

Spring-Summer 2015

Yukon Warbler

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club



Cameron Eckert photo

A female Red-breasted Nuthatch excavates her nest cavity in a tall willow near Carcross. 30 April 2015.



*Helmut
Grünberg:
a life in
conservation
remembered*

See stories pages 6 and 7

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.

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We want your birding photos and stories!

Thank you to all who contribute to make the Yukon Warbler. YBCnewsletter@gmail.com

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Rare sightings reports

All sightings of rare or notable birds should be sent directly to the Sightings Coordinator:
yukonbirdclub@gmail.com

Birding talks with Ione



Yukon Bird Club Events will be hopping again this year with talks/slideshows at the MacBride Museum by Ione Christensen.

The first events will be Birds of Spring ... an evening in mid-May, and an afternoon in June.

The second events will be Birds of Summer in July and August, and the third will be Birds of Fall and Winter in September.

Betty Sutton

Event Coordinator

MacBride show schedule

The 7 p.m. are more to try and get locals out, all the rest are for our visitors.

Date	time	Show
May 13	7 p.m.	Birds of Spring
June 9	1:30 p.m.	Birds of Spring
July 7	1:30p.m.	Birds of Summer
Aug. 4	1:30 p.m.	Birds of Summer
Sept 29	7 p.m.	Birds of Fall and Winter

Second annual Rusty Blackbird migration blitz underway

The Rusty Blackbird Migration Blitz 2015 is underway!

In the Yukon, the first Rusty Blackbirds arrive in the second half of April, and numbers peak around the beginning of May.

The Rusty Blackbird has declined in recent years more than any other landbird, and we are working together to find out why. The Blitz is providing much-needed information on this species' ecology during migration.

To participate and learn more please visit: <http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz>

Last year's first-annual Rusty Blackbird Migration Blitz coincided with an extremely poor migration for this species in the North, see more information in Sightings.



Cameron Eckert photo

Female Rusty Blackbird. The Rusty Blackbird has declined more in recent years than another landbird.

Spring birds report 2014

by Cameron D. Eckert

Summer 2014

What a difference a year makes! While spring migration never disappoints, some of the big movements, especially shorebirds and **Lapland Longspurs**, were missed this year; and a thin showing of **Rusty Blackbirds** didn't make for much a "blitz." This is in especially sharp contrast to the spring of 2013 when harsh weather produced dramatic fallouts. We're reminded again that no single season or year tells the story of our birdlife – rather, it's the long-term dedication and effort by birdwatchers, across the continent and over many decades, that monitors the health and survival of bird populations and informs conservation action.

A **Bean-Goose**, the specific identification of which is still being determined, was unexpected at Lake Laberge 27 May (ph. CE, BD). A

flock of 30 **Brant** at Kusawa Lake 25 May (ph. JK) was typical of the late spring movement through the Yukon Southern Lakes region. Peak migration for **Northern Pintail** in s. Yukon was noted 30 Apr with counts of 820 at M'Clintock Bay (JJ), and 809 at Tagish Lake (JJ, SVD); followed by the season's high count of 1495 at M'Clintock Bay 1 May (JJ). **Surf Scoter** migration through s. Yukon was noted with 285 at Tagish 16 May (SVD), 296 at Watson Lake 16 May (JJ), 138 at Little Salmon Lake 18 May (GW, MW), and 300 at Judas Creek 22 May (JH, YBC). A count of 240 **White-winged Scoters** was recorded at Watson Lake 24 May (CE, JJ). Four **Rock Ptarmigan** were on Tally-Ho Mountain 25 May (MGB). **White-tailed Ptarmigan** reports included 8 on Nares Mountain 19 Apr (MM), and 2 in the O'Brien Range, Ogilvie Mountains 27 May (SyC). The Yukon Bird Club's annual **Dusky Grouse** hike to Nares Mountain at Car-

cross produced fantastic views of 5 displaying males and 3 females, all under the watchful eyes of 2 soaring **Golden Eagles** (DK, YBC). Two **Yellow-billed Loons** were at Watson Lake 19-23 May (JJ, CE).

