

# Y u k o n *WARBLER*



Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club - Spring 1996

---



*Red-breasted Nuthatch, February 18, 1996. Wolf Creek, Yukon. Photo by Jeanette McCrie*

---

**Spring Events ♦ May Birding on the Dempster ♦ 1996 Birdathon  
Spring Glaucous-wing Gulls ♦ Eve Overwinters!**

---



## Spring Field Trips

**WEEKDAY AND WEEKEND OUTINGS** Dress for the weather, wear appropriate footwear, and bring binoculars. For more information or to arrange a ride call Stuart Alexander at 633-5193.

**Wednesday 17 April. Takhini River Ponds - Early Spring Birding!** Jump into spring with a search for Northern Shrikes and other early migrants along the Takhini River. **Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 6:00 pm.** Leader: Lee Kubica.

**Thursday 25 April. Spring Migration at Shallow Bay!** Swans, divers, and dapper drakes - catch spring waterfowl migration in full swing. **Wear rubber boots. Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 7:00 pm.** Leader: Wendy Nixon.

**Sunday 28 April. The Annual Tagish Birding Tour!** One of the premier birding trips of the spring, this popular tour will explore a variety of habitats between Whitehorse and Carcross. Bring a lunch. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 9:00 am.** Leader: Helmut Grünberg.

**Tuesday 30 April. Off the Beaten Path at M'Clintock Bay!** Where forest meets lake - an exploration of the songbird and waterfowl communities inhabiting the edges of large Yukon lakes in early spring. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 6:00 pm.** Leader: René Carlson.

**Saturday 4 May. Shallow Bay Spring Waterfowl Workshop!** Join long-time Yukon ornithologist Dave Mossop and explore some of the biology behind the behaviour of the waterbirds you love to watch. Bring a lunch and wear rubber boots. **Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 10:00 am.**

**Tuesday 7 May. The Astonishing Shorebirds of Lewes Marsh!** If you find shorebirds hard to identify then you won't want to miss this trip. Leader Cameron Eckert will be on hand to help you find and identify many of the shorebirds that occur in Yukon wetlands during spring migration. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 6:00 pm.**

**Saturday 11 May. In Search of the Jelly Bean Robin!** In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day kids are invited to bring their parents and join Wendy Nixon on this special trip to learn about birds, from dabbling ducks to swooping swallows, at Whitehorse's premier birding location, McIntyre Creek. **Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 10:00 am (trip will last about 1 hour).**

**Thursday 16 May. Songbirds at Paddy's Pond!** A short walk from Hillcrest through Aspen forest with Warbling Vireos and thrushes brings you to Paddy's Pond with its productive meadow of sedges, willows, and songbirds. Wear rubber boots. **Meet at the Airport Chalet parking lot (Mohawk station on the Alaska Hwy across from airport) at 7:00 pm.** Leader: Mary Whitley.

**Wednesday 22 May. The Birding Treasures of Mary Lake!** Explore one of Whitehorse's best kept birding secrets, with its great diversity of water and forest birds, including grebes, shorebirds, ducks, woodpeckers, warblers, thrushes, and sparrows. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 7:00 pm.** Leader: Wendy Nixon.

**Saturday 25 May. McIntyre Creek Bird Song Workshop!** This outing is designed especially to tune up bird song identification skills for Birdathon and Breeding Bird Survey participants. Other bird watchers interested in learning the songs and calls of birds are welcome. Bring snacks and **meet at Porter Creek Super A at 7:30 am.** Yes, this is an early morning outing - the early birder catches the song. Leader: Pam Sinclair.

## ***More spring (and summer) field trips!***

**Sunday 26 May. Haunka Creek, Atlin Road - A Northern Songbird Paradise?** This is an exploratory outing to a little-studied part of southern Yukon. Early indications are that wetlands along the Atlin Road provide rich songbird habitat. Bring a lunch. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 8:00 am.** Leader: Cameron Eckert.

**Tuesday 28 May. Migration Finalé at Judas Creek!** This area offers a fantastic diversity of habitats and birds with a variety of local specialties including Short-billed Dowitcher, Least Flycatcher, Belted Kingfisher, and Bonaparte's Gull. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 5:30 pm.** Leader: Jim Hawkings.

**Sunday 9 June. The Birds of Mount McIntyre!** Get a bird's-eye view of the Yukon River Valley while searching for Brewer's Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, and Willow Ptarmigan in the mountains above Whitehorse. Bring a lunch and sturdy footwear. Also, expect wind and temperatures several degrees cooler than Whitehorse. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 10:00 am.** Leader: Stuart Alexander.

**Saturday 15 June. Breeding Birds of McIntyre Creek Wetlands!** Explore Whitehorse's most significant wetland at the peak of the breeding season when it hosts scores of nesting songbirds and all of Yukon's swallow species including the rare Northern Rough-winged Swallow. **Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 9:00 am.** Leader: René Carlson.

**Sunday 23 June. The Avian Jewels of Hidden Lakes!** Expect surprises on this tour of Hidden Lakes (Riverdale) in search of breeding Barrow's Goldeneye, Hammond's Flycatchers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Last year's triumph was a rare and elegant Eastern Kingbird! **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 9:00 am.** Leader: Jeremy Baumbach.

**Sunday 21 July. Alpine Birding on Montana Mountain!** This day trip hike will explore the high alpine habitat of Montana Mountain near Carcross in search of White-tailed Ptarmigan, Blue Grouse, Brewer's Sparrow, Dusky Flycatcher and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. Bring a lunch and sturdy footwear. **Meet at Porter Creek Super A at 8:30 am.** Leader: Cameron Eckert.

**Sunday 28 July. Hidden Lakes Revisited!** Explore this rich natural area during "baby season", when broods of young birds are about, hounding their parents for food. **Meet at the SS. Klondike at 10:00 am.** Leader: Jeremy Baumbach.

### **Spring birdwatching course**

The City of Whitehorse Department of Parks and Recreation is offering a birdwatching course this spring. The course will include an evening seminar and a Saturday field trip.

Call 668-8325 to register.



---

## YBC News and Notes

---

### International Migratory Bird Day: Saturday May 11, 1996

The year YBC will recognize International Migratory Bird Day by participating in the North American Migratory Bird Count: held every year on the second Saturday in May. The count is similar to a Christmas Bird Count except that the count area can be any size or shape that can be consistently covered from year-to-year. All counts are held on the same day. YBC will initiate a Whitehorse count using the Whitehorse Checklist Area as the count area. All are welcome to participate regardless of experience. Just plan to go birdwatching at your favorite location on May 11, record your sightings (including species and number) and report them to Yukon's count coordinator (Cameron Eckert). YBC encourages birders from other communities to establish counts in their areas. For more information about the Yukon Migratory Bird Count contact:

Cameron Eckert  
1402 Elm Street, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 4B6  
Phone/Fax: 667-4630.  
Email: [ceckert@yknet.yk.ca](mailto:ceckert@yknet.yk.ca)

Those interested in receiving the North American Migration Count newsletter (free) contact: Jim Stasz, NAMC Coordinator, P.O. Box 71, North Beach MD 20714, USA. Email: [jlstasz@aol.com](mailto:jlstasz@aol.com)

### YBC goes online!

In October YBC launched an internet Web Page. The Web Page provides cyber-birders with an illustrated guide to birding North of 60° and has received a steady stream of praise. In the past six months over 1500 net surfers from all over the world have visited YBC's Web Page. Many have commented that the Web Page has inspired them to travel to the Yukon in search of our special northern birds. To reach YBC's Web Page just direct your internet browser to:

<http://www.yukonweb.wis.net/community/ybc/>

### McIntyre Wetlands Update!

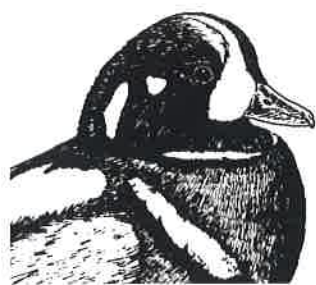
Whitehorse City Council has now heard from the public (overwhelmingly opposed to the subdivision) and from the proponent (YTG) in response to physical engineering concerns. City staff will organize information, including the letters (about 26 to 2 against at latest count) and the YTG study. Council will then consider this information in a *Committee of the Whole* meeting where they openly discuss the issues. At this point the options are; 1) It could be terminated, 2) Delayed for a proper planning process which should consider all city properties and wildlife habitat, 3) Council could recommend the Plan amendment for a vote at the next regular Meeting of Council (the following week). This latter would be not be favourable to the plight of the wetlands and would necessitate major public pressure to ensure a losing vote for the amendment.

