

# Yukon Warbler

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club  
Spring Summer 2007



Common Eider – Herschel Island , Yukon on 21 June 2007. Photo by Cameron D. Eckert

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**INSIDE: Boothroyd / Madsen Big Year** ◆ **Sightings Reports 2006** ◆ **Pelicans**

## YUKON BIRD CLUB

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

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Yukon Warbler editor: Boris Dobrowolsky  
Yukon Warbler - Spring Summer 2007



## Editors Note

2007 brought a few changes to the Yukon Bird Club Executive. Mary Whitley resigned as President and was replaced by Jim Bell. Mary has worked hard as President and everyone wishes her the best of luck in her other endeavours. Cameron Eckert has given up his involvement in the Warbler and will remain as a director. Cameron will continue to contribute to this newsletter. Robb Ellwood takes over as treasurer and I will try and fit into the Newsletter Director's position.

You may notice a few changes in the look of the newsletter. If you have any suggestions or comments or submissions please send them to the Yukon Bird Club, Post Box or send them directly to me.  
[boris@northwestel.net](mailto:boris@northwestel.net)

## Pelicans in Carcross

The Yukon's first American White Pelicans (4) were discovered June 6, 2007, on Nares Lake at Carcross in Southern Yukon by Dan Patterson. They were seen later in the day at Tagish Narrows outflow to Marsh Lake. The pelicans could turn up on any of the larger lakes in our area - please call right away (667-4630 or 667-8546) if you see them. The nearest pelican breeding colony is about 1000 km to the east in southern Northwest Territories.  
Cameron Eckert



American White Pelicans (4) - Nares Lake, Yukon June 6, 2007. Photo Cameron D. Eckert

## Yukon Bird Club Continues to Support Bird Banding in the Yukon

This spring the Yukon Bird Club approved a one thousand dollar grant to support bird banding activities at Albert Creek and Teslin.

Pictures of these bird banding activities are at <http://picasaweb.google.com/yukonbanding>

Our next newsletter will feature reports from Albert Creek and the Teslin Banding Stations.



## Boothroyd Madsen Family Embark on Big Year

From June 2007 to June 2008 my parents and I will cycle around North America searching for as many bird species as possible. In September, when my friends are heading back to school, I'll be sailing on Monterey Bay, looking for pelagic birds in Monterey Bay. When my classmates are writing midterms, I'll be at Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge watching thousands of Sandhill Cranes. When they're starting their

second semester I'll be squelching through a Florida swamp searching for Limpkins and Rails. It won't all be fun. There will be brutal headwinds, swarms of mosquitoes and dangerous drivers. Despite that, I know it will be a great trip and I can't wait until school is over.

We will start in late June as soon as school is out. We will cycle 15,000 kilometers, from the Yukon to California, east to Florida and west to southern Texas. Finally we will cycle through the scorching desert to the mountains in central Texas. We hope to end our Big Year with Black-capped Vireos and Golden-cheeked Warblers – I hope these birds will put our year's total at well over 400 species.

We hope that people will sponsor us; the money raised will go for protecting wild birds. The money that we raise will be given to conservation groups that work on bird conservation. People can sponsor us from our "sponsor us" page on our website, [www.birdyear.com](http://www.birdyear.com).

To raise publicity, we'll do interviews and speak at bird festivals. We'll do our bit for greenhouse gas reduction by burning no fossil fuels for transportation. We're encouraging other people who want to get a taste of self-propelled birding to take part in fossil-fuel-free big days of their own.

Follow our journey on our website by reading our blog. Help our cause by sponsoring us, fighting for bird protection or by trying some fossil fuel free birding!

**Malkolm Boothroyd**

Last update from their [www.birdyear.com](http://www.birdyear.com) site puts Malkolm rowing around Port Townsend in a replica of an 18<sup>th</sup> century longboat. Check out their blog.