11,550 Cranes

A total of 11,550 **Sandhill Cranes** was tallied at Faro 3 May (ScC). Shorebird migration was lackluster in s. Yukon this season with very low numbers of **American Golden-Plovers** and the largest flock **Long-billed Dowitchers** being a diminutive 125 at M'Clintock Bay 17 May (CE, JH, PS). A few notable flocks of **Pectoral Sandpipers** included 800 at M'Clintock Bay 15 May (JJ), and 800 at Lake Laberge 17 & 25 May (CE). Other shorebird migration highlights were a flock of 48 **Black-bellied Plovers**, one of the largest recorded in the Yukon, at Lake Laberge 21 May (CE); and 200 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** at Judas Cr., s. Yukon 20 May (CE). **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** is always a highlight of spring migration; 3 were seen at Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk 24 May (RJ, SM). A male **Red Phalarope**, a first for se. Yukon, was at Watson Lake 27 May (ph. JJ). The first **Long-tailed Jaeger** of the season was seen at Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk 16 May, with 6 there on 18 May (RJ, SM), while the first **Pomarine Jaeger** of the season was seen there 28 May (RJ, SM).

Three **Parasitic Jaegers**, a scarce inland spring migrant, were at Watson Lake 22 May (JJ). Northbound flocks of **Bonaparte's Gulls** totaling 330 were counted at Tagish 17 May (SVD). A notable movement of **Mew Gulls** 10 May saw flocks of 600 at Nares Lake (CE, YBC), 400 at Bennett Lake (CE, YBC), 380 at M'Clintock Bay (JJ), and 600 at s. Lake Laberge (CE). A



Jukka Jantunen photo

A Yukon rarity, this Red-throated Pipit was sighted at the Watson Lake airport on May 22, 2014.

Northern Saw-whet owl heard along Windy Arm

Black-legged Kittiwake, casual in spring in s. Yukon, was seen along Tagish Narrows 14 Apr (ph. JJ; SVD). **Barred Owl** has a toe-hold in se. Yukon at Albert Creek where one was first heard again this year 18 Apr (SD) and then through the season. **Boreal Owls** were noted in good numbers across s. Yukon in mid-Apr with over 50 calling owls recorded both incidentally and on owl surveys (JJ; SVD; et al.). **Northern Saw-whet Owl** is scarce in s. Yukon and this season individuals were heard calling along Windy Arm 11 & 25 Apr (SVD; vr. CE), near Jake's Corner 15 Apr & 5 May (JJ), and at Chootla Lake 3 & 24 May (SVD, JJ). **Pileated Woodpecker** is very rare in se. Yukon where one was at Albert Creek 25 May (CE, JJ, TMK).

Impressive **Tree Swallow** flocks included 400 at Tagish 14 May (JJ), 300 at Watson Lake 23 May (JJ), 150 at McIntyre Creek 21 May (BS), and 125 at Jackfish Bay 18 May (CE). Not to be outdone, **Violet-green Swallows** also put on a show with 500 at Jackfish Bay 14 May (CE), and 300 at McIntyre Creek 10 May (BS). Concerns over declining **Bank Swallow** populations have prompted new surveys of colonies; notable concentrations this season included 200 at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve 31 May (CE, TMK). A record-early **Cliff Swallow** was seen in Whitehorse 19 Apr (wd. CE, PS). A count of 300 Cliff Swallows was recorded at a sizeable nesting colony on the Tagish bridge 31 May (SVD). A **Barn Swallow**, well beyond its range, was at Herschel Island-Qikqitaruk 18



Jukka Jantunen photo

Also on May 22, 2014, a Vesper Sparrow was sighted at Watson Lake airport..