We suggest that Council take the opportunity to do it right - plan the protected areas, critical habitats, wetlands, and country residential areas within the city limits rather than constantly creating brush fires. The Official Community Plan calls for a buffer zone along McIntyre Creek "in order to prevent intensive development that may injuriously affect" it. McIntyre Creek is recognized in the plan "as being an ecologically significant and environmentally sensitive natural area ... serving as an important educational, ecological and environmental reserve." The proposed residential development is a direct conflict.

YTG's consultant comes from southern BC, an area that has lost, through planning and development, three-quarters of its wetlands. Whitehorse does not need to repeat the mistakes of the south, but rather has the opportunity to build a city with a rich diversity of life. If you have not yet expressed your concern to Council then **it is not too late**. Please call or write today:

**Whitehorse City Council**  
2121 Second Ave, Whitehorse, Y1A 1C2  
Phone: 668-8626 Fax: 668-8639





# Yukon Birdathon

## A migration Finalé!

**Friday May 31 - Saturday June 1**

The Birdathon is an exciting 24 hour birdwatching festival and conservation education fundraiser which is an annual highlight of spring for many Yukon birders. The Birdathon begins at 5:00 pm. on Friday and finishes at 5:00 pm. on Saturday. You do not have to be an experienced birdwatcher, and beginners are most welcome! You may spend all day on the Birdathon trail or just an hour or two at your favorite birding hotspot!

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 the basic ethics that guide all responsible birdwatchers. You can bird alone or in a team. Not only is birding with others socially enjoyable but 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.

The Birdathon finishes with a potluck Bar-B-Que rendezvous at Wolf Creek Campground located about 11 km south of Whitehorse on the Alaska Hwy. Bring something for the Bar-B-Que and share the excitement of another successful Birdathon! The Birdathon is a fun and casual event with lots of great stories, good food, and fun!

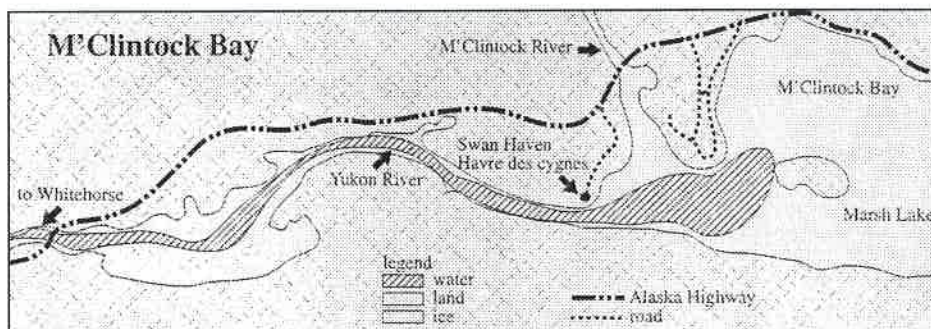
*Harlequin Duck illustration by Jennifer Staniforth.*

## Celebration of Swans

### April 14 to 21, 1996

*Celebration of Swans* highlights the return of Trumpeter and Tundra Swans to the Yukon. M'Clintock Bay is a critical resting place for the birds along their migration route to nesting grounds in the Yukon and Alaska. Here, they rest and feed to replenish precious energy used during their flight north.

We need your help to make the *Celebration of Swans* a success. Volunteers are required to provide information to the public during the event. If you like to talk about birds and have a few hours you would be willing to spend at *Swan Haven* then please call Julie at 667-8291.



# Winter field trip highlights

*by Stuart Alexander*

*Thanks goes to all the trip leaders who helped make the winter season such a success!*

**Tagish Birding Tour - Winter Edition.** Cancelled due to unseasonably cold temperatures. Helmut Grünberg did, however, venture out alone on January 21<sup>st</sup>, and reported back that nothing was visible in the Tagish River through the heavy ice fog shrouding the patches of open water.

**February Feeder Round-up.** This year's February 18<sup>th</sup> tour of Whitehorse feeders started with a nearly overwhelming array of Redpolls, Common and Hoary, at the well-stocked feeders surrounding the house of Pam Sinclair and Cameron Eckert. A large feeding platform stationed on the outside ledge of the kitchen window provided outstanding opportunities to examine the differences between the two species of redpolls. Many of the male redpolls were starting to develop their

bright red breeding plumage. Several Pine Grosbeaks and one female Downy Woodpecker were also seen. The next stop took the group to downtown Whitehorse with the hope of spotting the Evening Grosbeak that has been frequenting Barb Studds' backyard feeder this winter. It is quite unusual for Evening Grosbeaks to winter in the Whitehorse area. As it turned out, the first people to arrive at the feeder were lucky enough to see the bird before she left for a more peaceful location. The finale for this year's trip was grand indeed as Wendy Nixon and her son Michael conjured up three species of chickadees (Mountain, Boreal, and Black-capped) and a Red-breasted Nuthatch, apparently just for the group's benefit as the Mountain Chickadee had not

appeared at the feeder yet this winter - camera shutters experienced considerable wear during our stay. Many thanks to Mary Whitley for leading the group, and to Pam, Cameron, Barb, Wendy, and Michael for their feeder-side hospitality.

**Winter Ptarmigan Quest.** Without doubt, Cameron Eckert's Ptarmigan Quest was a great success. After a short ski, or trudge, along Fish Creek, the group of 14 birders encountered two flocks of Willow Ptarmigan totalling 11 birds, and many signs of their recent activity in the area (tracks, nipped buds, and droppings). On the

return trip, the group was entertained by an American Dipper living up to its name in the open waters of Fish Creek. Other species seen or heard in the area included Common Ravens, Black-billed Magpies, Boreal



A feeder-hopping highlight: A Mountain Chickadee at Wendy Nixon's Wolf Creek feeder. February 18, 1996. Photo by Jeanette McCrie

Chickadees, and Redpolls. Down the mountain, a side trip to the McIntyre Creek wetland revealed signs of impending spring: a pair of Red Crossbills. In addition, there were six Mallards, one Common Merganser, two American Dippers, many Common Ravens, one Gray Jay, and a River Otter. The Dippers could be seen coming out of the water with prey longer than their bills that took a few seconds to manipulate and swallow. It is always a bizarre and humbling sight, these small birds diving into frigid winter waters, while we stand bundled in Polar-fleece, Holofil, and Gore-Tex layers. Altogether, a great trip and not a bad tally for March 2<sup>nd</sup> at nearly 61°N latitude.



## Yukon Christmas Bird Count Report 1995/96

### Marsh Lake/ Yukon River December 17, 1995:

Ten birders gathered before dawn at the Yukon River bridge by Lewes Marsh (or showed up later) to take in a day of cold weather birding. The promise of a warm room at *Birders' Haven*, alias *Swan Haven* kept us going through the morning. And yes, thanks to Julie Lefebvre's efforts, the room was nicely heated and supplied with view of a Ruffed Grouse which was wondering about the comings and goings of all these birders in the middle of winter. In the morning and again in the afternoon we went off in groups on foot, by car and on snowshoes to explore the edge of the river, the quiet roads and trails and to listen to any whisper of a bird call in the woods. The day was not as cold ( $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) as some previous years, and nobody fell through the ice this time. Afterwards people commented how exhilarating birding can be in winter. In total, we saw 13 species including a very unusual adult Golden Eagle, which should have been much further south by now. White-winged Crossbills have rebounded from near zero last year to 211 this year. The Boreal Chickadee count was also very high with 72. In total 588 individual birds were tallied.



