duck species, most regularly occurring species of dabblers and divers were encountered (including mergansers). The most frequently occurring species included; Lesser Scaup (463), Surf Scoter (592), Common Merganser (336) and Red-breasted Merganser (231). Interesting duck sightings included; a trio of Redhead on September 29, a Harlequin Duck on September 5 and a Hooded Merganser on September 24.

At TLBO, raptors are best monitored through the visual migration counts, as these species are diurnal migrants (migrate during the day). This year, a total of 1,680 raptors of 15 species were counted including; Red-tailed Hawk (397), Sharp-shinned Hawk (307), Golden Eagle (299), Northern Harrier (230), Rough-legged Hawk (189), Bald Eagle (82), American Kestrel (66), Merlin (34), Peregrine Falcon (25), Osprey (21), Northern Goshawk (17), Swainson's Hawk (12), Northern Hawk Owl (2), Gyrfalcon (1) and Short-eared Owl (1). The continued sighting of Swainson's Hawk during late August/early September indicates this species is an annual migrant at TLBO. The only raptor species banded in 2010 was Sharp-shinned Hawk of which 14 were banded.

In terms of upland game birds, Ruffed Grouse was seen almost daily within the count area and Spruce Grouse were seen on only two days. A total of 2,266 Sandhill Cranes were seen in migration, including 1,886 on September 18. As a group, shorebirds are relatively under-represented at TLBO. However, 13 species were encountered, the most common of which included Least Sandpiper (120 bird days) and Spotted Sandpiper (91 bird days). Interesting shorebird sightings included a Sanderling (September 8) and Red-necked Phalarope on 3 days from July 30 to August 12.



California Gull

This year was a very impressive year for gull observations with a wide variety of species encountered. The close proximity to a Herring Gull colony resulted in a high number of individuals seen (2,546 bird days), particularly early during the season. Mew Gull and Arctic Tern were seen in modest numbers (80-90 bird days each) and Parasitic Jaegers are now becoming an annual observation (37 bird days). Thayer's Gull was also seen in modest numbers with a total of 261 bird days. Bonaparte's Gull was seen in low numbers with a total of 8 bird days. Other interesting gull observations included; Little Gull on October 15/16, California Gull (39 bird days), Glaucous-winged Gull (8 bird days), Glaucous Gull on October 4 and 18, Sabine's Gull on September 30 and October 11 and Black-legged Kittiwake on September 25.



Common Nighthawk was seen infrequently with single birds on August 14 and September 10. The most intriguing sighting of the season was a Fork-tailed Swift observed flying northwest over Teslin Lake on September 28. This observation is the first Canadian (and Yukon) record of the species. This is an Asian species breeding in southern Siberia, Mongolia and China; the wintering range includes southern India, Cambodia, Indonesia and Australia. Although the Teslin Lake sighting provided the first Canadian record, this species is considered rare or casual in western Alaska and the Bering Sea Islands. Among kingfishers and woodpeckers, Belted Kingfisher was most common with 35 bird days and 5 individuals banded. Other woodpeckers encountered included; Downy Woodpecker (3 banded), Hairy Woodpecker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker and Northern Flicker.

The flycatchers are a group of species which are typically well represented at TLBO and this year was no exception. Olive-sided Flycatcher was counted on 10 days from July 26 to September 7 although none were banded. Western Wood-pewee was relatively uncommon with 10 bird days and 5 individuals banded. Say's Phoebe was seen infrequently (a total of 8 bird days). Alder Flycatcher was once again seen in very high numbers with a total of 620 banded and a high daily species total of 88 on August 22. A total of 11 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were banded from July 29 to August 29; suggesting that this species may be increasing in numbers in the southern Yukon. Other flycatchers banded included; Least (3), Hammond's (17) and Dusky (3) flycatchers. Northern Shrike was seen occasionally (9 bird days) during the later portion of the season with most individuals seen on the visual migration watches. One individual was banded on September 19 and constituted the first individual banded to date at the observatory.



