

YUKON WARBLER

Newsletter of the Yukon Bird Club

Spring 2024



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Photo: Cameron Eckert



YUKON BIRD CLUB

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

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

The Yukon Bird Club is a registered non-profit, charitable organization.

Membership fees

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

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Go to:

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You can also print the membership form and mail it with your payment.

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Litter Pickup at the Quartz Road Marsh – a special birding hotspot!

The Yukon Bird Club's third annual litter pickup is slated for May 2

By Jenny Trapnell

The fundraising activity, supported by the City of Whitehorse's Community Clean-up Program, will cover an assigned area along Quartz Rd and trails near a popular bird-friendly, and scenic, wetland.

The Quartz Rd marsh is a recognized "hotspot" for observing many migratory species, some of which nest here. Yukon Bird Club president Syd Cannings says it's "great for birds and birders" and a good place to show "beginner" birds to children and new birders.

A remnant of the original wetland that was filled in when the big box stores arrived, its main feature are the shallow, slow-moving channels of the Yukon River that form around the area's many small islands. "When the waters are low in the spring, migratory ducks and shorebirds love the rich mudflats in there," Cannings noted. "It's also a place to see birds up close that are normally far out on the river flats, but here they are right at our feet. "So, if you want to learn to ID a Pintail duck from a Mallard, they are right there to compare."

New board member and designated Youth Coordinator, Olivia Trudeau is leading this year's event. The duck biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service is new to Whitehorse, and says she is looking forward to seeing what's arriving.

Cannings said volunteers at the event will see the mudflats where the creek comes in under Quartz Rd, and the gulls will be out on the islands, or at a nesting colony close to shore. The ponds might have some ducks and other waterfowl swimming, though there might be some ice remaining. Raptors may be cruising the shoreline for small rodents and mammals, and a pair of bald eagles can be seen busy with nesting duties atop a large spruce tree.

Visitors can easily walk or bike to the site, or park nearby, and see common species, but sometimes rarer visitors, too. It's accessible for both beginners and experts. "For example, Least Sandpipers are always there but among them you could see something interesting, like a Baird's Sandpiper."

As spring warms and insects emerge, migrating warblers, sparrows, flycatchers and other species enjoy the trees, shrubs and bushes at the north and south ends of the marsh. One year, a wayward sandhill crane dropped in from its migration and stayed several weeks, unperturbed by rush hour traffic and excited observers. Each fall, Rusty Blackbirds, a species of special concern, stop by as they head south. "There's always something different to see, it's remarkable that way," Cannings said. The bird club has also scheduled three field trips to the marsh, on May 9 and 21, with a family-friendly event on May 29.

Members and anyone interested are invited to meet up at the Boston Pizza parking lot at 6 p.m. May 2 to help with the clean-up and learn more about this special place. Gloves, bags and vests will be provided but bring good footwear. Be prepared for surprises! 🌿



Olivia Trudeau, the Yukon Bird Club's new Youth Coordinator and a waterfowl biologist, is leading the Quartz Rd cleanup event on May 2

Photo: Courtesy of Olivia Trudeau

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2024 Birdathon – Get those binoculars ready!

By Gemma Richardson

This year the 39th annual Helmut Grünberg Yukon Birdathon is taking place from 5 p.m. Friday May 31 to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 1. This is an event for everyone – beginners to experts of all ages – with the goal of observing and identifying as many bird species as possible while raising funds for the Yukon Bird Club.

Take part in this 24-hour Birdathon as an individual, group or family, or sponsor this year's Feature Birder, Syd Cannings (see profile below). Whether you stay close to home to discover the birds in your own backyard, or venture to hotspots in your surrounding community, this is a great opportunity to witness the spring migration and nesting season in the Yukon.

Afterwards, all are welcome to share their birding stories from the day at the Birdathon BBQ potluck, starting at 6 p.m. at Rotary Peace Park. There will be prizes for enviro-birders (who complete the Birdathon without the use of fossil-fuels), youngest and oldest birders, and of course, for the most species seen.

The annual Birdathon is the main fundraiser for the Yukon Bird Club, supporting education and outreach activities, including field trips, this newsletter, and conservation scholarship awards.

You can find out more about the Birdathon at yukonbirds.ca or

the Yukon Bird Club's Facebook and Twitter pages.

