

YUKON WARBLER

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club

Spring 2022



**Field Trips and
Events 2022**

Pages 5-7



**Story of a
Hawfinch**

Page 8

Photo: Jukka Jantunen

*A light morph Harlan's Red Tailed Hawk that was
photographed in Tagish at the end of April 2022*

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	\$15.00
Family *	\$25.00
Senior/Student **	\$10.00
Institutional	\$50.00
Contributing	\$50.00
Supporting	\$100.00
Lifetime	\$200.00

* Family memberships cover two or more people living at one address.

** Also includes those for whom finances are limited. Foreign members please pay by Canadian dollar or money order.

Membership fees are based on the Calendar Year (Jan 1 to Dec 31). The end of the year is a good time to renew your membership. If you have paid for multi-year memberships in the past and are unsure of your current status, feel free to contact us for clarification. If you receive a paper copy of "The Warbler" your mailing label will indicate the latest year for which your membership is paid up, i.e. 2021 or 2022.

For more information contact:

Yukon Bird Club
4061-4th Avenue Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H1
Canada
yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca

YBC Website: yukonbirds.ca
Yukon Birds Facebook group: [facebook.com/groups/212509148852262/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/212509148852262/)
YBC Twitter: [yukonbirds](https://twitter.com/yukonbirds)

We want your birding photos and stories!

Thank you to all who contribute to make the *Yukon Warbler*. To make a submission, write to newsletter@yukonbirds.ca

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Go to:

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Mark Your Calendars for the 37th Annual Helmut Grünberg Yukon Birdathon!

By Jenny Trapnell

The annual 24-hour fundraiser for the Yukon Bird Club will take place this year from

**Friday May 27, 5 p.m.
to
Saturday May 28, 5 p.m.**

This fun event for new and experienced birders is a great way to enjoy spring migration and Yukon birds and their habitats.


Spend all or part of the day identifying as many species as you can, in your yard, your local park or birding hotspot.

A range of prizes will be offered, and a BBQ is planned for Saturday at 6 p.m. to review the day's results.

This year's Feature Birder is Lena Ware, a relative newcomer to Whitehorse but not to the world of birds (see separate article).

Everyone welcome! Form a team in your community or neighbourhood or bird on your own.

Funds raised support Yukon Bird Club advocacy, awareness and conservation activities.

Save the dates and stay tuned to yukonbirds.ca Facebook and Twitter for details! 

2022 Feature Birder - Lena Ware

By Jenny Trapnell

Lena Ware has been “hooked” on birding for about a decade since spending a summer as a field technician - and meeting some passionate birders - studying Yellow Warblers in BC.

Now a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service in Whitehorse, Lena's past studies and work have taken her to Vancouver Island, Nunavut, Guam, California and to the Gulf of Alaska, studying everything from Black Oystercatchers to seabirds and endangered crows. She's also spent a lot of time at bird banding stations in western Canada.

Over the years, Lena has taken part in a number of citizen science events including the annual Christmas Bird Count. And as a



warm-up to the Yukon Birdathon, Lena will be participating in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon Global Big Day, which takes place this year on May 14.

Lena banding a female Blackpoll Warbler at the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory.

Photo: Courtesy of Jenny Trapnell

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Birding with Lone Christensen

In January I had these two visitors coming for bread and peanut's, Fred and Frank, two Northwestern Crows. They came every day at 11:30. Once the weather warmed up a bit they stopped coming.

My feeder has very little coming to it. A few Red Polls, two or three Cross Bills and the odd Chickadee (Black-Capped). 



Continued from page 3

The one-day event invites birders from around the world to submit their checklists and observations on eBird, a free online program and app. These snapshots of seasonal distribution, habitat use and other species data supports research and conservation of birds near and far.

Lena's favourite bird is the Yellow Warbler, the first species she worked with, and which jump-started her career. She also loves seeing large flocks of shorebirds and seabirds and is fascinated by migration, and the amazing long-distance journeys of species like the Arctic Tern.

For the Yukon Birdathon, Lena plans to cover a lot of ground, with stops at favourite birding hot-spots such as McIntyre Creek Marsh, the Quartz Road Marsh, the Millennium Trail and Judas Creek at Marsh Lake. Her Birdathon goal is to see 90 species, with the help of a small team. She'll be submitting her sightings regularly on eBird, which can viewed in real time on her eBird profile site.