An adult Golden Eagle soars over Lewes Marsh: A first for the Marsh Lake CBC. December 17, 1995. Photo by Cameron Eckert

Helmut Grünberg

**Kluane Lake December 21, 1995:** Six birders welcomed balmy temperatures ( $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and recorded a total of 126 birds of 14 species. The Kluane Count consistently records more Three-toed Woodpeckers than the other counts and this year was no exception with a tally of six. Other highlights were a Northern Goshawk and two Great Horned Owls. Unlike other Yukon Counts the Kluane count is relatively free from the influence of bird feeders which is reflected by the relatively low numbers of feeder-related species like Pine Grosbeak.

**Whitehorse December 26, 1995:** Seventeen birders enjoyed light rain (!) and tallied 2096 birds of 22 species. A highlight was the first Evening Grosbeak for the Whitehorse Count. Interesting were the different chickadee totals for the Whitehorse and Marsh Lake Counts: In Whitehorse the same totals were recorded for Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees, whereas Boreals outnumbered Black-capped two to one on the Marsh Lake Count. The three Yukon counts show a strong relationship between the number of participants and the total number of birds!

Species	Marsh Lk	Whitehorse	Kluane Lk
Common Merganser	2 (male,fem.)	2	
Bald Eagle		1 (adult)	
Golden Eagle	1 (adult)		
Northern Goshawk			1
ptarmigan sp. (rock/willow)		4	
Spruce Grouse		2	2
Ruffed Grouse	1 (male)	2	
Rock Dove		468	
Great Horned Owl			2
Downy Woodpecker		3	
Hairy Woodpecker	1	2	1
Three-toed Woodpecker	1 (female)	4	6
Black-backed Woodpecker			1 (male)
Gray Jay	11	15	22
Black-billed Magpie	30	68	11
Common Raven	91	706	5
Black-capped Chickadee	39	38	3
Boreal Chickadee	72	38	42
chickadee sp.	3		
Red-breasted Nuthatch		1	
American Dipper		3	2
Dark-eyed Junco		2	
Pine Grosbeak	74	280	9
White-winged Crossbill	211	56	19
crossbill sp.	15		
Common Redpoll	1	401	
Hoary Redpoll		1	
redpoll sp.	35		
Evening Grosbeak		1 (female)	
<b>Total number of species:</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total number of birds:</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>2096</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>



# Using plumage to identify birds

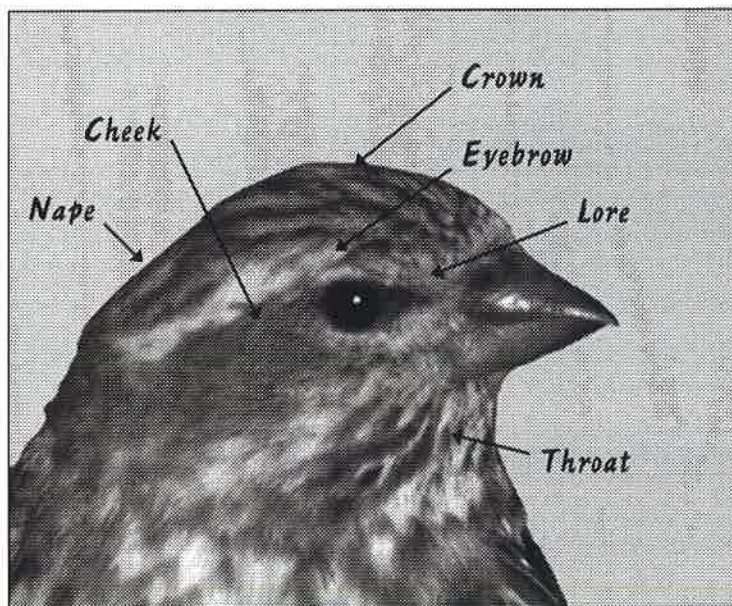
by *Jeremy Baumbach*



In previous columns I explored the use of silhouette in bird identification. A bird's relative size, body shape, bill shape, and wing and tail shapes in flight help to identify the family to which it belongs (e.g., woodpeckers versus finches). Next we need to consider plumage.

Plumage means the colour and pattern of the bird's feathers. In order to make the best

use of a bird's plumage for identification, there are two basic things to learn. First, tedious though it may seem, try to learn the names for the different parts of a bird's body. Some, like "crown" and "eyebrow" are self-explanatory, but others are not. It is not very helpful to know that Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings can be differentiated by the colour of their undertail coverts (white and cinnamon, respectively) if the location of undertail coverts is a mystery to you.



*Purple Finch by Cameron Eckert*

Another advantage of learning the parts of the bird's body is that it facilitates naming the bird's markings to oneself - and it is certainly easier to remember that there was a "white eyeline" than to somehow recall the exact location of that white streak. Second, it is worth gradually learning the "field marks" (critical identifying

features of the plumage) of the species which interest you. Often there are just a few field marks to be learned in order to distinguish between a number of birds in the same family. This is the case with our local swallow species. By committing just a few field marks to memory, one can come to experience the great satisfaction of standing at the riverbank effortlessly differentiating between three or four species of flitting swallows. The Peterson field guides are especially useful as they highlight the field marks.

Consideration of a bird's plumage should generally begin with the head, as diagnostic field markings are often concentrated there. Is the head all one colour? If not, how is it demarcated? Is the crown striped or plain? Is there an eyebrow? An eyeline? An eye ring? What colours are the nape? Throat? Loes? And so on. Sparrows, chickadees and kinglets can often be told apart using head markings alone.

After looking at the head, consider the rest of the bird for general colouration and any prominent field marks (e.g., wing bars, throat patch, rump colour). Some birds' colours are so striking you will identify them from that alone (e.g., Red-winged Blackbird). If you know the family of the bird, and are familiar with what tend to be the more critical field marks for that family (e.g., breast

streaking in sparrows, wing bars in warblers), you will increase your chances of attending to plumage characteristics that will help to identify the bird rather than those irrelevant to that task. The Golden guide is especially useful in providing this information.

*Continued on page 9*



## Exploring spring plumages

It is fitting that this first column on plumage will appear in the spring newsletter, for spring identification is of adult birds in breeding plumage, and this has a much better reward to frustration ratio for the novice than does fall identification. The complexities of immature/subadult and winter plumages found later in the year, will be (appropriately) the subject of the fall newsletter's column. The challenge posed by fall identification often persuades the novice birder to take up berry

picking instead. However, spring identification is not entirely frustration-free. Do remember that male and female birds are often coloured quite differently, especially in their breeding plumages. In the "easier" species the female is simply less brightly coloured than the male; in the "harder" species the plumages are entirely different. Indeed, for many years now I have identified female ducks more by the male company they keep than by their field markings!

### References and further reading

Lentz J.E., and J.Young. 1985. **Birdwatching: A guide for beginners**. Capra Press, Santa Barbara.

Peterson R.T. 1990. **Western Birds**. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston MA.

Robbins C.S., Bruun B., and H.S. Zimmer. 1983. **A Golden Guide to Field Identification: Birds of North America**. Golden Press, N.Y.

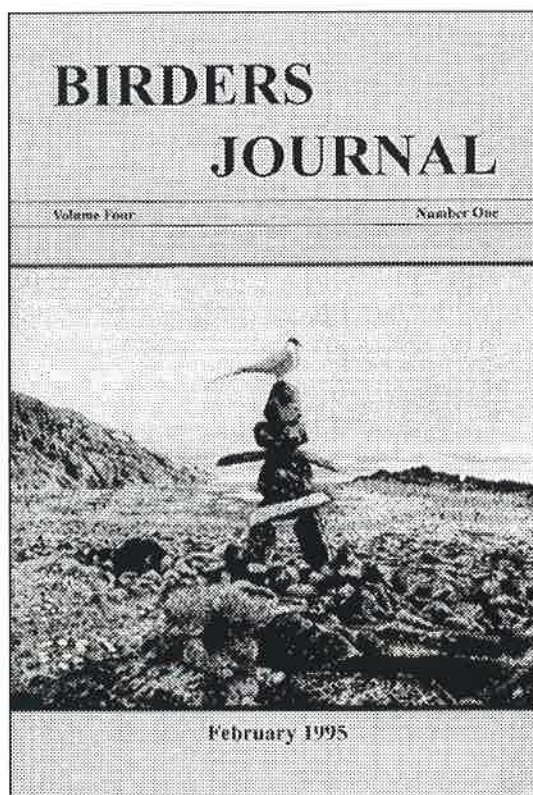
## Birders Journal: a meeting place for Canadian birders

*review by Cameron Eckert*

In 1991 I received a free copy of the inaugural edition of a brand new Canadian birdwatching publication called *Birders Journal*. Before opening the magazine I pondered the fate of the lost apostrophe after the "s" in *Birders*. Opening the journal I was immediately struck by a stunning series of dowitcher paintings by artist Peter Burke which accompanied an article on dowitcher identification. I ceased thinking about the lost apostrophe.