2024 Feature Birder – Syd Cannings

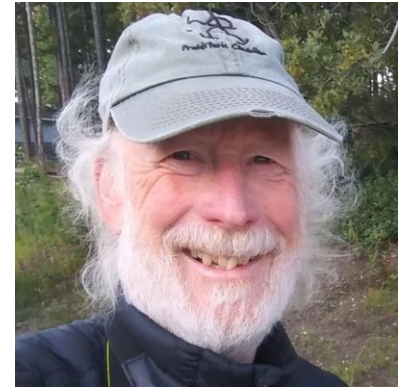
Beginning to record annual lists of birds sighted at just nine years old, Syd Cannings has truly been birding his whole life. His father began bird watching in British Columbia's Okanagan after returning from World War II. Cannings' father soon became one of the key birding figures in the region and naturally this meant his children grew up looking at birds too. Cannings and his twin brother often made birding into a competitive venture and participated in numerous Birdathons in The Okanagan. These early experiences with birds ultimately led to Cannings becoming a biologist.

"Birding is a great way to enter the natural world and enjoy it," he said. "And who knows where it might take you."

Having lived in the Yukon for 20 years and travelling here several times before relocating, Cannings has extensive experience birding throughout the territory. One particularly memorable moment was in 1987 when he was working as an entomologist doing an insect survey in the Richardson Mountains. While on a high alpine ridge, Cannings heard a bird calling that he did not recognize, puzzling him.

YBC President Syd Cannings

Photo: Courtesy of Syd Cannings



Following the calls, he spotted a Surfbird and even discovered the chicks, a rare sight.

"I knew about these birds and had seen them in Victoria, but they really are the mythical birds of Yukon and Alaska," he said. "I instantly knew it was very special."

While Surfbirds spend most of their time along rocky Pacific Ocean shorelines, they nest only in remote mountain tundra areas in Yukon and Alaska. The Surfbird was aptly selected last year to be the key feature of the new Yukon Bird Club logo.

Cannings' experience discovering a nesting Surfbird in a remote area highlights the importance of listening in birding. "Once you know bird songs and calls, the whole world opens up," he says.

In addition to leading several field trips over the years, Cannings is also a Board Member for the Yukon Bird Club and recently took on the role of Club president. He has participated in the Yukon Birdathon on and off for the past ten years, and this year has a goal of seeing about 90 birds.

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Red Crossbills in Pineridge - An update

By Jim Hawkings

I've been obsessively watching for nesting Red Crossbills every winter, especially as spring approaches. They are fascinating birds which can nest at any time of year – see a previous article in the Spring 2021 edition of the Yukon Warbler. This year I noticed adults (often a pair) through January and February at our Pineridge feeder. As mid-March came – and went - I eagerly looked everyday, hoping to see newly-fledged juveniles. Finally, on the morning of 10 April,

I glanced out the kitchen window and there were 3 adult males and 4 juveniles at the feeders. I scrambled to get my camera and snapped a few quick photos, one of which shows an adult feeding one of the juveniles regurgitated seeds. This particular juvenile was begging to be fed by fluttering it's wings. In my haste to get photos I failed to notice for sure if the other adult males were feeding juveniles as well. Red Crossbills are not known to be cooperative breeders, so I presume another adult male feeding any of the juveniles would suggest

there were two families present. Sadly, they flew away before I could get a good look at the situation, and I haven't seen them since. At any rate, that brightened up my day and made me feel that spring is coming fast.

I notice there were a handful of juvenile Red Crossbills reported earlier this spring: 26 March in Riverdale (Jenny Trapnell), 1 April in Porter Creek (Scott Cavasin), and 8 April in Raven's Ridge (Avery Bartels). Keep your eyes peeled folks, there are surely more to come! 🌱



Left: Juvenile Red Crossbills are unmistakable: brown and heavily streaked compared to the bright red adult males and greenish adult females. They also have bills which are only slightly crossed. 10 April 2024 in Pineridge.



Right: Adult male Red Crossbill feeds a juvenile regurgitated seeds. 10 April 2024 in Pineridge.

Photos: Jim Hawkings

2024 Birdathon - Continued from page 4

For those looking to maximize the number of species seen, he advises they visit several places that offer completely different landscapes. Even within City limits, it is possible to get out early in the morning for forest birds,

then visit a lake, get up into the subalpine, and stop by McIntyre marsh to spot the different birds found in each habitat.

All are welcome to participate in the Birdathon, regardless of

experience. If you cannot take part yourself, please consider sponsoring Feature Birder Syd Cannings in this key fundraiser for the Yukon Bird Club. 🌱

Field Trips & Events 2024

All are welcome!