May (RJ, SaM). A **Red-throated Pipit** at Watson Lake 22-24 May (ph. JJ, CE) established a first spring season record for s. Yukon. **Lapland Longspur** migration was incredibly thin with the largest flock reported being a meagre 150 at Shallow Bay 11 May (JJ). Regular checks of appropriate habitat have found that **Smith's Longspur** is a rare but regular migrant around Watson Lake; on 26 May, 6 were at the airport, and 1 was at nearby Upper Liard (JJ). Warbler migration was noted across s. Yukon with 25 **Orange-crowned** and 40 **Yellow warblers** at Albert Creek 24 May (CE, JJ, TMK), 75 **Wilson's Warblers** at McIntyre Creek wetlands 21 May (BS), and 200 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Watson Lake airport 22 May (JJ). A male **Western Tanager**, w. of its range, was at Little Atlin Lake 23 May (KG, SG); 6 were at Albert Creek 24 May (CE, JJ, TMK). A **Vesper Sparrow**, casual in the Yukon, was at Watson Lake 22 May (ph. JJ). Two **White-throated Sparrows** singing at Mayo 29-30 May (MOD) were well north of

their range. The first-annual Rusty Blackbird Migration Blitz coincided with an extremely poor migration for this species in the North; high counts were modest with 33 at Nares Lake 10 May (CE, YBC), 22 along the Teslin River 5 May (JJ), 14 at Shallow Bay 4 May (JJ), 12 at Albert Creek 4 May (TMK), and 9 at McIntyre Creek 3 May (BS). **Yellow-headed Blackbird** is a rare wanderer to the Territory; a singing male was at Albert Creek 24-27 May (ph. CE, JJ, TMK).

Observers: Scott Cameron (ScC), Syd Cannings (SyC), Susan Drury, Boris Dobrowolsky, Cameron Eckert, Ken Gabb, Sandra Gabb, Maxime Gouyou Beauchamps (MGB), Jim Hawkings, Jukka Jantunen, Ricky Joe, Jozien Keijzer, Dan Kemble, Meghan Marjonovic, Sam McLeod, Mark O'Donoghue (MOD), Ted Murphy-Kelly, Ben Schonewille, Pam Sinclair, Jason Straka, Shyloh van Delft (SVD), Gerry Whitley, Mary Whitley, Yukon Bird Club (YBC).

Birding community mourns Yukon conservationist

By Jennifer Trapnell

When he died last month, at 75, Helmut Grünberg had spent over 40 years promoting the enjoyment, study, and conservation of Yukon's bird life.

He found his way to Whitehorse in the early '70s when, en route to climb Denali in Alaska, he was waylaid by a car accident. He liked the city, and stayed.

Trained in the sciences, Helmut explored the territory looking for birds, and sought out kindred spirits who became like family. Whether it was banding ptarmigan in the early '70s on the Haines Road with Dave Mossop (they both became Yukon College instructors), promoting Dempster Highway birding with the Frisch family, or supporting young birders, Helmut found a way to help.

Helmut's formative years in Germany, birding and hiking with an outdoors club, may have shaped his work on the Yukon Conservation Society's Nature Appreciation Series and later, the Yukon Bird Club's field trip programme, and the Yukon Birdathon.

He nurtured the work of the Yukon Bird Club as one of its founders in 1993, and was one of the authors of the definitive *Birds of the Yukon Territory*, published in 2003. He was a natural teacher, says his friend Betty Sutton, who served on the executive with him.

I knew Helmut as a fellow board member — he was its president for years; he also led an untold number of amazing field trips, and stepped in for others, often. Most years, one of the season's highlights was Helmut's "fall finale" to the Whitehorse sewage lagoons, where he knew how to navigate the gaps in the gates (and sometimes had keys).

Helmut enjoyed several other spec-



Cameron Eckert photo

Helmut Grünberg birding at Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk.

tacular birding areas found near the Long Lake Road, where he lived for many years. His favourite was Swan Lake, a refuge for ducks, shorebirds, raptors, and warblers, which he found in 1976. Two decades later, he wrote a book about his and others' observations there.