Since 1991 *Birders Journal* has become *the* Canadian birding publication. Each issue features a "Cross Canada Round-Up" highlighting seasonal sightings from each province and territory. Articles cover a variety of topics such as the identification of species groups like the dowitchers, the distribution of little known birds like the Northern Wheatear, and Canadian "firsts" like Newfoundland's Common Redshanks last April. The numerous colour photographs and line drawings presented in each issue are generally spectacular.

*Birders Journal* is published bi-monthly (6 issues per year) which makes the \$34 subscription price very reasonable. *Birders Journal* is an attractive publication and a tremendous source of information. For a subscription write to: Birders Journal, 8 Midtown Drive, Suite 289, Oshawa, Ontario, L1J 8L2.



## May Birding on the Dempster Highway

by Pam Sinclair



Gray-crowned Rosy Finch at the Blackstone River. May 22, 1995.  
Photo by Cameron Eckert

It's May 23<sup>rd</sup> and not cold, but the wind blowing across this wide-open landscape is relentless. A small bird is buffeted across the ridgetop where we're hiking, and disappears over the leeward side. Was that a flash of white on its tail? We scramble over some loose rocks, escaping the wind just below the ridgetop, relocate the bird, and YES! It seems miraculous that this delicate little bird, a Northern Wheatear uttering metallic alarm calls as it bobs its striking white-and-black tail, has just arrived from Asia. We take a good look at its handsome black mask and other field marks and quickly move on, leaving this remarkable bird to enjoy its respite from the wind.

For birders from around the world, the Dempster Highway is one of the

Yukon's main attractions. To have vast expanses of tundra, and the fascinating bird communities which make this landscape their home, just a few hours from the urban sophistication of Whitehorse is an enviable situation. But you need not wait until tourist season to visit the Dempster! By mid to late May, most birds have returned. One of my favourite spring trips is to the Dempster for the long weekend in May. We usually set up camp at Tombstone Campground at km 72 and take day-trips from there. Short excursions from Tombstone will take you to a variety of rich bird habitats, including Moose Lake and the surrounding tundra at km 102, the Blackstone River Crossing and associated wetlands at about km 92, and 'Surfbird Mountain', a series of rounded hills to the east of the highway at about km 96.

In terms of weather, anything can happen. You might have a gloriously warm, sunny weekend, or you might be scooping snow off your tent and chipping at blocks of ice for your morning coffee. But bad weather will not ruin your birding opportunities...on the contrary! Many migrants have already arrived, so a snowfall at this time of year will concentrate birds in areas of bare ground. You may not have your hike up Surfbird Mountain, but instead you have a chance of seeing Surfbirds, Northern Wheatears, Gray-crowned Rosy Finches, and other high-alpine birds right down near the highway.

At Tombstone you will wake up to a chorus of northern songbirds including the musical offerings of Varied Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-crowned, American Tree, and Fox Sparrows, and Orange-crowned, Wilson's, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. This sounds particularly melodious if you have chosen a campsite that was also claimed by a territorial male Willow Ptarmigan. The frenzies of goofiness that comprise this ptarmigan's courtship flight displays in the wee hours can't help but make you laugh. Due to the vagaries of late spring weather, the stage of moult the ptarmigan are in may make them very conspicuous. A late snowfall may suddenly make brown summer-plumaged birds stick out like sore thumbs. On the other hand if the snow has melted off quickly, Rock Ptarmigan may be scurrying to any dirt or dust they can find, to "bathe" in it and dim their dangerously bright white feathers. Like us, the ptarmigan always have one eye open for an approaching Gyrfalcon.



## ***Nesting Surfbirds a Yukon specialty***

If the snow has melted, then you will be able to do some hiking up the mountains and hills beside the highway. Unless you like struggling through vast wet tangles of dense willows, a good access to higher ground is the communications tower at about km 96, on the west side of the highway. Walk along the road to the tower and then head up to your left for a



**The scenic splendor of Tombstone Mountain along the Dempster Highway. May 1994.  
Photo by Pam Sinclair.**

very pleasant walk along these rounded hills and ridges. Up top, you will have fantastic views of the landscape, and you will have a chance of encountering American Pipits, Horned Larks, Rock Ptarmigan, Northern Wheatears, and Surfbirds.

The Surfbird is a Yukon specialty. The Yukon territory is the only place in Canada where this species breeds. In fact, the world range of nesting Surfbirds is limited to the Yukon and central Alaska. It was the late Bob Frisch, who contributed an extraordinary amount to our knowledge of central Yukon birds, who first confirmed that Surfbirds nest in Canada. The Surfbird leads a curious dual life. In winter, large flocks frolic on rocky shores of the Pacific Ocean, dodging crashing waves and getting drenched in salt spray. Watching these wintering flocks, which share barnacle-speckled rocks with the likes of such ocean-loving birds as Black Turnstones, Rock Sandpipers, and Black Oystercatchers, it is difficult to imagine them more than a few metres from water. However, Surfbirds are very particular about their nesting habitat, and it has little to do with water. In summer, they seek out dry heath tundra on mountaintops many hundreds of miles from the sea. If you are lucky enough to see this enigmatic species on its nesting grounds along the Dempster, stop for a moment to ponder the strange life of this chunky shorebird.

Moose Lake, at km 105 is invariably full of ducks in late May. Tundra Swans may also be seen, along with Horned Grebes and Mew Gulls. The tundra around and just south of Moose Lake is particularly productive. American Golden-Plovers in their striking spring plumage are sometimes feeding here by the dozen, and Pectoral Sandpipers and a Whimbrel or two are often seen as well. Be on the lookout for Short-eared Owls flying low over the tundra with deep, stiff moth-like beats of their long wings. Watch too for Long-tailed Jaegers, and enjoy their breath-taking beauty as they hover gracefully over the tundra in search of mice and other prey. The Blackstone River crossing at km 92 is a good place to stop and look for a variety of birds including the exquisitely handsome Harlequin Duck, and the cryptic Wandering Tattler. Check the grounds around the outfitter's cabins here for Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Gray-crowned Rosy Finches, and a variety of other birds which gather here to feed on leftover grain.

For Whitehorse birders, the drive to the Dempster is somewhat long (6 hours); but there are many interesting places to stop along the way and the destination is well worth the trip.