Lena has a few tips for new birders: find experienced birders to go birding with, and take advantage of eBird. She also recommends using a phone app to identify birds, such as Merlin (a free option) or Sibleys (a paid option). Getting involved with the

bird club and going on guided hikes are also great ways to meet up to learn about Yukon birds and beautiful birding places.

The 2022 Birdathon takes place the last weekend in May, from 5 p.m. Friday, May 27 to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 28.

If you can't take part in this year's Yukon Birdathon, please consider sponsoring Lena and contributing in this way to the Yukon Bird Club's annual fundraiser.

Her e-Bird profile is <https://ebird.org/profile/NDE3ODM1> 

YUKON BIRD CLUB

Field Trips & Events – 2022

All are welcome!

For info email yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca

#learntobird – outings for beginner birdwatchers!



(30 April, 2022 revision)

Spring

Sun 24 April: **Bird Banding 101!** Meet at 1 pm at Swan Haven, Marsh Lake--a Yukon Environment event (1.5 hours). Join the banding experts from the Society of Yukon Bird Observatories, who will talk about their banding projects and, weather permitting, demonstrate banding techniques. *#learntobird*

Mon 25 April: **Quartz Road wetlands** *#learntobird* with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm. (1.5 hrs)

Mon 2 May: **Quartz Road wetlands** migration with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm (1.5 hours). A wonderful outing for new birders.

Friday 6 May: Carcross – The annual **Dusky Grouse Nares Mtn hike** with Joel Luet. Meet at the gazebo opposite Montana Services 6:30pm. Dress for cool weather and wear sturdy footwear. (3 hrs)

Fri/Sun 6-8 May: Faro – Birding the **Crane and Sheep Festival**. View thousands of migrant cranes over the birding paradise of Faro. Meet at the Campbell Regional Interpretive Centre for information and events.

Sun 8 May – Enjoy a **bird walk around Nares Lake and Carcross** with Dan Patterson and Jim Hawkings. Meet 10am at the gazebo opposite Montana Services. (2.5 hrs)

Mon 9 May – **Quartz Road wetlands** with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot 5:30 pm (1.5 hrs). *#learntobird*

Tue 10 May: Explore the **bird rich Yukon Wildlife Preserve** with Jake Paleczny and friends. Meet 5:45 pm. Entrance fee \$12 for non-members of the Wildlife Preserve (2 hrs). *#learntobird*

Wed 11 May: Haines Junction -- **Spring migration at the scenic lagoons!** Meet at 6 pm at the entrance to the sewage lagoons (additional parking across the highway by the landfill). Contact leader Julie Bauer at 336-0688 if you

have any questions. Bring binoculars, and a scope if you have one (2 hours). *#learntobird*

Sat 14 May: **The shorebirds of Swan Haven** (an Environment Yukon event). Meet at 10 am at Swan Haven, Marsh Lake (1.5 hours). The shores of Swan Haven boast much more than swans: sandpipers and snipes, yellowlegs and godwits! Expert birder Jukka Jantunen will sort it all out during a short walk and talk. Rubber boots are recommended.

Sun 15 May: Tagish – **Early spring migrants** with Shyloh van Delft. Meet at Tagish Bridge rest area at 1pm. (2 hrs) *#learntobird*

Sun 15 May: Burwash Landing – Learn about the **Dagay (swans)** of Jedalj on a walk with a Kluane First Nation Elder. Bring lunch, warm layers, and rubber boots are a must! Meet at the Kluane Museum of History in Burwash Landing 12pm (4 hrs). Contact the Yukon Wildlife Viewing Program (wildlife.viewing@yukon.ca) to learn more about this remote, day-long adventure which is part of the annual Celebration of Swans.

Mon 16 May: A **family-friendly** *#learntobird* bird walk at Quartz Road wetlands with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm. (1.5 hrs)

Thurs 19 May. **Judas Creek Migration Spectacular** with Jim Hawkings. Meet at the SS Klondike at 5:30pm, or Marsh Lake Community Centre at 6:15pm. (3.5 hrs)

Sat 21 May: Dawson – **Spring birds of the Klondike** with Greg Brunner & Cynthia Hunt. Meet at Henderson's Corner west entrance at 8am. (2 hrs)

Sun 22 May: **Birding the Takhini Salt Ponds** with Shyloh van Delft. Meet at the corner of the Alaska Hwy & Elk Road at 10am. (1.5 hrs) *#learntobird*

Mon 23 May: **Peak migration** at Quartz Road wetlands with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm. (1.5 hours)

Thurs 26 May: Birds of the **Millennium Trail** with Jenny Trapnell. Meet at the Whitehorse Fish Ladder 6:00pm. Wheelchair accessible. (2 hrs) *#learntobird*

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#learntobird – outings for beginner birdwatchers!