Cameron Eckert, a local birding expert, says Helmut's lovely introduction to *The Birds of Swan Lake*, Yukon showed his friend's joyful appreciation for nature, birding, and this special place — part of the Ta'an Kwach'an's traditional territory. Helmut visited Swan Lake as often as he could, calling on friends when his car needed pulling out of the mud.

While he won Yukon's Biodiversity Award in 2001 for his contributions, Helmut most enjoyed the limelight during the annual Yukon Birdathon — a 24-hour bird-watching blitz held each May. By recording the most species and sponsoring others in the birdathon, he was for many years the Yukon Bird Club's biggest financial supporter; he once donated \$30 per species to one participant, who saw 30 species.

One year, when he was in his sixties,

Helmut impressed everyone by canoeing, walking, and cycling to Swan Lake and Jackfish Bay, recording 81 species in this epic effort.

Helmut's "enviro" birdathons were legendary, remembers his colleague, Jim Hawkings.

My favourite memory of Helmut was at one birdathon when he met me on the Millennium Trail to verify my sighting of an (uncommon) American Restart. As a novice birder my sighting was, shall we say, in doubt. Luckily, the bird appeared on cue, flashing its orange-patched sides, and wings in the willows. "Well, I think you are right," he said, with the big smile he had. It was a thrill to have his endorsement.

After I became a trip leader years later, Helmut often came along to enjoy spring birds on the Millennium Trail. And as he did on every trip, he patiently helped identify birds, and set up his scope so that everyone could have a good, close look.

I appreciated the knowledge and love for birds that Helmut so easily shared. And like many of his colleagues and friends, I will miss him.

*Dr. Helmut Ewald
Grünberg
December 9, 1939 –
February 10, 2015
Whitehorse, Yukon*

Helmut was born in Hamburg, Germany and arrived in the Yukon “by accident,” which is a story he was fond of telling. In the early 1970s, Helmut was in the Yukon en route to a climbing expedition at Mount Denali, Alaska when he broke his arm. He enjoyed his unplanned stopover in Whitehorse and decided to make the Yukon his home. Helmut brought with him a passion for nature, birds, wilderness and conservation. It is a passion he would share with his fellow Yukoners and visitors to the territory for the next forty years.

Helmut received a Master’s degree in Germany in 1967, and then came to North America where he earned a Ph.D. in plant biochemistry at University of Maryland. In 1978, he became an instructor at Yukon College where he spent the rest of his professional career.

Helmut is well known as one of the Yukon’s foremost birdwatchers. Helmut’s generosity in sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for the Yukon’s birdlife was extraordinary. He was a founding member of the Yukon Bird Club and served as a director for over 20 years. Helmut led countless birdwatching trips and always made a special effort to ensure that everyone came away with a special sighting. Helmut established the Marsh Lake Christmas Bird Count, and conducted breeding bird surveys for many years to monitor northern bird populations. He meticulously recorded all his sightings and breeding records, which he shared through *North American Birds*, and *Birds of the Yukon Territory* (2003) of which he was an author.

Helmut served as a director for the Yukon Conservation Society in the 1980s, and always sought ways to reduce his own ecological footprint.



Shyloh van Delft photo

Helmut Grünberg at a Birdathon barbecue. The Birdathon was renamed the Helmut Grünberg Yukon Birdathon this year in his honor.

He strongly advocated protecting large wilderness areas, as well as the many small wetlands and special habitats that are so important to the Yukon’s biodiversity. In 2001, Helmut was awarded the first-ever Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions.

Foremost among Helmut’s achievements was the publication of his book, *Birds of Swan Lake, Yukon*. Since Helmut’s first days in the Yukon, he visited this rich boreal lake near Whitehorse and carefully recorded his observations. In 1994, he compiled his own sightings, as well as those of many other local birders and published this delightful book. In sharing his love of this special place he recognized that the area is home of the Ta’an Kwäch’än, and gently reminded visitors to treat the land with respect.