# Birders' Crossword

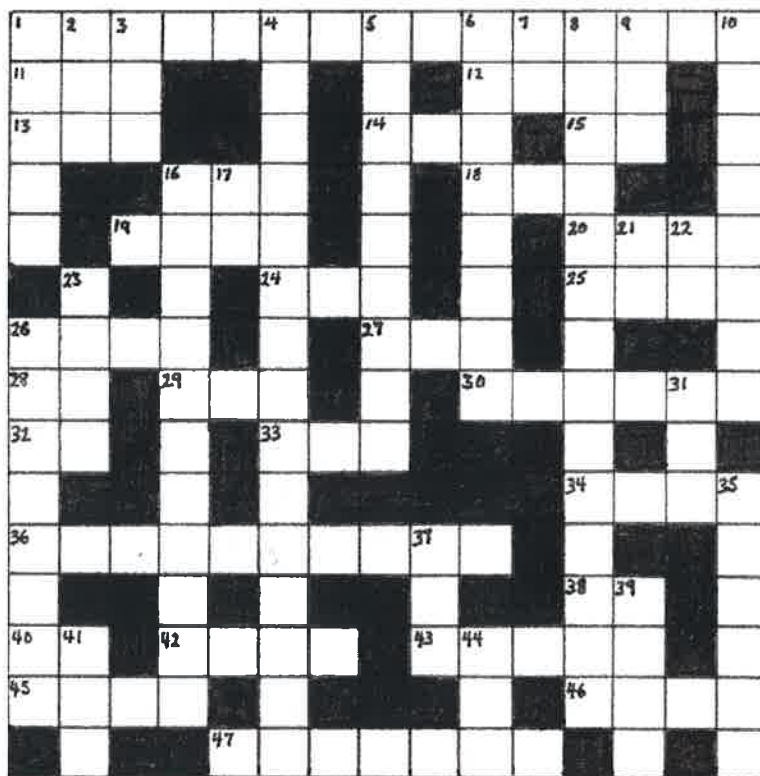
by Jeremy Baumbach

## Across

1. Barb and Bob Studds' rare winter guest (7,8)
11. Bird: person :: perch: \_\_\_\_\_ (3).
12. Fall field trip quarry (4).
13. Definitely not found in the Yukon (3).
14. Species of crossbill (3).
15. U.S. State (abbrev.) (2).
16. Birdlike but not one (3).
18. The Harlequin Duck is also called the \_\_\_\_\_ mouse (3).
19. Bill Mason's classic canoeing book: \_\_\_\_\_ of the Paddle (4).
20. It's time to make sure your YBC dues are \_\_\_\_\_ (4).
24. A favourite grass of waterfowl (3).
25. Let's hope the *Yukon Warbler* has not reached this (4).
26. Unloved (by most Yukon birds) component of bird seed mix (4).
27. Doctor's association (abbrev.) (3).
28. Santa's first syllable (2).
29. Its position triggers migratory behaviour (3).
30. State achieved by the end of a rainy field trip (6).
32. Protagonist in child's running game (2).
33. Dawson area First Nation (3).
34. A bird of the marshes (4).
36. These females are brighter than the males (10).
38. Birder's most frequent direction of gaze (2).
40. Political abbreviation (2).
42. Norse god of wisdom (4).
43. King of Birds (5).
45. What baby birds do over the course of the summer (4).
46. Where male Sage Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse display (4).
47. This bird stores seeds stuck together with spit (4,3).

## Down

1. Gravel ridge (5).
2. What some birders do in the Birdathon (3).
3. Arctic Terns' spring one here in early May (abbrev.) (3).
4. A hawk with a dish-shaped face (8,7).
- 5 Bird of Kings (4).



6. A duck that swims underwater using its wings (8).
7. Half of synonym for mediocre (2).
8. Named for Napoleon's nephew (10,4).
9. Many look forward to this part of the winter season (3).
10. This bird feigns injury to draw predators away from its nest (8).
16. This bird flies 960 km/day catching food for its young (4,7).
17. Add a "c" to name the scourge of the bird feeder (2).
21. Kutchin Indian name for 6 Down sounds like its call: \_\_\_\_\_ hanla \_\_\_\_\_ (2).
22. Intramuscular (abbrev.) (2).
23. Bird with lobed toes (4).
26. This sparrow uses hair to make its nest (8).
31. All owls have two of these, but only two have it in their names (3).
35. Avoid this when peering at birds on private property (6).
37. Position of this sense organ differentiates between predator and prey species (3).
39. A "\_\_\_\_\_ sweep" occurred last May at Lewes Marsh when all five Yukon species of small sandpiper were seen (4).
41. Lacking oil glands with which to preen, cormorants must perch with wings half open to \_\_\_\_\_ them (3).
44. Exclamation upon sighting a sought-after rarity (3)

Solution see page 20.

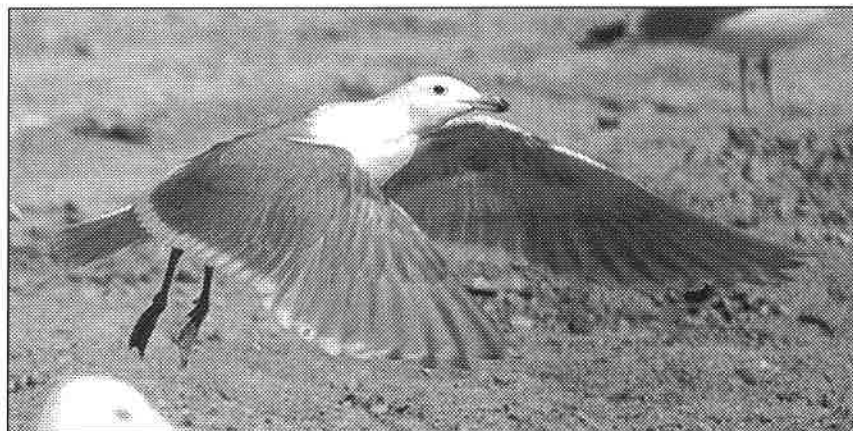


*Yukon Gullery presents*

## Glaucous-winged Gull a rare spring visitor

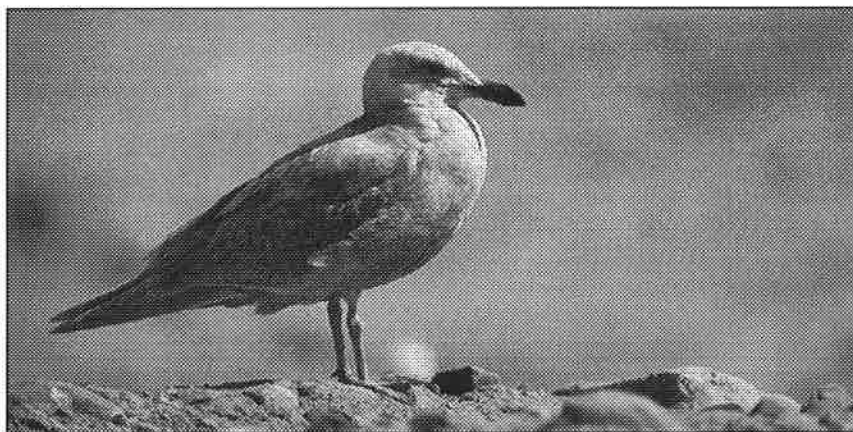
**by Cameron Eckert**

While the Glaucous-winged Gull is common in coastal waters just 100 km to the southwest it is only a very rare spring wanderer to the Yukon. Most sightings are of immature birds and very rarely adults. The identification of Glaucous-winged Gulls would be relatively straightforward if it were not for the relatively common occurrence of hybrid Herring x Glaucous Gulls. Therein lies the challenge!



Third-summer Glaucous-winged Gull, April 24, 1993. Whitehorse, Yukon.  
Photo by Cameron Eckert

is slightly paler than a pure Herring Gull and the grey back and wing colour of a Glaucous-winged Gull is slightly darker than the average pure Herring Gull. Further, the Glaucous-winged Gull has a dark eye while a hybrid Herring x Glaucous Gull has a pale yellow eye.



First-summer Glaucous-winged Gull, April 27, 1994. Whitehorse, Yukon.  
Photo by Cameron Eckert

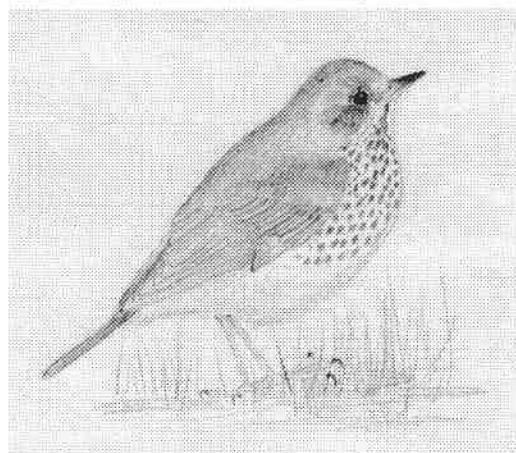
The Glaucous-winged Gull has pink legs and is larger than the similar Herring Gull. The adult Glaucous-winged Gull has grey wing tips which do not contrast with its grey back and wings. While this feature distinguishes Glaucous-winged from Herring Gull which has black wing tips, it does not separate Glaucous-winged from the relatively common hybrid Herring x Glaucous Gull. However, the grey back and wing colour of a hybrid Herring x Glaucous Gull

First-summer (one year old) birds are the most common age-class of Glaucous-winged Gull observed in the Yukon. While young Herring Gulls have blackish-brown wing tips, these birds are pale brown throughout. However, the pale brown colouration of a first winter Glaucous-winged Gull closely resembles that of a similarly aged hybrid Herring x Glaucous. Extremely careful study is required to resolve the problem. The outer web of the

outer tail feather is the crucial feature. A first-summer hybrid Herring x Glaucous Gull shows dark lateral barring, while on a first-summer Glaucous Gull this feather is plain pale brown with no barring. It takes patience and luck to see this minute feature, but if you see the unbarred outer tail feather on a first-summer bird, you can be reasonably confident that you have correctly identified this rare visitor!