## Field Notes: Observations from the field

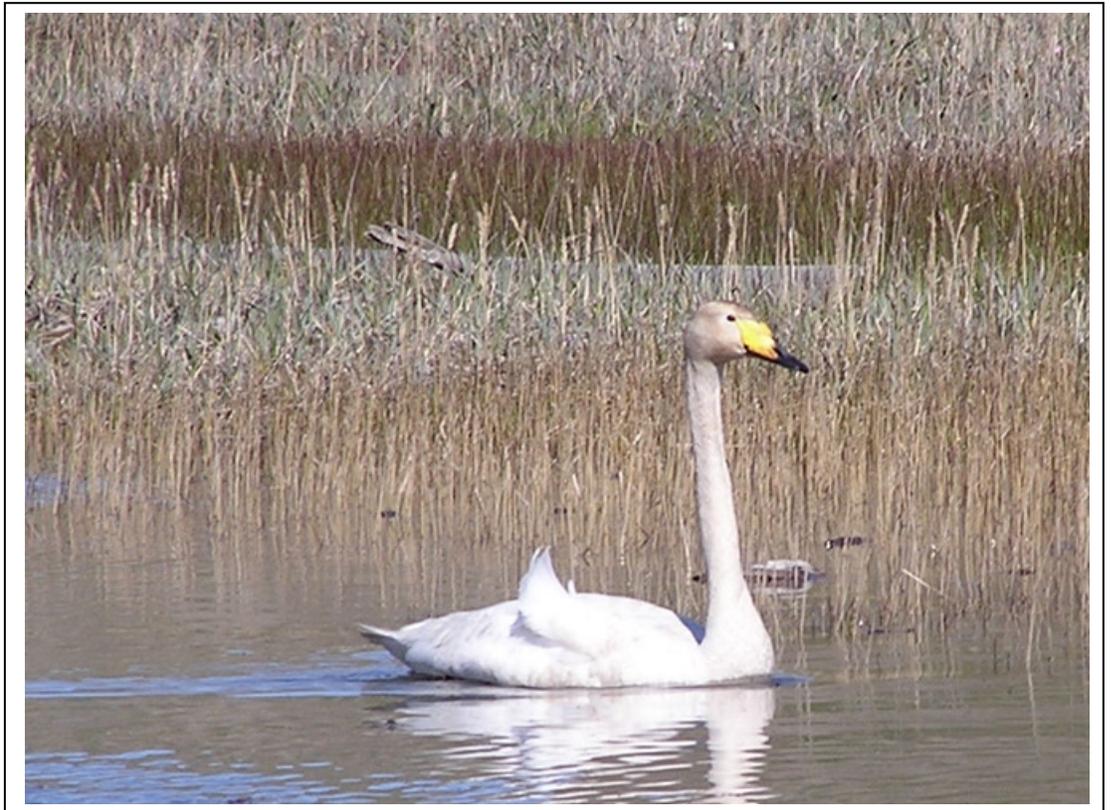
Please report your observations to the Yukon Bird Club via the sightings coordinator, Helmut Grünberg (phone 667-6703; email: ([grunberg@northwestel.net](mailto:grunberg@northwestel.net))), or Cameron Eckert (phone: 667-4630; email:([cdeckert@northwestel.net](mailto:cdeckert@northwestel.net))). Include important details such as date, location, number, and observer(s). Please provide as much detail as possible for breeding records, and descriptions of rare sightings. All observations will be forwarded to the Canadian Wildlife Service for inclusion in the comprehensive Birds of the Yukon Database.

### Summer 2006 (June, July)

compiled by Cameron Eckert and Helmut Grünberg

Yukoners face the twin challenges of monitoring long-term trends, while also responding to imminent threats to birdlife posed by development. This year, shorebird surveys across northern Yukon by the Canadian Wildlife Service collected baseline population data for the Arctic Plains & Mountains bird conservation region. Studies in the Yukon will hopefully help understand and relieve the spiraling pressures on northern bird populations. Birdwatchers also play an essential role - reports from a few new observers can provide much needed information about this region. If your summer travels take you to the North, don't hesitate to share your sightings and stories. – With respect to the weather in the Yukon, a brief spell of warm weather in June gave way to a relatively cool summer.