A single vireo species, Warbling Vireo was encountered for a total of 41 bird days from July 25 to August 31 and 19 were banded. Gray Jay and Common Raven were frequently encountered throughout the season; 4 and 1 individual were banded, respectively. Black-billed Magpie was also observed almost daily from September 1 onwards. Horned Larks were seen infrequently (3 days) during the visual migration counts (4 bird days). Swallows were seen in low numbers and included the following species from greatest to least; Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Tree Swallow and Violet-green Swallow. In 2008 and 2009, an irruption of chickadees resulted in high numbers being banded. From a total of 800 + banded in 2009, zero Boreal Chickadees were banded in 2010. Black-capped Chickadees were observed frequently but in low numbers and likely represented local individuals. Red-breasted Nuthatch also followed suit with low numbers encountered (23 bird days, 2 banded). Golden-crowned Kinglet was encountered during the later portion of the season and 2 were banded. Ruby-crowned Kinglet was much more common with a total of 206 bird days and 109 banded; the high count for this species was 13 on September 19.



Forty-one Mountain Bluebirds were counted, almost all of which were seen during the visual migration counts. Townsend’s Solitaire showed a similar pattern with 20 individuals counted. These species are very seldom seen on the ground at the observatory, they are typically only seen flying over the site. American Robin and Varied Thrush are thrush species which also seen frequently as visual migrants; this year nearly 2,700 robins and 410 Varied Thrush were counted and 9 and 5 were banded, respectively. The *Catharus* thrush are the most common thrush banded at the site, the following were banded in 2010; Swainson’s Thrush (53), Hermit Thrush (12) and Gray-cheeked Thrush (8).



Gray-cheeked Thrush

American Pipits are another passerine species which is most often seen in migration over the site, this year 250 were counted. Bohemian Waxwing is seen in migration but is also seen occasionally foraging within this banded area and is sometimes; this year, none were banded and 508 bird days were counted. Similar to 2009, Cedar Waxwing was also seen within the count year, this year the species was counted on 6 days from July 16 to August 3.

Being primarily neotropical migrants, the warblers as a group are a primary focus of monitoring at the observatory and they typically dominate the number of birds capture. The following table summarizes the warbler species encountered in 2010 and includes the number banded, total number encountered (bird days) and the season high count/date. The most notable warbler sightings during 2010 included a Audubon’s Warbler on October 9, 2 MacGillivray’s Warblers banded on August 6 and 12, and an exceptionally late Tennessee Warbler observed on October 8.



Audubon’s Warbler

Species	# Banded	Total Bird Days	High Count	
			#	Date
Tennessee Warbler	40	59	6	4 August
Orange-crowned Warbler	271	341	25	25 August
Yellow Warbler	471	680	81	25 August
Myrtle Warbler	673	1894	231	2 September
Audubon’s Warbler	-	1	1	9 October
Townsend’s Warbler	10	15	3	29 August
Blackpoll Warbler	194	297	21	16 August
American Redstart	30	47	6	26 August
Northern Waterthrush	54	103	7	7 August
MacGillivray’s Warbler	2	2	1	6 / 12 August
Common Yellowthroat	70	100	7	21 August
Wilson’s Warbler	177	233	19	25 August



Western Tanager is observed very infrequently at the site; this year single individuals were observed on July 16 and 29. Similar to the warblers, sparrows are a group of species which are well represented in the mist net captures. A summary of sparrows encountered during 2010 is provided in the following table. Notable sparrows encountered included the observatory's first Song Sparrow banded on August 28 and Swamp Sparrow banded on July 25.



Species	# Banded	Total Bird Days	High Count	
			#	Date
American Tree Sparrow	21	47	5	21 September
Chipping Sparrow	18	38	7	7 August
Fox Sparrow	28	46	4	Many days
Song Sparrow	1	1	1	28 August
Lincoln's Sparrow	14	17	3	13 August
Swamp Sparrow	1	1	1	25 July
White-crowned Sparrow	36	40	8	14 August
Dark-eyed Junco	420	1199	120	7 September
Lapland Longspur	-	84	10	10 September
Snow Bunting	-	3	2	15 October

Two species of blackbird were observed in 2010; Brown-headed Cowbird (1 bird day) and Rusty Blackbird (743 bird days). Rusty Blackbirds were seen as a mixture of visual migrants (348 birds) and individuals foraging within the site. As part of a color banding project with CWS Whitehorse, 20 Rusty Blackbirds were banded with light blue color bands in addition to the standard numbered leg band.

This year was very productive for finches, both in terms of individuals banded and observed during the visual counts. Finches banded included; White-winged Crossbill (100), Pine Siskin (91) and Common Redpoll (1). There was an obvious irruption of White-winged Crossbill and Pine Siskin during 2010, with 1,600 and 1,400 bird days counted for these species, respectively. Other finches counted included the following; Common Redpoll (2,300), Pine Grosbeak (233), Red Crossbill (39) and Purple Finch (35).



