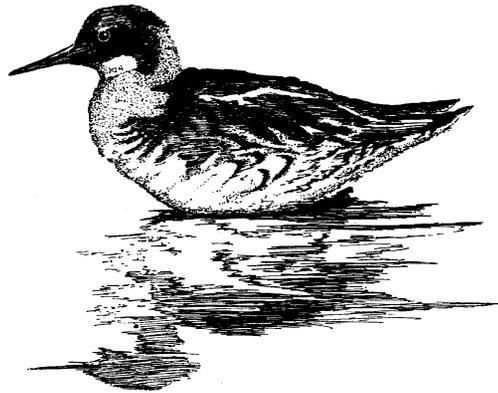


The Helmut Grünberg

YUKON BIRDATHON

Supporting bird & habitat conservation



Spring marks the return of our birds of summer, and the Yukon Birdathon is a special way to celebrate! Initiated in 1986, the Birdathon is an exciting 24-hour birdwatching festival and an annual highlight of spring for many Yukon birders. Participants collect sponsors on a dollars-per-species basis in their quest to observe as many species as they can anywhere in the Yukon within the specified 24 hour period. The proceeds support bird and habitat conservation in the Yukon.

The Birdathon is held on the last weekend in May beginning at 5:00 pm. on Friday and finishing at 5:00 pm. on Saturday. You do not have to be an experienced birdwatcher, and beginners are most welcome! Whether you spend all day prowling mountains for pipits and searching marshes for Soras, or just spend an hour or two at your favorite birding location, your participation is important!

BIRDATHON BASICS

The goal of the Birdathon is to have fun while celebrating our diverse and beautiful bird life in support of conservation education. The rules are few, 1) Count all species that you *confidently identify by sight or sound* in the Yukon within the 24 hour period. 2) Follow Yukon Bird Club's *code of ethics* which guide responsible birders.

You can bird on your own or in a team. Birding with others socially enjoyable and fewer birds go unnoticed! Teams can be any size but keep in mind that team members must bird together in order to contribute to the team's total. More than ever, participants are opting for an "Environmental Birdathon" relying solely on bikes, canoes or their own two feet for transportation.

SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The Yukon Birdathon adds to our knowledge of the Yukon's birdlife. Each year the Birdathon provides a snapshot of diversity and abundance during the peak of bird activity in the Yukon. The group total for all participants is usually about 130 species. The Birdathon provides excellent information about the occurrence of many of our common species. As well, the unusual sightings always add to the excitement. A few of the notable species sighted over the years includes Yellow-billed Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Bar-tailed Godwit, Smith's Longspur, Brant, Sandhill Crane, Tennessee Warbler, Western Kingbird, Sabine's Gull, Clay-colored Sparrow, Western Tanager, House Finch, and Brewer's Sparrow! What next??



FINDING SPONSORS

Many people would like to contribute to conservation education in the Yukon and sponsoring a Birdathon participant is an excellent way for them to do so. There are two ways to sponsor Birdathon participants; either by the number of species or with a flat donation. If sponsors prefer to make a flat donation then encourage them to write a cheque right away - it saves having to do it later. Cheques should be made payable to the *Yukon Bird Club*. Birdathon donations are tax deductible and receipts will automatically be sent out for all donations over ten dollars. However, this can only be done if the full names and addresses of all your sponsors are clearly noted.

COLLECTING PLEDGES

Collecting pledges quickly is critical to the success of the Birdathon. The longer that pledges are left, the more difficult it becomes to collect them. An effective way to collect your pledges is to make up a form letter indicating how much your sponsors owe. Try making it rewarding for your sponsors by providing highlights of your count with the complete list of birds you observed. Consider giving sponsors a copy of a Yukon bird checklist as a token of thanks.

There may be sponsors who do not send in their pledges after your first call or letter. Don't let this become a point of frustration. If it is a small pledge then consider letting it go. For a larger pledge try a second friendly reminder. Try to collect all your donations with a week or two of the Birdathon and please drop off or send in the money as soon as possible to the *Yukon Bird Club*.