Spring (Continued)

The Helmut Grünberg –

Yukon Birdathon!

Friday-Saturday, May 27-28 (5pm to 5pm)

Sharing the passion – a conservation fundraiser! For more info: <https://yukonbirds.ca/birdathon/>

Sat 28 May: Mayo – **A spring bird walk** with Mark O'Donoghue. Meet at 5-Mile Lake campground at 8:30am. (3 hrs)

Sun 29 May: McIntyre Creek **Birdsong Workshop & eBird primer** with Pam Sinclair. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 7:30am. (3 hrs) *#learntobird*

Mon 30 May: **Late Spring** at Quartz Road wetlands. Another family-friendly bird walk with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm. (1.5 hrs)

Special Event! Fri-Sun 3-5 June: **Tombstone Weekend on the Wing!** Hosted by Friends of Dempster Country & Yukon Parks at Tombstone Campground (km 71, Dempster Hwy). A great chance to see northern specialties – Surfbird, Long-tailed Jaeger, Smith's Longspur, and Northern Wheatear. For more info email tombstonecentre@gmail.com

Mon 6 June: **Quartz Road Wetlands again!** with Jim Hawkings. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm. Optional social event following. (1.5 hours) (2 hrs) *#learntobird*

Tues 7 June: **Explore the forest and ponds along McIntyre Creek** near Yukon University with Katie

Aitken. Some steep hill climbing. Meet at student parking lot 6:30pm. (2 hrs) *#learntobird*

Thu 9 June: An **evening walk** to see breeding birds in Cowley Creek wetlands adjacent to Spruce Hill subdivision with Clive Osborne. Meet at 33 Engelmann Drive in Spruce Hill at 5:30 pm (3 hrs).

Mon 13 June: **more birding** at Quartz Road wetlands with Jim Hawkings. Optional social event following. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30 pm. (1.5 hrs) *#learntobird*

Tue 14 June: **Explore summer birds** of the Yukon Wildlife Preserve with Jake Paleczny and friends. Meet at 10:45am. (2 hrs) \$12 entrance fee for non-YWP members. *#learntobird*

Tue 21 June: Dawson – **Solstice birding in Dawson City** with Sebastian Jones. Meet at the SS Keno at 6pm. (2 hrs)

(Continued on next page)

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Summer

Sun 24 July: **Baby birds abound** at Verslucce Meadows with Pam Sinclair. Ducks, grebes, swallows, warblers, and more! Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 9:00 am.

Sun 31 July: **Dragonflies of Hidden Lakes** with Syd Cannings. Dragonflies, birds, and biodiversity! Meet at the SS Klondike at 1pm. Wear rubber boots, or water shoes. (2.5 hrs)

Fall

Sat 6 August: **Fall birding** at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve with Jake Paleczny and friends. Meet at 10:45am. (2 hrs) \$12 entrance fee. *#learntobird*

Sun 18 September: **Fall migration at Teslin Lake**. See up close how birds are banded.....and what's flying by. Visit the Teslin Lake Bird Observatory, operated by the Society of Yukon Bird Observatories. Meet at Teslin Lake Campground at 8am.

Wed 23 November: **What's on the river?** A lunch-time stroll across the Rotary Centennial foot-bridge with Jim Hawkings and friends. Meet at the Fish Ladder at 12 pm. Dress warmly! (1 hr)

Winter

14 December to 5 January. **Yukon Christmas Bird Counts!** All are welcome – beginners, feeder-watchers, and seasoned field birders! Be part of a North American-wide bird monitoring and conservation program. To organize a count in your community email yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca

Come birding with the

Yukon Bird Club!

- ✓ Field trips & events throughout the Yukon
- ✓ Informative newsletter – *Yukon Warbler*
- ✓ Twitter – yukonbirds

For more information or to join contact; Yukon Bird Club, 4061-4th Avenue, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 1H1. Email: yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca Web: www.yukonbirds.ca

Yukon Bird Club field trips & events are free, and visitors and non-members are welcome!