An immature **Whooper Swan**, the first to be photographed in the Yukon, was at Herschel Island 26-29 June (photo LJM, DA, photo MBo, WB, KM). A late report of a male **Eurasian Wigeon** at Henderson Corner near Dawson 4 May (CD) provided one of few Dawson area records. A count of 13 **Red-throated Loons** was made at Herschel Island 13 June (PS). A high breeding density of **Red-necked Grebes**, about 50 pairs nesting



**Whooper Swan Photo Lee John Meyook, Hershel Island, June 26, 2006**

in the *Equisetum* (Horsetail) marshes, was recorded on a survey of Little Atlin Lake, southern Yukon 14 June (CE, EN). An **Eared Grebe**, only casually observed in the Yukon, was seen in breeding plumage (or nearly so) at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 24 July (HG, BD, HS), and one, presumably the same bird, was there 25 July (BD).

Participants of the Yukon Bird Club trip to the Millennium Trail had great views of both adult **Bald Eagles** on a new nest near the Yukon River 6 June (JT, MW, Yukon Bird Club). A **Northern Goshawk** took exception to an observer approaching its nest in the Whitehorse-Pilot Mountain area in early June. Please ask the observer for the exciting details (BD). It was good to see that the **Gyrfalcon** nest at km 158, Dempster Highway, had four young this year, on 10 June (HG, RP, TH, Weekend on the Wing).

Three **Upland Sandpipers** were observed, apparently on territories, near the Horse Creek Road, Lake Laberge area in late June (MBe, PB). Three pairs of **Upland Sandpipers** were seen at Duke Meadows, southwestern Yukon 5 July (RF). A late but noteworthy report was of two **Ruddy Turnstones** at Surfbird Mountain, near km 100 on the Dempster Highway 31 May (SF, BL). **Surfbird** reports near the Dempster Highway included one singing at Surfbird Mountain 31 May (SF, BL), one at Blueberry Ridge 7 June (BL), one singing in the Richardson Mountains, 40 km north of the Eagle River 12 June (SF, BL), and four at Incline Mountain 20 June (SF, BL); in southwestern Yukon, four were observed at 2000 m elevation in the Quill Creek drainage 20 July (photo DD).



**Red-necked Stint Photo by Pam Sinclair June 10, 2006**

The Yukon's first **Red-necked Stint**, a stunning breeding plumage bird, was a great midnight find at Herschel Island 10-11 June (photo PS, SD, IMD, WN). Other scarce shorebirds recorded during the Canadian Wildlife Service surveys on the North Slope were two **Black-bellied Plovers** seen west of Komakuk 11 June (PS), and three **White-rumped Sandpipers** at Herschel Island 10-11 June (photo PS).

Two adult **Little Gulls**, casual in southern Yukon, were spotted among a late flock of migrant **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Twin Lakes, North Klondike Highway 6 June (photo DMR). Single adult **Glaucous-winged Gulls** were seen at Herschel

Island 12 June (photo PS), and at Whitehorse 5 June (CE, DMR) and 1 July (photo CE). A **Caspian Tern** seen along Kluane Lake, just south of Congdon Creek, southwestern Yukon 5 July, followed a sighting of two at Kelsall Lake, on the Haines Summit just south of the Yukon/B.C. border 3 July (RF).

A **Eurasian Collared Dove** was seen briefly in Haines Junction 16 June (photo WR); however, recent releases of this species in Petersburg, southeastern Alaska have muddied the waters around the origin of this sighting and others in southeastern Alaska. Possible doubts about the wild origins of birds are one of the factors considered prior to adding a new species to the checklist. A **Mourning Dove** was observed at Gem's Haven Stables, Mile 9.5 (km 15) of the Carcross Road (South Klondike Highway) from the third week of June to the third week of July (photo CS, RS, EW). CS wrote: "The third week of June is when the dove was first observed. It decided that our bird feeder just outside our kitchen window was a wonderful place to be. We observed the dove in the morning and in the evenings feeding. I must also tell you that our dove shared the feeder with the squirrels and other native Yukon birds". On the **Great Horned Owl** nest that was found 20 May, 2006 on

top of an old (2004) Red-tailed Harlan's Hawk nest at Swan Lake near Whitehorse, there were now three juveniles visible, 2 June (HG).