Helmut very much appreciated the caring and compassion he received

from Tina Bunce, Hayley Henderson, George Kokuryo, Dr. Jake Morash, the staff of the Thompson Centre and Whitehorse General Hospital, as well as his many friends. Helmut is survived by his brother Reinhard Grünberg, and his sisters Arnhild Grünberg and Erika Hesper.

*Celebration of Life for Helmut
Grünberg*

*6:30 PM Saturday May 30th, 2015
Robert Service Campground
Refreshments will be served*

*The Yukon Bird Club annual birdathon’s name was changed to honour Helmut’s contribution to the birding community, and is now named:
Helmut Grünberg Yukon Birdathon.*

Birding at an early age

Fort Selkirk, 1939/41

By Ione Christensen

Are you a Birder? Well no but I love watching birds, photographing them, and a walk in the bush would be incomplete without the sounds and sights of birds.

My interest in birds go's back as far as I can remember. We were living in Fort Selkirk and our neighbour, a lovely old trapper took great delight in instructing me on how to catch birds as they came through on the annual spring migration. All you had to do was put salt on their tails. I tried in vain till my Mother put a stop to the use of her salt supply.

But I loved watching the great flocks and learning their names.

In the early summer the Cliff Swallows, or Mud Swallows as we would call them, would build their lovely little tea kettle nests under the eaves of the local Anglican Church.

As the eggs were laid and then hatched, I would keep an eye on the many nests and the very busy flocks of birds as they came and went with food for the ravenous little mouths crowding the small hole leading into a nest.

As the chicks grew and the mud

nests got dryer, often there would be structural frailer and the chicks, not yet ready to fledge would come tumbling down.

Some did not survive the fall but for those who did I was there to pick them up and take them home to a big box I had made with a long perch and a screen lid. I would feed them three times a day with a formula of caned milk, corn syrup and cod liver oil. (if it had been good enough for me, it should be good for the birds) I had an eye dropper



Ione with two of her little flock. 1940.



Ione with her little birds, one on each shoulder 1939.

to administer the drink and they seem to thrive on it. Most of these little guys were really only days from fledging, there were a very few I would have for more than five days. I would take them out on my finger and moving it up and down let them exercise their wings. It would not be long before they would just take off and that would be the last I saw of them.

I did this for all the years I was home during the nesting season. One year I had a Gray Jay for a pet for a while, I kept him in the big cash behind the house and he was free to fly in there. He was very tame and well fed on moose meat. Yes birds have always been part of my life, as have many animals and reptiles over the years.

My life would not be complete with out them.

A three-count Christmas

by Dan Kemble

By the third Christmas Count since her arrival, my mother-in-law was no longer even pretending to participate.

She'd been warned about ours, a day-long bacchanalia of birding, which some friends and I had started almost a dozen years ago and during which nothing else matters. Not Christmas, not anything.

Karin had gamely volunteered for that, anticipating a nice walk in the neighbourhood. But we teamed her up with our most determined carbirder, Rick, and they went on to drive some 140 km within our 24 km count circle. This is a record, and would have put our carbon footprint through the roof but the fact there were three people in the car instead of Rick's usual solo act.

Rick shared his knowledge with not only Karin and Eleanor but also with neo-birder Oscar Karain and family at Crag Lake (they needed help getting chickadees sorted out). Karin learned birders' terminology, such as "double-dipping" and "creative birding."

It began to dawn on her that there would not be just one count but three, and the concept of "count weeks" began to raise its ugly head. So the following day found her at the Tierstra's place for the celebrated Tagish Bird Count.

Organized with uncommon intensity by young Shylo van Delft, the Tagish count involves everyone from the most casual of feeder watcher (Karin's group) to the wild-eyed cadre of imported, heavy-hitters determined to wring every last bird from the circle.