STORY OF A HAWFINCH

First Territorial Record

First National Record for Canada



By Julie Bauer

December 14/2020 and it is organizing time for the Haines Junction Christmas bird count with most routes allotted and feederwatchers contacted. I get an email from Wolf Riedl and he has seen an unusual bird at his feeder and quote "had a clear black throat, big dark grosbeak bill, and a gray collar. The back was a

uniform darkish color and the head was lighter. I'm sure it's a Hawfinch but he bugged off before I could get my camera." Well I have to admit I thought unlikely a Hawfinch but could not come up with other options, so did regular visits to Wolf's feeder for the next few mornings. Also called out the Whitehorse birders who later combed the area on a chilly -20 day. December 19 is Christmas

bird count day and the Whitehorse birders are back again adding to our numbers in the field. No luck with rare bird spotting. December 28 and our neighbour Millie sees an unusual bird at her feeder, "It had a different colored neck than the rest of its body. The only thing I can say with any definitiveness is that it had white on the tip of its tail feathers" That's our bird!!!

Photo: Lloyd Freese

The first documentation
of the Hawfinch
December 29, 2020

Photo: Julie Bauer



December 29 is a snowy wintery day and now the visiting Whitehorse birders are combing the area between our house and Millie's home. We have the woodfire downstairs available and a few cheese biscuits out of the oven. It is Covid time so few visitors in the house. I decide to settle in a chair upstairs and concentrate on just watching the bird feeders and ground below the feeders. One of the spotters sees a likely hawfinch flyover and hears the vocalization.


Later that afternoon I spot the Hawfinch perched high in an aspen tree and then it quickly leaves with a flock of redpolls. Text the ground crew with the news. Continue the watch and later get a glimpse of the bird feeding on the ground and finally a poor picture through the window at 70 feet. Have the rest of the crew on speed text and let them know the news. The Hawfinch is not seen again that day.

December 30 brings early morning Whitehorse birders again to our home. Much watching and after about 4 hours SUCCESS and all present spot and photograph the Hawfinch! A LIFER for most present.

The Hawfinch is never seen again at our backyard feeders but not for lack of watching. Where did it go? What feeder is it visiting now? I put up posters throughout the community and emails to all the Junction bird watchers. A handful of people see brief glimpses of the bird in January and February 2021. February 22 a call from Rita Jux who like Wolf Riedl gets those uncommon birds at their feeders. She has spotted the Hawfinch using her feeders. It now sits in her birch trees and pecks at the window, attracted to its own image. This bird continues to be seen in this area for almost 2 months. Other birders from parts of the Yukon came to observe but anyone in the Junction who is interested can also see the

Hawfinch. People from the community show others, greet visitors and delight in showing off this rare bird. In later discussions it is likely this bird was seen in the Junction in November and possibly October. Seen on the ground in local gardens. It was last seen by myself on April 11/2021.

The Hawfinch is a bird that is a resident of Europe and Asia. It shows up in Aleutians and Bering Sea Islands and had only recorded on the mainland near Anchorage. It is a common bird in Japan which is 6000 kms away.

What a unique bird for our community. To have a bird never seen in Canada show up in our small community was a treat for all. We can only imagine the birders that would have flocked to our small community if Covid had not been occurring! You never know which rare bird may be seen next....maybe a Whooper Swan? 

Haines Junction Christmas Bird Count Trend-Through-Time

By *Clive Osborne*

This short article presents a summary table of observations made on the Haines Junction Christmas Bird Count throughout its history. This is the second Yukon Count to be summarized in this way (Trend-through-Time); the Whitehorse Count was featured in the Spring 2021 Warbler newsletter. Table 1 reports the data for counts that were conducted for 31 years during the intervals 1973 – 1977, 1988 – 1989, 1996 – 2019.

The data reported in the Maximum, Minimum and Mean columns of Table 1 is numbers of birds per party (observer group) hour. This statistic allows the data to be comparable among years and, if one chooses, among other Counts. The downside of using this statistic is that not all participants have an equal opportunity to observe a species occupying limited habitat within the Count circle (e.g., open water habitat, landfill site). For these species, the statistic generally decreases as the number of participants increases.

The spreadsheet used to create this table shows a completer and more in-depth picture of population changes. We see an assemblage that is typical of a northern boreal forest winter; well represented by Corvids (ravens and jays), grouse, woodpeckers, chickadees and nuthatch, and finches. The area appears to be quite attractive to White-winged Crossbills, Dark-eyed Junco, Owls (Great Horned and Northern Hawk) and Goshawks. This Count has also produced some rare winter sightings such as eagles, hawks, shrike, sparrows, and a dove


I am thinking of submitting future articles with similar compilations for other Yukon Counts. If you found this table of interest, please let me know at cosborne@northwestel.net. 