A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** banded at Teslin Lake 11 June was the first one seen there through this year's "spring" banding season (photo BS). The known range of the **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** in central Yukon was somewhat clarified with counts of three near Mayo 7 June (MOD), eight on the Goldfield roads near Dawson 24 June (PS, SD), and two at Faro 27 June (PS, SD). Three hatch-year **Least Flycatchers**, at the far northwestern edge of their range in central Yukon, were banded at Shell Creek along the Yukon River 22 July (photo TMK, BS). The Mount McIntyre Breeding Bird Survey in Whitehorse on 16 June found **Dusky Flycatchers** well below their typical tree line breeding grounds this year (CE), no doubt a result of heavy snow conditions in alpine areas late into the spring. An **Eastern Phoebe**, well beyond its range, was singing at Henderson Corner near Dawson 6 June (DMR).

A **Blue-headed Vireo** at Swan Lake near Whitehorse 9 June (audio recording BD) was a first record for the Whitehorse area; one was also heard at Windy Arm along the Skagway Road (South Klondike Highway) for a rare southern Yukon record 2 July (RP). The **Red-eyed Vireo** is very rare in the Whitehorse area; reports this year included one in downtown Whitehorse 13 and 15 July (RP; DS, MS), one at Little Atlin Lake 14 June (CE) and 16 June (BD), and one on the Atlin Road 17 June (PS). Rare on the Yukon's North Coast were a **Tree Swallow** between the Firth River and Babbage River 13 June (PS), and a **Barn Swallow** at Herschel Island 29 June (MBo). A **Winter Wren**, scarce in southern Yukon, was heard during the Rancheria Breeding Bird Survey 17 June (HG). Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, rare north of the southern edge of the Yukon, were at Little Salmon Lake 26 June (CE, PS). One was seen in the McIntyre wetlands near the Fish Farm in Whitehorse, a known location from which it hasn't been reported for a few years, 12 June (HG, DC). **Cedar Waxwings** staged one of their periodic mini-invasions in the Whitehorse area this summer; a pair was confirmed nesting (5 eggs) at Marsh Lake in late June (photo DP).

**Tennessee Warblers** continue to be seen in high numbers in southeastern Yukon; a record high count of 22 was recorded on the Rancheria Breeding Bird Survey 17 June (HG); one was singing at Swan Lake near Whitehorse 27 June (audio recording BD, CO); this was only the second record for the Swan Lake area. Reports of **Cape May Warblers**, well west of their range, included one singing in Whitehorse 1-7 June (photo PS; CE; MBo), one singing at Haines Junction 10 June (MOD), and a male on the south side of the Chilkat Pass just south of the Yukon/B.C. border 3 July (RF). Five **Townsend's Warblers** were tallied along the Top-of-the-World Highway, central Yukon 23 June (PS, SD). Two were singing at km 58.8 Dempster Highway (Grizzly Creek), 11 June (HG, Weekend on the Wing). A male **MacGillivray's Warbler**, a species that is rarely seen in southern Yukon, was banded at Teslin Lake June 4 (BS).

A female **Western Tanager**, west of its range, was banded at Teslin Lake 4 June (photo BS); a male, even further west, was singing and calling at the Mt. McIntyre trails in Whitehorse in the first week of June (SC) in the same area as last year (16-17 June 2005, CE, SC). **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** breeding in the Yukon? Well, not yet - a distance of just 150 km separated a **male Yellow-headed Blackbird** seen near Carcross in late May (photo BW), and a **female** seen near Haines Junction Yukon in early June (photo JO).

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## Field Notes: *Observations from the field* Fall 2006 (August, September, October, November)

compiled by Cameron Eckert and Helmut Grünberg

Abbreviation: ph. = photo

Questions as to how climate change is affecting bird ranges arise with each new unusual sighting – be it a Lesser Goldfinch in Whitehorse, or an invasion of Steller's Jays. While there are no quick answers as to what drives such events, it is clear that climate change is having increasingly dramatic impacts in the North. All hopes for an extended fall season were quashed by November's record-breaking cold spell when temperatures plunged to -40°C.