They think we don't know their

game, but we do. It's about ensuring that Tagish gets a higher species count than us. Which they did again. Perhaps when "ringers" are engaged, they should, the following year, be forced ally themselves to one of Yukon's less fortunate counts. Kind of like a hired gunslinger switching sides. Fair? Then again, that would mean more rules and we don't want that. Guess we just got to grow our own "ringers" and get a little busier next year.

Record ptarmigan exposure

On the Tagish count, John and I did our usual routine of heading to treeline, he on skidoo, me towing behind on skis. That's fun enough without birds, but this time we were treated to record ptarmigan exposure (for us), at least three to four dozen. We identified a couple of them as willow ptarmigan, then lumped in the rest as they seemed to be in a loose flock.

The weather and conditions were beautiful. We went on to more adventure as we attempted an alternate, untried return trail, which eventually petered out forcing us to backtrack up some gnarly steep slopes. Perfect day!

The previous day on the Carcross count, in the alpine of Montana Mountain with the other Dan, I had found a small flock of White-tailed Ptarmigan, a new count bird for us! I dreamed of seeing Rock Ptarmigan on the Atlin count and thus gaining the coveted Ptarmigan Grand Slam over a three count season! How cool would that be? Yeah, it didn't happen.

Other highlights of Carcross R2 (that's our count's name) were three

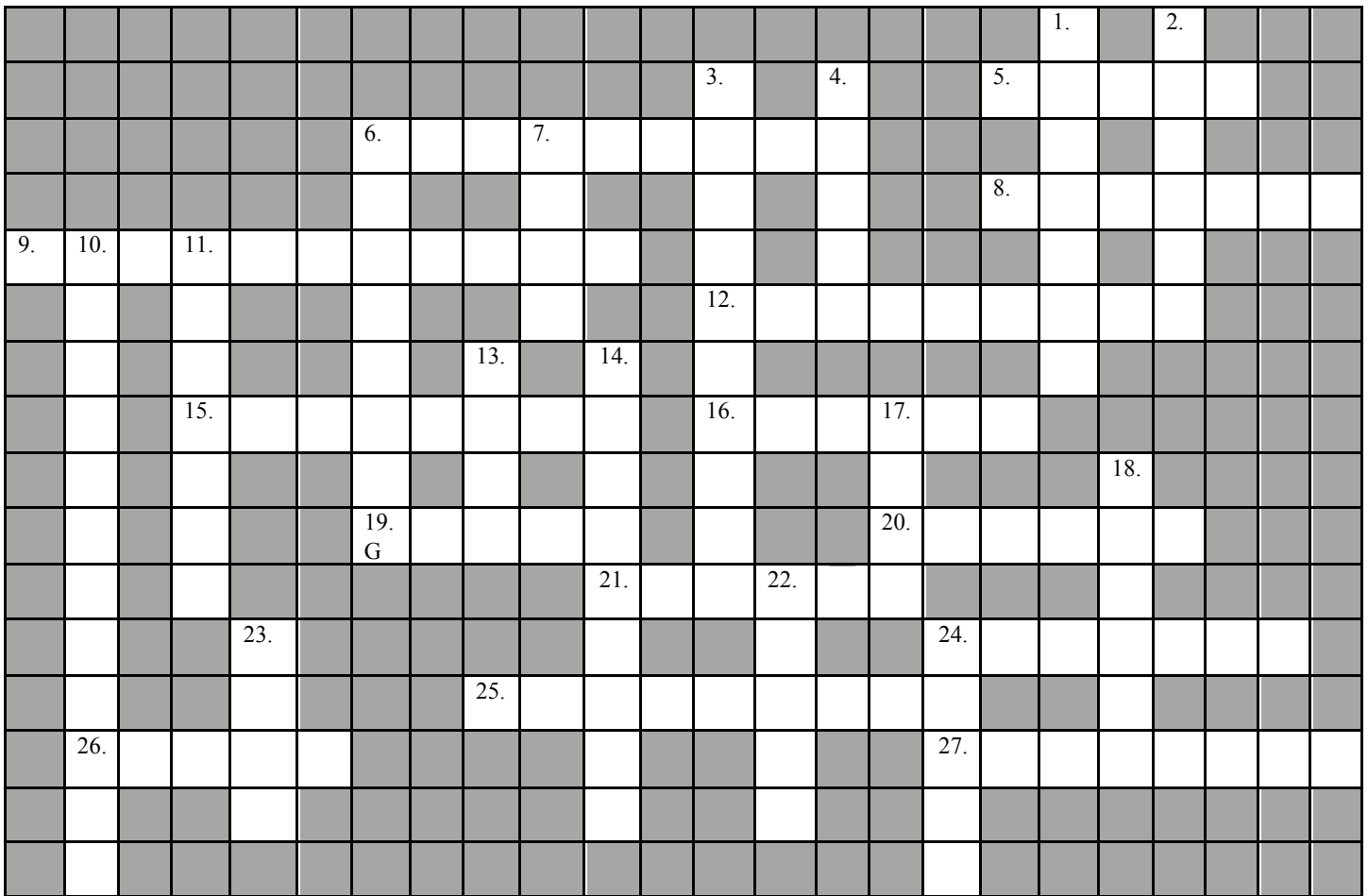
woodpecker species, with a record five American Three-Toed Woodpeckers reported by the sharp-eyed Trish and Joel! The Luet's beat is along the mature white spruce riparian zone of the Watson River. If anyone's likely to see woodpeckers, it'll be them. We also ticked Dark-eyed Junco, Pine Siskin, Dipper, two duck species and the chickadee grand slam. Not a bad effort.