Table 1: Number of Birds Observed per Party-Hour for the Haines Junction Christmas Bird Count from 1973-2019.

Table: Clive Osborne

	No. of Years Observed	Max.	Min.	Mean
Number of Participants	31	29	4	14
Number of Party Hours	31	38.0	9.8	23.0
Number of Species Reported	31	23	13	18
White-winged Crossbill	11	32.63	0.07	8.66
redpoll sp.	6	35.06	0.05	8.22
Pine Siskin	1	8.00	8.00	8.00
Common Raven	31	12.07	1.16	6.29
Pine Grosbeak	29	13.68	0.18	5.41
Common Redpoll	23	16.06	0.13	4.17
crossbill sp.	2	5.32	0.13	2.72
Black-capped Chickadee	30	9.61	0.25	2.72
Black-billed Magpie	31	20.04	0.24	2.51
finch sp.	2	2.62	1.40	2.01
Boreal Chickadee	28	4.25	0.53	1.83
Gray Jay	31	1.31	0.39	0.90
Willow Ptarmigan	19	5.17	0.03	0.77
Bohemian Waxwing	3	1.25	0.10	0.67
Dark-eyed Junco	17	2.89	0.03	0.52
Red-breasted Nuthatch	23	0.77	0.06	0.33
Hairy Woodpecker	26	0.51	0.03	0.25
White-tailed Ptarmigan	4	0.72	0.04	0.23
Snow Bunting	7	0.55	0.05	0.22
Ruffed Grouse	22	0.66	0.03	0.22
Spruce Grouse	16	1.64	0.03	0.20
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	23	0.71	0.03	0.14
Downy Woodpecker	23	0.30	0.03	0.14
Great Horned Owl	15	0.38	0.03	0.12
Hoary Redpoll	9	0.41	0.03	0.12
chickadee sp.	2	0.13	0.11	0.12
Eurasian Collared Dove	2	0.16	0.03	0.10
Rough-legged Hawk	1	0.10	0.10	0.10
Northern Hawk Owl	8	0.21	0.03	0.09
Fox Sparrow	1	0.07	0.07	0.07
hawk sp.	2	0.08	0.07	0.07
Mountain Chickadee	1	0.07	0.07	0.07
Black-backed Woodpecker	7	0.13	0.03	0.07
woodpecker sp.	7	0.20	0.03	0.07
Northern Goshawk	11	0.17	0.03	0.06
Great Gray Owl	2	0.08	0.03	0.06
American Dipper	16	0.21	0.03	0.05
Northern Shrike	3	0.06	0.04	0.05
White-crowned Sparrow	6	0.11	0.03	0.05
Golden Eagle	3	0.10	0.03	0.05
Rock Ptarmigan	1	0.05	0.05	0.05
Boreal Owl	1	0.05	0.05	0.05
Am. Tree Sparrow	2	0.06	0.03	0.05
grouse sp.	2	0.05	0.03	0.04
White-throated Sparrow	2	0.05	0.03	0.04
Bald Eagle	1	0.03	0.03	0.03
Northern Harrier	1	0.03	0.03	0.03

January Cold Snap Tests our Winter Birds

By *Jim Hawkings*

Our climate is warming rapidly, and this is most notable in the winter. In our Climate Region the winters have warmed by 5.3 degrees C in the past 74 years. That's a lot. But we do still get cold spells to remind us of the "old days". We had a particularly nasty cold snap a few months ago in early January. From 3 to 8 January the temperature in Whitehorse never got above -26 C and we had three brutal nights between -42 and -46. A lot of cars were unhappy and a lot of firewood, stove oil, propane, and electricity was used! I know this because I personally fed our wood stove almost continuously – and discovered towards the end of January that I had badly underestimated our firewood needs for the winter!