## Little Brown Birds



*Hermit Thrush by Pam Sinclair*

## Three Little Thrushes

**by Wendy Nixon**

Which little brown birds are dark (brown to grey brown) on the back, light or white on the lower belly and spotted on the throat and chest? Three species of thrushes! Telling the three apart can be tricky the first time you observe these little beauties, especially if they are not singing. Try to get a good look at the face and tail. The Swainson's Thrush has a buffy colored eye ring and buffy lores (that patch between the eye and bill) and a bright buffy background to the spotted breast. The Gray-cheeked Thrush looks very similar but lacks the buffy eye ring and buffy lores. The name highlights the species' rather subtle grey cheek. The Hermit

Thrush has a light eye ring and in good light you will notice the reddish tail contrasts with the darker brownish back. The Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes do not have contrasting tails.

The songs of these three birds comprise an audible feast. The most common, and my all time favorite of the songbirds is the Swainson's Thrush - it sings a long ascending spiral of melodious, flutelike notes, often from the top of a spruce tree. The Hermit Thrush is somewhat similar, but it usually starts off with one sustained note followed by a short phrase which Peterson's *A Field Guide to Western Birds* describes as "clear, ethereal and flutelike". The Gray-cheeked Thrush is less melodic than the other two, but it is a distinct phrase which I think of as "fly away quick, NO FEAR" with the high notes on the "quick" and the beginning of "FEAR" and with a fast descent at the end of "FEAR".

## Why Birding Ethics?

**by Cameron Eckert**



The Yukon Bird Club has a Code of Ethics to guide our behaviour as birdwatchers. In the past twenty years there has been a great increase in the number of North American birdwatchers. It is important to recognize that birdwatchers are no longer just a few folks out enjoying birds. Our numbers in North America are well into the tens of thousands and our activities can have a negative affect on birds.

Yukon Bird Club's Code of Ethics provides a measure by which we can minimize the potential negative impacts of our activity on the very birds and habitats that we cherish. While this is critical for heavily birded areas like Shallow Bay, M'Clintock Bay and McIntyre Creek, ethical birding behaviour is also appropriate for any habitat at any time of year. Many issues relate to birding ethics. For example, feeding birds is one of the best ways to closely observe birds; however, care must be taken to protect birds from hazards associated with feeders such as windows and cats. Most birders concerned for the safety and survival of birds have completely stopped the practice of using tapes to attract owls or other birds. These are folks who have been birding for a great many years and understand that tapes are just too stressful on birds. When observing flocks of waterfowl it is best to stay well back and use a scope for good viewing.

Birds are faced with countless stresses in their lives; the destruction of critical habitats, environmental contamination, and competition from introduced species are just a few. As birdwatchers it is our responsibility to check our behaviour and tip the balance in favour of birds and their habitats.



## YUKON BIRD CLUB CODE OF ETHICS

We, the membership of the Yukon Bird Club, believe that all birders have an obligation at all times to protect wildlife, the natural environment and the rights of others. We therefore pledge ourselves to provide leadership in meeting this obligation by adhering to the following general guidelines of good birding behaviour.

### **I. Birders must always act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds or other wildlife.**

- Observe and photograph birds without knowingly disturbing them in any significant way.
- Never chase or intentionally flush birds.
- Do not use recordings to attract birds.
- Keep an appropriate distance from nests and nesting colonies so as not to disturb them or expose them to danger.
- Do not handle birds or eggs.

### **II. Birders who attract birds to their yards or property, either through feeders or nest boxes, should provide a safe environment for the birds.**

- Always ensure that winter feeders provide an uninterrupted supply of feed.
- Nest boxes should be cleaned and maintained on an annual basis.
- Place feeders and nest boxes to minimize a bird's exposure to predation and other risks.

### **III. Birders must always act in ways that do not harm the natural environment.**

- Stay on existing roads, trails, and pathways whenever possible to avoid trampling or otherwise disturbing fragile habitat.
- Leave all habitat as it was found.

### **IV. Birders must always respect the rights of others.**

- Respect the privacy and property of others by observing "No Trespassing" signs and by asking permission to enter private or posted lands.
- Observe all laws and the rules and regulations which govern public use of birding areas.
- Practice common courtesy in our contacts with others.
- Always behave in a manner that will enhance the image of the birding community in the eyes of the public.

### **V. Birders in groups should assume special responsibilities.**

#### **1) As group members, we will**

- Take special care to alleviate the problems and disturbances that are multiplied when more people are present.
- Act in consideration of the group's interest, as well as our own.
- Support by our actions the responsibility of the group leader(s) for the conduct of the group.

#### **2) As group leaders, we will**

- Assume responsibility for the conduct of the group.
- Learn and inform the group of any special rules, regulations, or conduct applicable to the area or habitat being visited.
- Limit groups to a size that does not threaten the environment or the peace and tranquillity of others.
- Teach others birding ethics by our words and actions.



## FieldNotes: Observations from the Field



Please send your sightings to Helmut Grünberg, (807 Wheeler, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2P8). Whenever possible include details such as date, location, number of birds, sex and age, and observers' names. Highlight interesting observations and include descriptions of rare species. This report contains documented and undocumented sightings. Please send your sightings according to the following seasonal schedule:

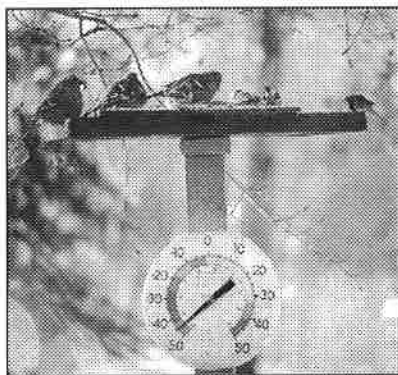
**Winter** (December 1 - February 29)

**Spring** (March 1 - May 31)

**Summer** (June 1 - July 31)

**Fall** (August 1 - November 30)

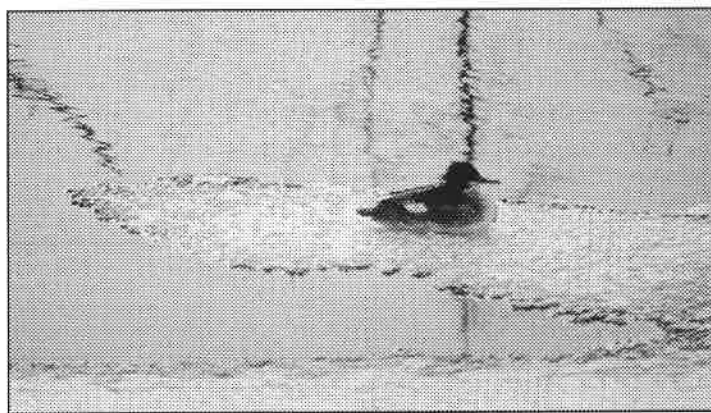
### The Winter Season



Dark-eyed Junco (far right) at -47°C.  
Photo by Katie Ostrom

Don't let old timers fool you with a line like, "*In the olden days the winters were always this cold*". No, January 1996 had the longest and coldest cold spell on record. How did the birds fare in this cold? The only apparent loss was one male **Downy** and one female **Hairy Woodpecker** from a Porter Creek feeder. However, we mostly judge bird survival by their presence at our feeders where there is plenty of food. In the wilderness, food shortage and extreme cold could well be a deadly combination. The rest of the winter was about normal with its regular ups and downs. Including various Christmas Count observations, 37 species were observed this winter season, quite a remarkable number!