Flocks of 100 **Greater White-fronted Geese** and 300 **Snow Geese** were flying northwest over Herschel Island 15 August (CE). A lone Snow Goose, rare in fall, was trailing a southbound flock of 42 Tundra Swans over Marsh Lake 25 Sept (CE). The annual fall staging of geese at Shallow Bay, Lake Laberge peaked 29 Sept with 60 **Greater White-fronted Geese** and about 2000 **Canada Geese**; the latter appeared to be of the subspecies *Branta canadensis parvipes* (ph. CE). Also at Shallow Bay were 300 **Tundra Swans** 28 Sept (CE). High numbers of waterfowl were recorded at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons with peak counts for **American Wigeon** (1500) and **Ruddy Duck** (80) 22 August, and peak counts for **Northern Shoveler** (1200) 11 Sept (HG). A male **King Eider**, rare in fall at Herschel Island, was at Pauline Cove 19 August (CE). Unusual for the Whitehorse sewage lagoons was a female-type **Harlequin Duck** 29 September (BD, HG) and 10 October (HG). One was also potted in Whitehorse below the Yukon River dam 29 October and another one 31 October (HG); two were record late there 21 November (HG, CM). The latest sighting of **Ruddy Ducks**, one male and three females, at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons was 19 October, eight days before freeze-up (HG).

A juvenile **Yellow-billed Loon**, seen annually in low numbers in southern Yukon, was at M'Clintock Bay 23 October (CE); another one was seen nearby below the Yukon River bridge near Lewes Dam 3 November (HG, BSu). An adult **Red-necked Grebe** at Pauline Cove provided the first record for Herschel Island 19 Aug (CE). An estimated 200 Red-necked Grebes were on Marsh Lake 25 September (CE). An adult **Eared Grebe**, casual in southern Yukon, first seen at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons in late July was last seen 7 August (HG).

The close-up sighting of a **Northern Goshawk** taking a squirrel while Common Ravens were harassing it was an exciting feeder observation in Whitehorse-Porter Creek 19 November (DRa, GR); although the observers were sad to see the squirrel go, it was promptly replaced by another one. A **Rough-legged Hawk** (light phase female-type) was seen at the south end of Lake Laberge during a Yukon Bird Club trip 15 October (BD, YBC); one each, also light-phase female-types, were seen along the Alaska Highway near the Kusawa Lake turn-off (Takhini Burn) and near Mendenhall 17 October (HG). Six **Golden Eagles** were observed heading south from McIntyre Mountain, Whitehorse 19 October (JP, RP) after three of them had joined three others near this year's nest site. It was encouraging to see six **American Kestrels**, a species that has been declining in the Yukon, on fences and trees at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 18 August (HG, BSu, CL). A **Merlin** was going after a **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 12 August (HG). A Merlin was also seen here 18 August (HG, BSu, CL).

The annual build-up of **American Coots** at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons peaked at 153 on 11 September (HG); two were still there 26 October, the day before the lower lagoon was 99% frozen (HG, CO). A pair of **Sandhill Cranes** lingered at Kookatsoon Lake, southern Yukon 8-14 October (MEJ).

A rare **Black-bellied Plover** was observed during a Yukon Bird Club trip to the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 24 September (HG, YBC), and one was heard calling there 29 September (HG, BD). A juvenile **Greater Yellowlegs** was record-late at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons, eight days before freeze-up, 19 October (ph. HG). An **Upland Sandpiper** was a nice find in somewhat unusual habitat, the willows north of Shallow Bay, Lake Laberge 6 August (HG, CO). A juvenile **Western Sandpiper**, a rare species in southern Yukon, was seen at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 29-30 September (ph. HG); this was also the latest of the few fall sightings to date. The Yukon's shorebirding season closed out 26 October with a juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (ph. CE), and a winter plumage **Dunlin** (ph. CE, HG, CO) at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons; the day after, the lower lagoon was 99% frozen, and there was no shorebird habitat left.