But what really stood out for me during this extreme cold was the effect on the birds at my feeders in the Pineridge subdivision. The birds definitely were hungry, quite understandable when you consider the simple physics that suggests they have to eat twice as much at -40 C as they do at 0 C just to generate enough heat to stay warm. They were also less active, a good way to save energy, and they all did their very best to assume the shape of a perfect sphere. Our most regular winter residents, the Boreal Chickadees, seemed to be relatively comfortable and functional all puffed up like a little



feather ball. The Canada Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, and Pine Grosbeaks also looked reasonable considering the extreme conditions. But I noticed our slightly more exotic visitors, Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches, did not look like they were doing so well. The nuthatches tried to puff up, but they just looked ragged – it seemed like there were too many holes where the cold air could sneak in. They moved very deliberately and slowly, in contrast to their normal dashing back and forth and flitting from feeder to feeder. The Mountain Chickadees (we had two at times in fall prior to the cold snap) also looked extremely uncomfortable and clumsy. Towards the end of the cold spell, on 8 January, I saw one of them outside shivering, moving

A Red-breasted Nuthatch enjoys peanut treats after surviving our vicious early January cold snap.
Photo: **Jim Hawkings**

awkwardly, and looking extremely weak. It flew – more like fluttered – weakly. I thought it was surely done for. I spoke with my neighbour Ann Jessup who lives in Wolf Creek, and she was extremely concerned because her nuthatches were also looking very distressed during the same period, and she was convinced they were not going to make it. When the weather warmed up it took a few days for my nuthatches to perk up, and I can't say for sure if I still had at least three of them (they come and go from the feeder so fast it's hard to figure out how many you actually have!). I looked anxiously every day for a Mountain Chickadee, and finally one

Continues on page 14

How to participate in Global Big Day - May 14th




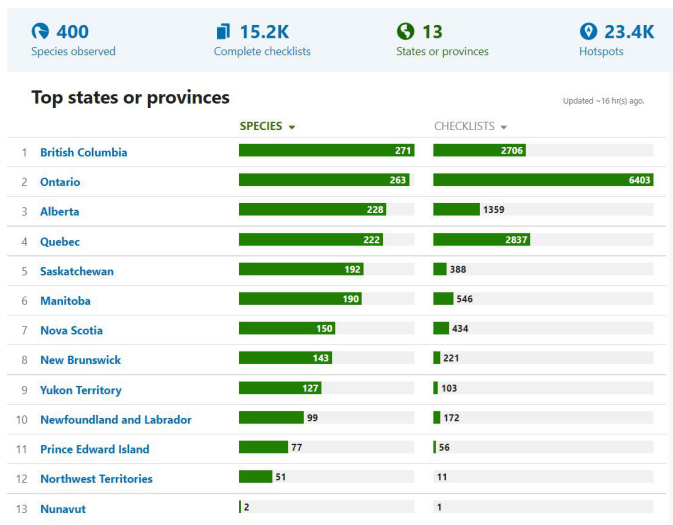
By Lena Ware

A 'big day' is when a birder or team of birders attempt to see as many species as possible in 24 hours. Global Big Day, hosted by Cornell's Lab of Ornithology, is one day each year where birders across the globe collectively observe as many species as possible by submitting checklists to eBird. The Global Big Day has become an exciting celebration of bird diversity by contributing your

local knowledge to global bird conservation. During last year's Global Big Day (May 9, 2021), 54,621 birders in 192 countries observed an outstanding 7336 species!! Canada ranked 23rd for the number of species observed (Peru, Ecuador and Columbia typically compete for first), however, Canada ranked second place for the most checklists submitted. Within Canada, BC and Ontario typically race neck and neck for first place for the total

number of species observed (250+) while Yukon ranks about 9th. Last year, 26 Yukoners submitted 103 checklists and observed 127 species.

Participating in Global Big Day is easy! First, if you don't already have one, make an eBird account online at <https://ebird.org/home>. Second, watch birds on May 14. Third, enter the birds you observed and submit your eBird checklists. And four, watch the global stats roll in (in real time!) 



TOP REGIONS 8 MAY 2021

Updated ~16 hr(s) ago.

Species leaders

Rank	Country	Species	Checklists
1.	Peru	1,361	79,366
2.	Colombia	1,231	15,237
3.	Ecuador	1,129	3,359
4.	Brazil	993	3,181
5.	Bolivia	899	2,960
6.	Kenya	812	2,921
7.	Mexico	777	2,634
8.	Argentina	760	2,492
9.	Venezuela	754	2,387
10.	United States	727	1,948

Checklists leaders

A lot of information on the Global Big Day can be found online at <https://ebird.org>

Bird lightning strikes twice in the Yukon!