Even in the deep of our coldest winter McIntyre Creek wetlands clearly provide critical habitat for a variety of species: A female **Common Merganser** (below) wintering on a small stretch of open water of McIntyre Creek wetlands was joined by ten **Mallards**, five males and five females on January 29 (CE). These ducks survived the extreme cold. Imagine ducks at 40 and 50 below! Seven **Common Goldeneye** were seen at Tagish on January 2 (GK,LKu). A male and a female **Common Merganser** were spotted on open water at Johnson's Crossing on December 3 (HG).



A female Common Merganser successfully winters at McIntyre Creek Wetlands. March 2, 1996. Photo by Jeanette McCrie

An adult **Bald Eagle** was seen alighting on a bare willow on Grey Mountain Rd. behind Riverdale on January 28 (RA); one adult was seen in Haines Junction on February 8 (TH); and one was spotted on the McIntyre ski trails on February 18 (JG). These birds must also have lasted through the January cold. Not previously reported in the *Fall Report* was the drama of a **Northern Goshawk** killing a **Short-eared Owl** at Jarvis Creek on November 14 (ME). A **Northern Goshawk** was an exciting find at MacPherson on December 30 (EC, LR). An immature **Northern Goshawk** was spotted eyeing two **Hairy Woodpeckers** at the bottom of Seahorse Hill at km 1677 of the Alaska Hwy.

on December 30 (TH). Four **Spruce Grouse** were picking gravel at the Fish Lake Rd. on December 14 (CE); one was feeding on a pine tree all day at Swan Lake on January 28 (CE,HG); and perhaps the same one was flushed there on February 11 (HG). One was observed at Strawberry Lane, Takhini River northwest of Whitehorse in February (LG,JH), and one was noted at Horse Creek at Lake Laberge (KO). A covey of six **Willow Ptarmigan** was at Fish Lake on December 14 (CE), and a **Ruffed Grouse** was startled at Little Atlin Lake on January 2 (GK,LKu).



## More observations from the field

A **Great Horned Owl** was observed at the old Dawson Trail, north of Takhini River Road., northwest of Whitehorse in February (LG,JH). A **Boreal Owl** which spent the day perched in open poplars at Horse Creek on January 26 was a real treat (KO). No winter bird report is complete without **Rock Doves**; approximately 300 were seen in Whitehorse on February 10 (HG). **Downy Woodpeckers** were commonly observed this winter with reports from Watson Lake (LE), Whitehorse (JB,HG), MacPherson (DS), Takhini River (LG,JH), Porter Creek (CE,PS),



A male Hairy Woodpecker at -45°C, Horse Creek, YT.  
Photo by Katie Ostrom

and Horse Creek (KO). Most interesting was a report of a **Downy Woodpecker** in Dawson feeding on standing dead sunflowers (DM). They were more commonly reported than last year with about as many males as females. **Hairy Woodpeckers** were reported by many observers from Haines Junction to Whitehorse and Watson Lake, with about as many males as females. Most striking was a female **Hairy Woodpecker** drumming on a metal pole in Whitehorse on February 1 (JB). A **Three-toed Woodpecker** was foraging during the extreme cold at Swan Lake on January 14 (HG). Three **Three-toed Woodpeckers** were seen on one tree near Silver Creek, southwestern Yukon on February 21 - the observer noted "that's 18 toes on one spruce tree" (TH). One female **Three-toed** frequented dead pine trees in a Whitehorse yard (JB).

A very early spring **Horned Lark** on Two-mile Hill in Whitehorse, first seen on February 23 provided a first documented winter record for this species (LKI); it could be found at that location well into March and was photographed (right) on March 10 by Helmut Grünberg. **Black-billed Magpies** were seen by many observers. **Gray Jays** were seen regularly in small numbers, mostly in the woods outside settlements. **Common Ravens** were seen regularly inside and uncommonly outside settlements.



Truly optimistic **Black-capped Chickadees** were singing in Whitehorse on January 19 (HG) and on January 29 (CE,PS). This species was a regular visitor to most feeders. A **Mountain Chickadee** was seen at Tagish on January 2 (GK,LKu), and one was visiting a feeder in a different part of Tagish during the frigid (-40 °C) weather on January 21 (TG, HG). **Boreal Chickadees** were seen regularly at feeders and in the woods alike surviving the cold well. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was observed along the old Dawson Trail, north of Takhini River Rd. in February (LG,JH). An **American Dipper** was spotted at Christmas Creek, southwestern Yukon on December 23 (KA,TH,LH). One was also observed at McIntyre Creek, Whitehorse on January 29 (CE), and one was seen at the Whitehorse fish farm on February 10 (GK,LKu); one was noted at Kathleen River, at Kluane, and three were singing at Klukshu River on February 25 (GK,LKu). This species is obviously well adapted to cold winters.

An **American Robin** trying its luck with a Yukon winter was observed on December 2 and 30 but never again (RC). A **Townsend's Solitaire** lingered on Teslin Lake long enough to provided a first documented winter record for this species on December 3 (DD,HG). Small flocks of **Bohemian Waxwings** were seen regularly in Whitehorse through the winter; Five were observed in Porter Creek on January 10 (GK,LKu). A **Northern Shrike** was keeping tabs on a Horse Creek feeder on February 3 (KO). An immature **White-crowned Sparrow** provided a first documented Whitehorse area winter record for this species on December 1 (LC,CE). **Dark-eyed Juncos** survived the winter at a number of feeders; A single bird was at a Teslin feeder on December 3 (DD,HG); two were at another Teslin feeder on the same day (HG,LU); one was at a Whitehorse feeder (JB); one irregularly visited a Hillcrest feeder (LC); one was observed at a Watson Lake feeder throughout December and January (LE), and one was at a Porter Creek feeder (HT). North America's hardiest junco had to be the one which survived temperatures as low as -46°C at a Horse Creek feeder (KO).



## A few more Winter observations ...

Very unusual were the widespread observations of **Snow Buntings**, usually a rare winter resident, across southern Yukon this winter: A single **Snow Bunting** was observed at Horse Creek on December 24, and 25-30 were there on January 21 (KO); a flock of 20-30 was flushed in Whitehorse on January 27 (MW), and 200 were observed near Rancheria on January 30 (RF); 40-50 were reported at Horse Creek, Lake Laberge area February 7 (KO); 17 were seen at Blanchard River and five at Cracker Creek February 25 (GK,LKu).

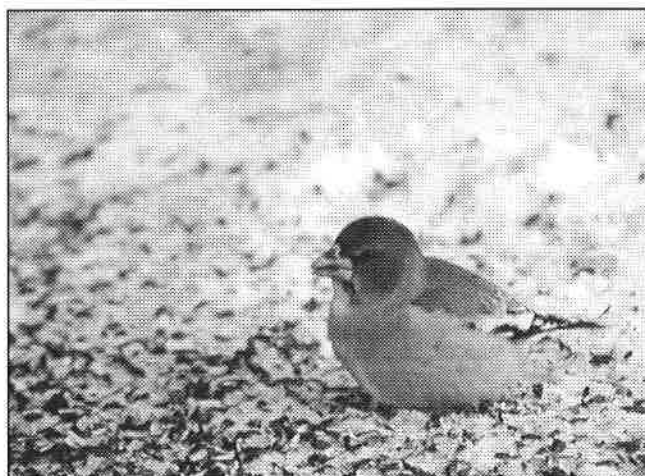


A Hoary Redpoll shows off its white rump, lightly streaked sides and white feather edges. Porter Creek, January 1996. Photo by Cameron Eckert

appeared to be a sign of early spring movement (CE,PS). **White-winged Crossbills** were seen regularly during December but seemed to dwindle after the January cold spell; three were noted in Whitehorse on January 28 (RC,KW). **Common Redpolls** were very common at most feeders. Two very strange **Common Redpolls** turned up in Whitehorse: one had a white cheek with a red and black cap, "trying to be a Black-capped Chickadee" (HG), the other appeared to have an all white head with just a red cap (BaS). Subtle but still strange was a **Common Redpoll** with a single pure white primary flight feather at a Porter Creek feeder (CE). Small numbers of **Hoary Redpolls** were seen among most of the larger redpoll flocks. High counts were six at a Watson Lake feeder (LE) and four at a Porter Creek feeder on January 27 (CE,PS). A couple of "wild" **Hoary Redpolls** were an appropriate reward for a deep-winter expedition to Swan Lake on January 28 (CE,HG). Three male and two female **Evening Grosbeaks** were in Teslin on December 2 (DD). Watson Lake reported ten, six males and four females (LE). The star of Whitehorse's winter birding season was *Eve(s)* a female **Evening Grosbeak**. First seen at a Hillcrest feeder on December 17 (LC), the bird acquired the name *Eve* but disappeared after a few days. Then a female **Evening Grosbeak** showed up at a Whitehorse feeder on December 23 and was seen there through the winter (BaS,BoS), occasionally straying to another feeder nearby (CE,HG). However, close examination of photos of the Hillcrest bird and the Whitehorse bird indicated that two birds were likely involved! Which would make it *Eve*<sup>2</sup>.