An adult **Thayer's Gull**, not unexpected for the date, provided the first well-documented record for Herschel Island 14-19 August (ph. CE). An adult **Glaucous-winged Gull**, likely the same bird as reported in early June, was at Herschel Island 15-20 August (ph. CE). Two Glaucous-winged Gulls, rare in fall, were at the Whitehorse landfill 13 August, and a juvenile was there 10 October (ph. CE). Although not specifically a Yukon record, we mention the following to give an important perspective on a rare species: The plight of the **Ivory Gull** was not helped by late, deep snow on northern Baffin Island, Nunavut this summer; there were no breeding birds recorded at the Brodeur Peninsula (MM). **Black Guillemot** surveys at Herschel Island this year recorded 40 adults, 9 successful nests, and 13 chicks; down from 2005 counts of 60 adults, 12 successful nests, and 22 chicks (CE, Herschel Island rangers). The highest count of **Rock Pigeons** in Whitehorse was made at the late date of 12 November; if they nested somewhere nearby, this is an amazingly late date to bring young from the nest; there hasn't been any new high count till the end of the season, and the number 44 was confirmed a few times (HG). Single **Snowy Owls**, rare in southern Yukon, were reported from McIntyre Mountain, Whitehorse 19 October (JP, RP), and downtown Whitehorse 4 November (SC); the latter, an immature bird, was being harassed by Common Ravens at the bottom of the Two Mile Hill; it was eventually found dead. The first ever **Northern Shrike** banded at Teslin was one chasing after "the bander's" redpolls at a feeder 11 November (ph. BSc).

Confirming that the redpolls are a major food source for the shrike was one taking a panicking redpoll that had just glanced off the window at a feeder in Whitehorse 4 November; in three attempts at the same feeder the shrike took two Common Redpolls 17 November (HG). Two **Blue-headed Vireos** were banded at the Albert Creek banding station, Upper Liard this fall, a hatch-year bird 5 August, and an adult 2 September (TMK).

### **Southern Yukon Steller's Jay Invasion**

An invasion of Steller's Jays to southern Yukon this fall proved to be a sensational birding phenomenon! By late November, we had received 119 reports by 137 observers of birds at 62 different locations. To imagine the scale "per capita", it would be like receiving reports from 55,000 birdwatchers in Ontario. The number of reports accompanied by photographs was remarkable. The first Steller's Jays appeared in early September around Carcross and spread over the Whitehorse area north to Lake Laberge by September 16, east to the Atlin Road and Atlin by September 26, west to Haines Junction by September 28, and north to Ethel Lake (an amazing 430 km north of Skagway, Alaska) by October 14. It seems likely that hundreds of birds were involved. The pattern of the invasion indicates that the jays came over the White Pass from Skagway, Alaska. All were of the coastal subspecies, and the many we were able to age from photos were hatch-year birds. The only previous Yukon Steller's Jay invasion was in fall 1994 when jays were recorded at about 8 Whitehorse-area locations. Prior to 1994, there had only been a total of 9 Yukon reports. So while this type of invasion is not unprecedented, the scale of this year's event was well beyond anything previously recorded. There are various possible explanations as to what drove the invasion, but none seems entirely satisfactory and in that way it remains somewhat of a mystery. However, the enthusiastic response demonstrated by Yukon birdwatchers and naturalists that enabled us to document and track this year's invasion, will no doubt enhance our ability to understand future events.