Albert Creek Bird Observatory Fall 2010 Report

Submitted by Station Co-Manager Ben Schonewille

This year marked the tenth consecutive year of migration monitoring at the Albert Creek Bird Observatory (ACBO) in the southeast Yukon. The first of the Yukon Bird Observatory field stations, ACBO has grown substantially from its start in 2001 and is now an important bird monitoring project in the southeast Yukon.

This fall, the Bander In Charge duties were shared between Jillian Johnston, Jukka Jantunen and Ted Murphy-Kelly. The season started on July 24 and the banders were busy right from the start as the nets captured many juvenile birds of a wide variety of species; over 100 birds were banded on July 25 and 26 each. A wide variety of species were banded over this period; however, the catch was dominated by local breeders including Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat and Lincoln's Sparrow. Most notable was the capture of Tennessee Warblers, 88 were banded on the 25 and 26 of July alone. It appeared as though Cedar Waxwing was once again a local breeder at the site; 3 were banded in the first few days of the season.

On July 28, ACBO's fourth Bay-breasted Warbler was banded (a juvenile). This species is at the extreme northwest of its breeding range at Albert Creek and it is not recorded annually at the observatory.

The first week of August was not exceptionally busy with birds captured, approximately 50 birds were banded per day. The species captured include a wide variety but primarily included various species of warblers, flycatchers and thrush. Magnolia Warbler appeared to have once again bred at the site with modest numbers of juvenile birds banded through early August. On August 6, a juvenile Cape May Warbler was banded. This species appears to be increasing at ACBO and local breeding is highly likely.

August did not see any large movements of birds, although species diversity was high with up to 24 species banded per day. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher banded on August 8 as this is one of the least common flycatcher species found in the territory. Into September, bird captures remained relatively low and there was a notable shift from neotropical (ie, warblers) to temperate (ie, sparrows) migrants during early/mid September. The season closed on September 22 with a total of 1,770 birds banded of 48 species, with an average of 40 birds/100 net hours.



Juvenile Tennessee Warbler



Juvenile Bay-breasted Warbler



Juvenile Magnolia Warbler



Yukon Birds Crossword Puzzle

This version of the crossword puzzle is provided by YBC member, Ruth McCullough. This version's theme is sparrows.

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Across

- 2. This bird's call is sometimes confused with an insect
- 3. Has a yellow eyebrow, no white-throat
- 4. Complex song, found at high elevations during summer
- 7. Orange bill, two tone crown
- 9. Flocks with Horned Larks and Snow Buntings
- 12. Sharply pointed tail, bog breeder
- 14. Closely resembles #7 but only in western North America
- 15. Tundra breeder, plain gray chest with black spot

Down

- 1. Very rare in Yukon, has a pink bill and streak sides
- 2. Black bill, rusty cap, rapid buzzy song
- 5. Wetland breeder, primarily in southeast Yukon
- 6. Large sparrow, upside down triangles on chest
- 8. One of the first sparrows to arrive in spring
- 11. Uncommon in Yukon, song is melodious
- 13. Only in extreme southeast Yukon

Key to Fall 2010 Crossword Puzzle

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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 !



Tombstone Park, January 2011
Photo – Cameron Eckert



Teslin Lake, August 2010
Photo – Jukka Jantunen



Teslin Lake, October 2010
Photo – Jukka Jantunen



ANSWERS TO THE PREVIOUS BIRD ID CHALLENGE

Prepared by Ben Schonewille



Fox Sparrow (McIntyre Marsh) – May 2010

Photo – Ben Schonewille

The overall stocky build, large legs and conical beak are key clues that this is a sparrow. Key features that indicate this is a Fox Sparrow include; overall large size, rusty rump/tail, breast with teardrop shaped rufous spots and grayish/rufous head and neck without a striped crown.



Peregrine Falcon (Whitehorse)

Photo – Cameron Eckert

At first glance, this raptor can be identified as a falcon by the relatively narrow pointed wings. Although the entire head is not visible, it is possible to see the throat pattern which is white with a black facial stripe (barely visible). This bird also has bluish gray upperparts which is indicative of Peregrine Falcon.



Solitary Sandpiper (Teslin Lake) – August 2010

Photo – Ben Schonewille

The head of this shorebird is not visible; however, there are some key plumage characteristics which are visible. Key features that indicate this is a Solitary Sandpiper include; white throat and belly, dark barring in outer tail feathers, wings dark olive-brown with fine spotting and greenish-yellow legs.



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