**Observers:** Ken Anderson, Robert Armstrong, Jeremy Baumbach, Lauren Bradley (LaB), Liz Bradley (LiB), Linda Cameron, Evelyn Church, Denny Denison, Cameron Eckert, Matt Evans, Lois Everett, Rob Florkiewicz, Linda Gerrand, Jim Gilpin, Terry Gireaux, Louise Hardy, Helmut Grünberg, Todd Heakes, Jürg Hofer, Liz Hofer, Laura Klager (LKI), Greg Kubica, Lee Kubica (Lku), many observers (m.ob.), Dawn Mitchell, Bob Murkett, Katie Ostrom, Helen Reader, Pam Sinclair, Dan Steele, Barbara Studds (BaS), Bob Studds (BoS), Heather Thompson, Len Usher, Mary Whitley, Keith Williams.

**Pine Grosbeak** were common at most feeders with high counts of 45 at a Hillcrest feeder on December 18 (LC,HG), 40 in Whitehorse on January 14 (HG), 30 in MacPherson (DS), 50-75 daily at a Horse Creek feeder (KO), and 30 at a Watson Lake feeder (LE). Unusual for winter was a flock of 15 **Red Crossbills** 75 km west of Whitehorse on the Alaska Hwy on January 7 (RC,LH). Five **Red Crossbills** frequented a Pilot Mountain feeder through the winter (LaB, LiB,BM); a male was at a Riverdale feeder on December 12 (HG); a female was in Riverdale on January 10 (BaS); and a pair in Porter Creek on February 17



Eve chows down in Hillcrest. December 19, 1995. Photo by Helmut Grünberg



# Eve Overwinters!

by Barbara Studds



On February 11, 1996, Eve dropped in for a feeding session at Helmut's feeder and stayed long enough for a portrait. Photo by Helmut Grünberg.

It was December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1995 when *Eve*, the female Evening Grosbeak first came to our downtown Whitehorse feeder, and we have seen her nearly every day since. She was immediately noticeable because of her differences from the Pine Grosbeaks: She is slightly smaller, her dark head slopes back from her forehead, and she has a large white patch under her chin. She is pale yellow-gray, and brighter yellow on the sides of her neck and up over her back. Her wings are black, white and yellow and her black and white tail is shorter than that of a Pine Grosbeak. Her feet and legs are pink. But the most amazing feature is her large yellowish-ivory

bill, which resembles a big piece of popcorn sticking out of her mouth!

She comes early in the morning now, around 8 a.m. and several times during the day for her sunflower seeds. She is more serene than the very excitable Pine Grosbeaks. She keeps a sharp eye out for danger but does not fly up when threatened and we have at times been quite close to her. She keeps to herself and prefers to feed when it is quiet and the other grosbeaks are not around. We have enjoyed her company very much and hope she will be able to find Adam before too long!



## Eve or Eve<sup>2</sup> - You be the judge.

Whitehorse's now famous female Evening Grosbeak, *Eve*, was first discovered in Hillcrest on December 17<sup>th</sup> by Linda Cameron. When Eve disappeared shortly thereafter and a female Evening Grosbeak turned up at Barbara and Bobb Studds' downtown Whitehorse feeder just a few days later (December 23<sup>rd</sup>) it seemed a natural assumption that the two birds were likely the same individual.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, Helmut Grünberg photographed Eve at Linda's Hillcrest feeder (top left) and then on February 11<sup>th</sup>, Helmut photographed Eve at his own feeder (bottom left) in downtown Whitehorse (only a few blocks from the Studds). Helmut's photos provide a basis to judge whether one or two birds were involved.

The Hillcrest bird clearly shows a black spot on the upper mandible (bill); the upper mandible of the downtown Whitehorse bird shows no black spot. The original photos show that the spot was pigmentation in the bill rather than dirt. Could a bird entirely lose such a spot over the course of a month? Perhaps. On the other hand maybe Eve was two.



## THE YUKON BIRD CLUB

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

### 1995/96 Board of Directors

<b>President:</b>	Pamela Sinclair
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Jeremy Baumbach
<b>Secretary:</b>	Mary Whitley
<b>Field Trip Coordinator:</b>	Stuart Alexander
<b>Events Coordinator:</b>	Wendy Nixon
<b>Sightings Coordinator:</b>	Helmut Grünberg
<b>Checklist Coordinator:</b>	Lee Kubica
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Cameron Eckert
<b>Birdathon Coordinator:</b>	René Carlson
<b>Special Projects:</b>	Dennis Kuch
<b>Youth Coordinator:</b>	open

The Yukon Bird Club is a registered non-profit, charitable organization and membership is open to everyone!

### Membership fees are as follows:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Senior/Student	\$5.00
Contributing	\$25.00
Supporting	\$50.00
Institutional	\$20.00

Family memberships cover two or more members living at one address. Foreign or American members should pay with a Canadian dollar money order.

YBC will publish ads or notices of interest to its members. Members and non-profit groups may submit non-commercial ads at no charge. A reasonable rate is applied to commercial ads.

For more information contact:

**The Yukon Bird Club, Box 31054,  
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada, Y1A 5P7**

**Yukon Warbler** is published by the Yukon Bird Club. Copyright © 1996 Yukon Bird Club. All rights reserved. Printed material, artwork or photographs may not be reproduced by any means without permission from the credited author, artist or photographer. Other material may not be reproduced by any means without permission from the editor.

## One of these birds ...



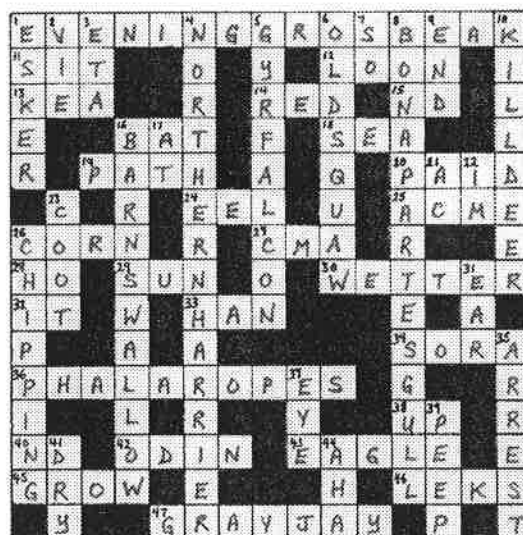
... is not like the other!  
A few of the very rare  
**Summer '93 Yukon  
Warbler** are still  
available. Get yours!

Other back-issues available are Winter-93 (rare); Winter-94; Fall-94; Spring-95; Summer-95; Fall-95; Please send \$2.50 per issue to the Yukon Bird Club.

## Congratulations Takhini!

In April Takhini Elementary School's bird club was awarded a \$1000 grant from the Bailie Bird Fund. Takhini Elementary's bird club is one of the school's most active clubs and the grant will be put towards field guides, binoculars and a trip to Swan Haven for the students.

## Birders' Crossword Solution



**Birders are invited to submit  
articles, stories, or drawings to  
the Yukon Warbler.**

**Please send your submissions to:**

**Cameron Eckert, 1402 Elm Street  
Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 4B6  
Phone/Fax: 403-667-4630  
Email: ceckert@yknet.yk.ca**