4061-4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 1H1

Email: yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca / web: yukonbirds.ca

For this schedule & updates: yukonbirds.ca/field-trips

Spring

Wed 24 Apr: **Whitehorse Bird Friendly City event!**

Join this workshop to share your special bird habitat & viewing spots at 7-9pm, Hellaby Hall, 4th Ave & Elliot St.

Friday 26 Apr: Carcross – The annual **Dusky Grouse hike** with Joel Luet. Meet at the gazebo opposite Montana Services at 6:30pm. Wear warm clothing and sturdy footwear and for a steep hike. (3hrs)

Sat 27 Apr: A **scenic #learntobird bird walk** along Eagle Bluff with Tracy. Meet at the bus turnaround on Range Road 400 metres north of Northland Trailer Court at 6pm. (1.5hrs)

Thurs 2 May: **Litter pick-up and birds at Quartz Road wetlands** with Olivia Trudeau. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot 6pm. (1 hr). Thank you!

Fri-Sun 3-5 May: Faro **Crane & Sheep Festival**. View thousands of migrant cranes over Tintina Trench. Meet at Campbell Regional Interp Centre for events.

Sun 5 May: **Birding for Beginners Workshop** – jumpstart your birding season with birder Glenn Rudman. Meet at Whitehorse Public Library (1171 Front St), 10:30am-4:45pm. For more info & to book your spot email glenn@yukonbirds.ca

Thurs 9 May: **Quartz Road Marsh spring birding** riverside walk with Lena Ware. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30pm. (1.5hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Sun 12 May: Carcross – Enjoy a **bird walk around Nares Lake** with Dan Patterson & Syd Cannings. Meet 10am at the gazebo opposite Montana Services. (2.5hrs)

Tue 14 May: Birds of the **Yukon Wildlife Preserve** with Jake Paleczny and friends at 6pm. Entrance fee \$19 for non-members of YWP (2hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Wed 15 May: Haines Junction – **Spring migration** at the lagoons with Julie Bauer & Terry Skjonsberg. Meet at the sewage lagoons at 6pm. (2hrs)

Thurs 16 May: Birds of the **Millennium Trail** with Jenny Trapnell. Meet at the Whitehorse Fish Ladder 6:00pm. Wheelchair accessible. (2hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Sat 18 May: Dawson – **Spring birds of the Klondike** with Greg Brunner & Cynthia Hunt. Meet at Henderson's Corner west entrance at 8am. (2hrs)

Sat 18 May: **Army Beach spring beach bird hike** with Jim Hawkings. Meet at the SS. Klondike at 9:30am, or the Army Beach day-use area at 10:15am. (2hrs)

Tue 21 May: **Peak migration** at Quartz Road wetlands with Kirsten Wilcox. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30pm. (1.5hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Thurs 23 May: **Judas Creek Migration Spectacular** with Jim Hawkings. Meet at the SS Klondike at 5:30pm, or Marsh Lake Community Centre at 6:15pm. (3.5hrs)

Sat 25 May: Mayo – **A spring bird walk** at this much-loved lake with Mark O'Donoghue. Meet at 5-Mile Lake campground at 8:30am. (3hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Wed 29 May: **Almost summer** at Quartz Road wetlands! A family-friendly stroll with Jim Hawkings. Meet at Boston Pizza Parking lot at 5:30pm. (1.5hrs)

Sun 2 June: McIntyre Creek **Birdsong Workshop** & eBird primer with Pam Sinclair. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 7:30am. (3hrs) [#learntobird](#)

The Helmut Grünberg –

Yukon Birdathon!

Fri-Sat 31 May - 1 June (5pm to 5pm)

Sharing the passion – a conservation fundraiser!

For more info: yukonbirds.ca/birdathon/



Field Trips & Events 2024

All are welcome!