Two **American Crows**, casual in fall in southern Yukon, were seen around Whitehorse in August and September (SD, PS, AP, DRi). A couple of late **Bank Swallows** were fleeing south over Shallow Bay, Lake Laberge 29 September (CE). **Cliff Swallows** had found the perfect nesting location on a church wall on 8th Avenue and Wheeler Street in Whitehorse; their nesting progress was followed almost daily, and it was found that the last day that two big young swallows were being fed here by two adults was 18 August, pinpointing the end of the nesting season (HG, BSu, CL); they will not be nesting here the following summer because the wall has been obstructed by the church. A late **Barn Swallow** was at Swift River, southern Yukon 21 September (BSc). A major swallow migration was observed at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 1 September as about 200 were flying against a strong south wind (HG); some appeared to have been Barn Swallows.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was by far the most common species at the Albert Creek banding station (412 banded) this season (TMK). **Cedar Waxwing** reports from Whitehorse included two juveniles 28 August (LD), and one juvenile 7 September (SD, HG). All three birds hit windows in two different locations, and only the last one survived. An adult female **Townsend's Warbler** was banded at the Albert Creek banding station 29 August (TMK). A hatch-year **Bay-breasted Warbler** 12 August, and a hatch-year **Ovenbird** 20 August each banded at the Albert Creek banding station (TMK) added to the growing number of Watson Lake area records for these two southeastern Yukon specialties. The fall banding season at the Albert Creek banding station saw a two-way battle for warbler supremacy with **Common Yellowthroat** (228 banded) narrowly edging out **Wilson's Warbler** (218 banded) (TMK). A juvenile Timberline-race **Brewer's Sparrow** banded at Teslin Lake 3 September (ph. BSc) provided one of very few lowland records for this species in the Yukon. Fairly late was a **Fox Sparrow** lingering at an Army Beach feeder, Marsh Lake 19 October, but disappeared a couple of days later (FW). Even later was a Fox Sparrow at Dawson City that stayed past the end of the season surviving the late November cold spell of temperatures down to  $-43^{\circ}\text{C}$  (ML). Single **Song Sparrows**, rare in fall in southern Yukon, were seen in Whitehorse 10 September (MB) and 28 September (ph. HG). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was observed at a Carcross feeder 20 November and survived the late November cold spell into the winter season (DK, NM). An estimated 1000 **Lapland Longspurs** were at Pauline Cove on Herschel Island 18 August (CE). The fall flock of **Rusty Blackbirds** at the Whitehorse landfill peaked at about 200 on 5 September (PS, SD); a total of 267 Rusties were colour-banded this year in the Yukon, and we encourage birders to be on the lookout and report sightings of colour-banded Rusties. Watch out for **Brewer's Blackbirds** among the Rusties. There was a female Brewer's at the Whitehorse landfill 13 August (CE).

Two **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** reports, both from southern Yukon, included an interior-race bird at Horse Creek, Lake Laberge area 5 November (KO), and a coastal-race bird in Whitehorse 13 November (HG). The latter bird survived the late November cold spell as it was also seen in December. Good numbers of **Red Crossbills**, 15-20, were observed at a Horse Creek feeder near Lake Laberge 20 October (KO). Late October to the middle of November saw thousands of redpolls, predominantly **Common Redpolls** but with many **Hoary Redpolls**, moving through the Whitehorse area. The most bizarre record of the season was that of a female **Lesser Goldfinch**, a Yukon first, in Whitehorse 22 September - 5 October (ph. HG, BD, ph. CE). This bird was about 2200 km north of the north edge of the species' regular breeding range in southern Oregon (as the Lesser Goldfinch flies).

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## A Beginner's Guide to Recording Bird Song



Once you start spending time observing birds it doesn't take too long to figure out that it is easier to hear a bird singing than to see it.

In the spring of 2006 I decided to take a serious shot at recording bird songs. My motivation was to learn those elusive bird songs that had stumped me season after season. I also found out that popular bird song recordings, only document the most common calls and songs and often do not reflect what a particular subspecies sounds like in the Yukon.

Being a bit of a computer nerd I hopped on the web and found quite a few sites devoted to bird song recording. I was looking for some birdsong recording equipment that would be light, unbulky and relatively inexpensive. Several sites recommended a disk recorder and a shotgun microphone. At the end of the day I bought a shotgun microphone for \$100 and a Disk player for \$200. This set up weighs almost nothing, fits in my fanny pack and has made some

pretty high quality sound recordings

This is where I got my microphone ( SME-ATR55 ) [www.mineroff.com](http://www.mineroff.com)

I use Audacity to edit my sound files. It is a free, open source piece of software which allows you to edit your sound file as well as convert it to other file formats. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/windows>  
Sound files I record are stored on my computer initially as wav. files. I convert them to mp3. files which are a compressed file format and use less space.

Next find a quiet place, be quiet and start recording.