By *Jim Hawkings*

They say lightning never strikes twice in the same place, but “bird” lightning seems to have done exactly that within the borders of our territory over the past 6 months. We have had exactly the same oddball species appear here – something so far out of it’s normal range as to seem almost impossible once, let alone twice.

That species is the Black-throated Blue Warbler, a very distinctive and attractive wood warbler that is common in southeastern Canada – its normal breeding range doesn’t go beyond western Ontario!. The most westerly Canadian record in eBird (until now) was in Powell River BC, on 6 October 2012. There is also a lonely record from Juneau, Alaska from 22-23 November 2001.

Yukon Bird Club got an email last fall reporting a male Black-throated Blue Warbler from Tustles Lake, YT, which is 27 km northeast of Frances Lake . It was reported by Markus and Elfie Lenzin. They saw the bird on the porch of their cabin (61°45’17”/129°12’35”) on the evening of 15 October 2021, then found it dead there on the morning of the 16th. We thought this was recorded in eBird....but apparently not yet!

Then on April 7, 2022, exactly the same thing, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, was found dead in the Mt. Sima subdivision by Dylan Russell. His father, Don,



This male Black-throated Blue Warbler was found by Marcus and Elfie Lenzin at Tustles Lake, YT on 15/16 October 2021.

Photo: Marcus Lenzin

is a birdwatcher and realized this was something strange. He sent a photo to me and I forwarded it to a bunch of rabid Yukon birders, including YBCs expert on such things, Cameron Eckert. Eventually Dylan brought the dead bird to Cameron, and it will be preserved in the official bird collection at Yukon University.

There is, of course, intense speculation on how these birds happened to end up in the Yukon, so far from their normal haunt in eastern Canada. The bird found at Tustles Lake was first seen alive, so we know it got there somehow under its own steam. However, the recent bird from the Mt. Sima subdivision was found dead, and there are many possible explanations that have to be considered. Did it get there on its own or did it die elsewhere and

somehow got transported (for example on/in a vehicle or a piece of equipment) to where it was found? When did it die? - it could have died last fall and simply remained frozen and covered in snow until it was found. Cameron did have a look at the bird and noted it was quite pristine, not bedraggled and mummified, suggesting that it died fairly recently rather than having spent the entire winter lying dead where it was found. There are plans to look closely at the feathers on this bird because the stage of feather moult may give clues as to exactly what time of year it died.

Another strange thing is that these two birds found in the Yukon, and the one seen in Juneau, were found at very weird

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times of year, even for warblers that breed in this area: extremely late in the fall, and almost impossibly early in the spring.

It's a good reminder to all you birdwatchers that bizarre things can happen, especially during migration. This is one of the great things about birdwatching - you never know what is going to turn up! ♣

This male Black-throated Blue Warbler was found by Dylan Russell in the Mt. Sima subdivision, Whitehorse, on 7 April 2022.

Photo: Dylan Russell



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appeared on 14 January, a week after the weather warmed. I was somewhat relieved by that, but I haven't for sure seen two of them, and I suspect the one I saw in such distress did not survive.

On social media I learned that a Northern Flicker – a very odd thing to have overwintering here -

managed to survive that brutal cold with the help of some feeders, so some individual birds get things just right in spite of the odds stacked against them.

This all makes me think that it might be extreme cold that plays a role in limiting the winter distribution of species such as

Mountain Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch, which are both at the near the northern edge of their normal range in the Whitehorse area. I also feel – though I haven't really looked carefully at the numbers – that both species are more common in the southern Yukon than they were 30 years ago. ♣

Wintertime Bird Crossword

Crossword puzzle creator wanted!

This is the last crossword puzzle of our long time contributor Ruth McCullough. The Yukon Bird Club was lucky to have her create them for all these years, thank you! If you want to start creating crossword puzzles for us, please reach out to: newsletter@yukonbirds.ca

By Ruth McCullough

Birds that appear in this crossword are rare to the Yukon, have only been sighted once or have been sighted twice but not every year.