Meanwhile, back in Tagish, highlights included Lincoln's Sparrow, a lot of ducks, and three raptor species. Hawk Owl? Big! By the time we got to Atlin, Karin had had enough. The Eurasian Collared Doves meant nothing to her. When she returned from a walk and I asked her what birds she'd seen, she responded with casual indifference that she "wasn't even looking." I countered that, unwisely, by suggesting that I wouldn't be participating in her 80th birthday celebrations the following day. But cooler heads later prevailed and I backed down on that threat. For Nancy and I, the Atlin count, including count week, was phenomenal! I'd been thinking for years that Atlin would make a great Christmas count. Thanks to Andrea Sidler, with help from Cam 'n' Pam, that's now a reality. We ticked five species never documented on our own count. Besides the doves, we saw Sharp-Shinned Hawk, Starling and a gull (probably Herring). Also, for me a huge event - a Boreal Owl sighting on count day!

At the risk of sounding unbalanced or at least like a mid-level birder trying desperately to look like a "ringer" - I reported these sightings. Fact or fiction? You decide. See you next Christmas.

Yukon birds crossword

by Ruth McCullough



Across

5. Bird most associated with spring
6. This bird can be "red" or White" winged
8. Known by its bright red cap
9. See 17 across
13. Common in Northern bogs, walks with a bobbing motion
16. Townsend's medium sized thrush, found North of Mexico
17. Nesting materials for Magpies
20. Large water bird heard early spring in Yukon
21. Bird that doesn't come to Yukon but has a beautiful song
22. East Coast water bird, winters on the ocean
24. Flying formation of Swans
25. First Nations name for the Raven
27. Half of this smallest hawk calls Killy, Killy, Killy

Down

1. Primary food of owls
2. Common along Mountain streams, has sooty plumage and a short tail
3. Spinus Pinus in Latin
4. Female Grosbeak's color
6. This sparrow has a rusty cap and black eye stripe
7. Attracts Woodpeckers
10. A habit of Canada Geese
11. Description of beak of 6. Across
12. Woodpecker's tool for getting bugs
14. Spring Crane Festival location
15. Second fastest falcon known
17. This bird's dark plumage contrasts with its high white bill
19. Commonly nests on the arctic tundra, winters along both coasts
23. What a Junco builds on the ground
24. What 14 down celebrates

Answers on page 12

Reduce hazards to birds

In the past 50 years we may have lost almost half the songbirds that filled the skies.