BD

### **2007 Birdathon a Success**

I would like to extend a warm thank you to all who participated, sponsored birders, and supported the 2007 Birdathon. This year's feature birders, the Boothroyd / Madsen family were extremely enthusiastic in their efforts and solicited some wonderful prizes for enviro-birders, coordinated fossil fuel free outings during the birdathon weekend, and generally inspired people to re-think their approach to the birdathon. I'd like to thank them for the efforts and wish them well on their upcoming Big Bird Year. The birdathon weekend saw numerous birders cycling, hiking, strolling around enjoying the outdoors and the splendour of spring birding. Many of the usual hotspots were visited - McIntyre Creek wetlands, Swan Lake, Judas Creek, and the Yukon River. A total of 114 species were observed by the lively participants who attended at the post-birdathon barbeque. (115 if we count the crow that also attended the bbq). A few of the highlights were a Horned Lark by the rodeo grounds, Harlequin Ducks on the Yukon River by the Millennium Bridge, and the ever elusive Sora at McIntyre Wetland - we also noted a dearth of shorebirds. Thanks to Jim, our trusty tallyman, for making the reading of a checklist a highlight in itself.

Nancy Hughes. Birdathon Co-coordinator

## Judas Creek Field Trip Report, May 23, 2007

Ten people (or was it nine...), including 3 visitors from out of town, participated in this year's Judas Creek outing. Jim Hawkings was the leader with the legendary Helmut Grunberg adding his expert identification skills. The evening weather at Marsh Lake was more pleasant than expected based on the howling winds in Whitehorse around departure time.

The first stop was Bob Lake, where we found the usual assortment of ducks (Bufflehead, Barrow's Goldeneye, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup), as well as pair of Horned Grebes and a Lesser Yellowlegs). A Mew Gull was seen at the far end of the lake nesting on a stump in the water. We then moved to the legendary hotspot down on the beach near the mouth of Judas Creek. We were greeted by a refreshing breeze from the south, but it wasn't nearly as bone-chilling as we have had in some years. The marsh was fairly quiet: a few Northern Shovelers, a pair of Mallards, and a nice pair of Say's Phoebes -- still a bit early, cool, and windy for the likes of Common Yellowthroats and Sora I guess. Shortly after we arrived on the beach we were treated to a brace of Whimbrels as well as a good look at an American Pipit, Savannah Sparrow, and a few Arctic Terns -- which later appeared to be preparing to nest a bit further down the beach. The ice on the lake still looked pretty solid, though there was a good bit of open water at the mouth of the creek and along the beach to the north. There were 2 Common Loons, a few Mew and Herring Gulls, and a good assortment of ducks in the Lake: Scaup, White-winged and Surf Scoters, Mallards, American Wigeon, Green Winged Teal. Also 2 Greater White-fronted geese, and about 20 Canada Geese, include one rather small and very high-pitched one with a slight white neck ring -- could well have been a Cackling Goose (dare we say it WAS?). For the swan aficionados there were 12 Trumpeter Swans busily excavating the estuary.

As we got closer to the actual mouth of the creek we discovered a virtual plague of shorebirds -- at least 300 -- spread across the mud. These were still a bit far for the straining binoculars, and even tough with scopes due to creeping hypothermia among the participants. There was a brief flurry of excitement over a drab but quite odd-looking duck found in the company of a male American Wigeon. At first glance it looked like a female American Wigeon; but on closer examination it looked to be a mixture of American Wigeon and Northern Pintail. Unfortunately we couldn't get a photograph of the bird. After this the crowd suffered quietly as the scope-wielding experts determined that the shorebirds seemed to be mostly Pectoral Sandpipers, with a good supply of Lesser Yellowlegs, a few Dowitchers (long- or short-billed?), and also a smattering of smaller peeps, likely Semipalmated Sandpipers.

At this point the tour leader asked if anyone was interested in a nice hot chocolate. This apparently instilled some hope of -- or at least a healthy craving for -- the real thing. So in short order we abandoned the legions of unidentified shorebirds in the creek and the remaining ducks and other goodies shimmering in the distant heat haze across the estuary in favour of retreat to the warm shelter of the parking area and the ride home. Everyone was warned to keep glancing back over their shoulders on the walk back, as we know the rarities on this excursion regularly attack from behind late in the evening. But no luck. Next year.....

Jim Hawkings

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