Across

1. Has a long slightly rounded tail that "pumps" in flight, a heavily streaked breast with central "spot".

4. Female has pale throat bordered with black.

6. Common on Canadian prairies but is fast losing its habitat to farming.

10. Commonly winters in Asia.

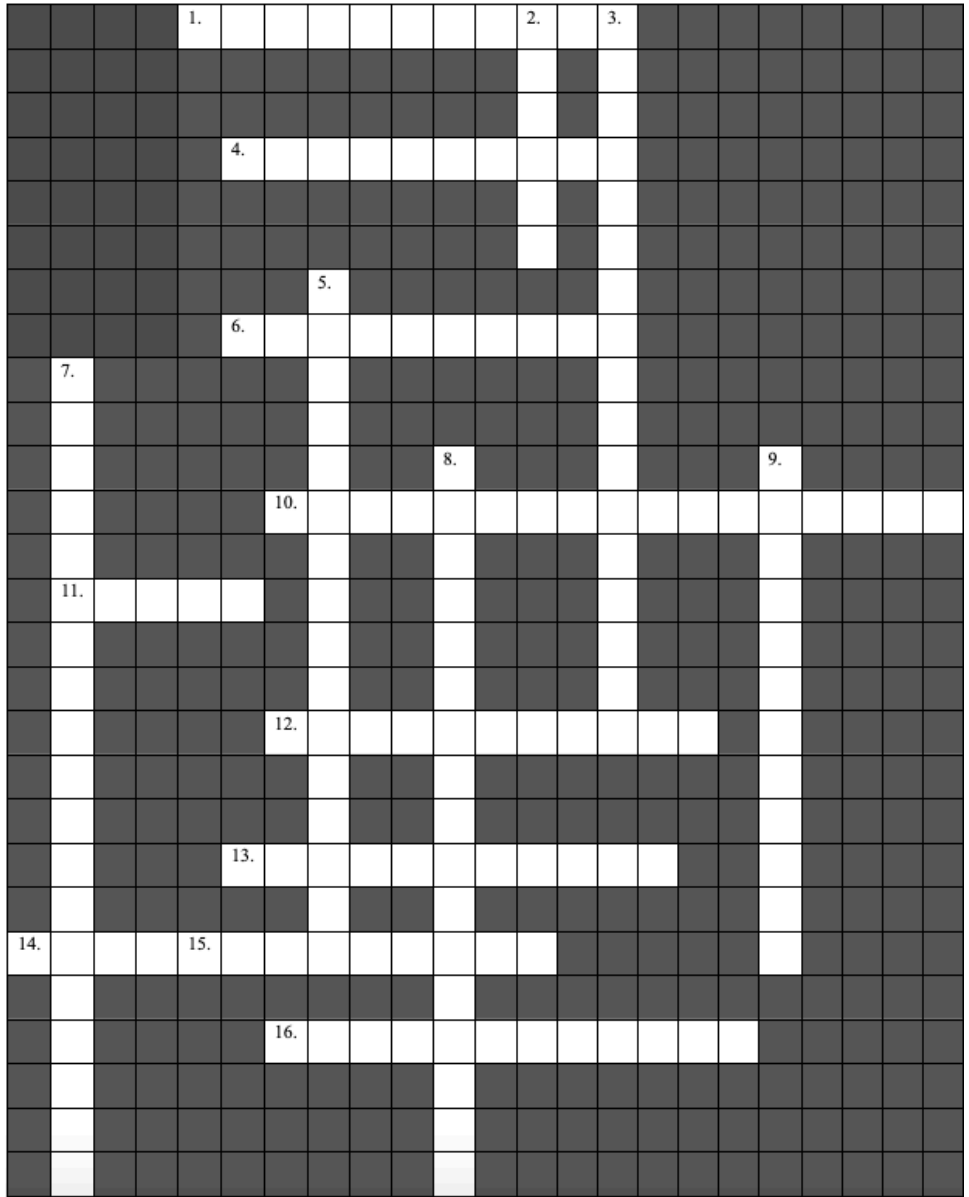
11. This Finch could easily be mistaken for the more common Purple Finch.

12. Its white tipped tail and black breast spot identify this sparrow.

13. Nests and feeds on the ground, song is a rapid Junco like trill.

14. Has a long keel shaped tail and song is a loud ascending squeak.

16. This bird's song is a caw



rather than a croak.

Down

2. This hummingbird is more common in western Washington and Oregon.

3. Usually found around farms, has white outer tail feathers and throat patch.

5. Identified by bluish gray head, white eye ring, bright yellow throat and wing bars.

7. Male has orange under parts, black head and white wing patches.

8. Male of this species can be told by light eye, purplish sheen on head and greenish tint on body.

9. Uses long tail feathers as props when working up and around tree trunks.

15. Two of this species have been sighted in the Yukon. Both are highly colorful birds from the southern U.S.A. 