With that in mind, here are a few tips about keeping birds safe from common human problems, such as cats, disease and window collisions.

Cats

Potentially billions of birds fall victim to cats each year.

Keep your cat indoors and away from birds to prevent further deaths.

- Help keep your feeder birds safe;
- Limit your cat's exposure to diseases, parasites, and poisons;
- Keep your cat safe from other dangers such as cars and other animals;
- Result in a longer, healthier life for your cat and the wildlife in your yard.

Disease

A number of bird diseases affect wild birds, and some could potentially be spread when birds congregate at feeders.

Birds can become ill from leftover bits of seeds and seed hulls that grow molds and bacteria. Bacteria can also thrive on the bird droppings that accumulate on and around feeders.

Clean feeders every two weeks: Empty the feeder and wash with hot, soapy water. Immerse clean feeder in a bucket filled with a 10% chlorine solution (1 cup liquid bleach to 9 cups of water) for 5 minutes. Allow the feeder to air dry before refilling with seed.

Provide fresh water in bird baths daily. Disinfect bird baths twice a month. After cleaning the bath, fill the basin with a 10% chlorine solution and let stand for 5 minutes. Pour out the solution and allow



This bird was killed flying into the glass at the pool of the Canada Games Centre.

the bath to air dry. When dry, rinse thoroughly with water and allow to air dry again. Refill with fresh water.

Dry your feeders before refilling so that the food remains dry and doesn't mold.

Clean hummingbird feeders at least once a week

Rake the ground below feeders to limit accumulation of waste

Locate bird feeders and bird baths away from areas of your yard that your family uses for recreation to avoid contact with bird droppings and waste seed.

Provide seed in a feeder rather than spreading seed on the ground, and store seed in a cool, dry, bear-proof place.

Don't use seed that is wet, smells

musty, or has been exposed to insects or rodents.

Wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting feeders and bird baths and wash your hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds when finished.

Source: http://m.extension.illinois.edu/wildlife/directory_birds.cfm

Window collisions

Collisions with buildings kill an estimated 16-24 million birds a year in Canada.

Windows can deceive birds, so make sure all your windows are visible to birds. Provide visual clues or markers that alert them to the presence of glass.

Cover windows with decals/strings of objects to make visible to birds.

Relocate feeders more than 30 feet from windows.

Another option is to place feeders within three feet of a window. If birds make contact with a window after leaving a feeder that is close to the window, they are generally moving slowly and will not hurt themselves.

You can further reduce window strikes by installing window awnings and screens.

For problematic windows, consider attaching bird netting to the window frame (the type used to keep birds away from fruit). Birds will bounce off of the netting and fly away unharmed.

Consider keeping blinds down on one set so that birds cannot see through and try to fly to the other side.

More tips on <http://www.flap.org/bird-safe-buildings.php>

Bird feeders may be bear attractant

Black bears are drawn to bird seed, peanuts and suet - even small quantities will be sought over natural sources.

Those living in rural areas and in places where bears frequent should be packing up feeders when bears begin to emerge from their dens in mid-April, and in the fall wait until early November to begin feeding again.

Remember to store bird seed securely indoors at all times.

Nyjer seed is not a big bear attractant, and it can be fed in a specially designed tube feeder with small seed ports that will prevent this tiny seed from falling on the ground.

Residual seed remaining on the ground should either be removed or treated with a covering scent such as ammonia.

Nest boxes and birdbaths can be used to attract birds during bear



Rachid H photo/Flickr

Black Bear family feasting on bird food and suet after yanking the feeder down in a Sparta, NJ, yard.

season. Running water is particularly attractive to birds. Finding unfrozen water can be a challenge for birds in the winter.

Many companies now produce heating elements that are specifically designed to keep birdbaths free of ice.

Crossword answers