4061-4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 1H1

Email: yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca / web: yukonbirds.ca

For this schedule & updates: yukonbirds.ca/field-trips

Summer

Fri-Sun 31 May – 2 June: **Tombstone Weekend on the Wing!** Hosted by Friends of Dempster Country & Yukon Parks at Tombstone Campground (Dempster km 72). For info email tombstonecentre@gmail.com

Tues 4 June: **Explore the forest and ponds along McIntyre Creek** near Yukon University with Katie Aitken. Some steep hill climbing. Meet at student parking lot 6:30pm. (2 hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Tue 11 June: **A summer bird walk** at Paddy's Pond with Jenny Trapnell. Meet at Skky Hotel parking lot at 5:30 pm. (1.5hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Fri 21 June: Dawson – **Magical solstice birding** under the Midnight Sun with Sebastian Jones. Meet at the Dawson Public Library at 5:30pm. (2hrs)

Sat 22 June: **Valerie Lake Canyon Mountainbike** birding with Kirsten Wilcox. Meet with your bike at Winterlong Brewing at 9am. (2.5hrs)

Sun 23 June: **Valerie Lake Canyon Hike** with Aaron Barker. Meet with your walking shoes at Winterlong Brewing at 9am. (2.5hrs)

Thurs 27 June: **Wetland birds along McIntyre Creek** with Lena Ware and Olivia Trudeau. Meet at the gazebo on Fish Lake Rd at 6pm. (1.5hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Sat 20 July: Learn about **Yukon bumblebees** on this special outing with Syd Cannings. Meet at the SS Klondike at 1pm. (2hrs) [#learntobee](#)

Sun 21 July: **Baby birds abound** at Verslucce Meadows with Pam Sinclair. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 9am. (2hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Sat 27 July: **Birding the Takhini Salt Ponds** with Alex Oberg. Meet at the corner of the Alaska Hwy & Elk Road at 10am. (2hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Sun 28 July: **Dragonflies of Hidden Lakes** with Syd Cannings. Dragonflies, birds, and biodiversity! Meet at the SS Klondike at 1pm. Wear rubber boots, or water shoes. (3hrs)

Fall

Sat 3 August: Teslin – **Early fall birding** at Teslin Lake Bird Observatory with Ted Murphy-Kelly. Meet at Teslin Lake campground 8am, follow signs to the banding station. [#learntobird](#)

Sun 8 Sept: Teslin – **Fall migration at the Teslin Lake** Bird Observatory with Ted Murphy-Kelly. Meet at the Teslin Lake campground at 8am, follow signs to the banding station. [#learntobird](#)

Sat 28 Sept: Haines Junction – **Experience the magic of Rainbow Street** with Julie Bauer & friends. Meet at Rainbow Street at 11am. (2hrs) [#learntobird](#)

Wed 20 November: **What's on the river?** A lunch-time stroll across the Rotary Centennial foot-bridge with Cameron Eckert and friends. Meet at the Fish Ladder at 12pm. Dress warmly! (1 hr)

14 Dec to 5 Jan. **Yukon Christmas Bird Counts!** All are welcome – be part of a North American-wide bird conservation event. For more info email yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca

Come birding with the

Yukon Bird Club!

- ✓ Field trips & events throughout the Yukon
- ✓ Informative newsletter – *Yukon Warbler*
- ✓ Twitter – [yukonbirds](https://twitter.com/yukonbirds)

For more information or to join contact:

Yukon Bird Club, 4061-4th Avenue, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 1H1
email: yukonbirdclub@yukonbirds.ca / web: yukonbirds.ca

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

Winter Potluck Event Shared Birding Stories from Near and Far

By Jenny Trapnell

Each winter, in the coldest month of January, the Yukon Bird Club club hosts an annual pot-luck dinner and slide show, inviting birders to share a dish along with photos of their birding adventures within and outside the territory. And every picture, of course, tells a story.

This year's event, held January 18 at Hellaby Hall in Whitehorse, was lively, with good food and impressive photos of bird life and habitat from hotspots around the globe. Long-time board member Jim Hawkings MCD the event.

New to the Yukon, Avery Bartels, a professional birding guide, brought some of his favourite images from a trip he led last fall to south Colombia. In one photo, the vivid turquoise, red, black and green plumage of a Paradise Tanager in lush green foliage filled the screen, as seen from the deck of a local Colombian family house near Mocoa.

Other photo highlights from Bartels' trip included a Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, found only the very southwestern corner of Columbia, and in this case at a farm located off a mountain road. As Bartels noted: "A family has initiated a birding tourism project centre around this species. We enjoyed views of a pair, one of which was seen briefly feeding on palm fruits."

For something completely different, board member Lena Ware

shared photos from her summer field work in the High Arctic as crew for a federal 20-year-old shorebird survey (Polar Region international Shorebird Monitoring, or PRISM). Over six weeks last summer, from early June to mid-July, the team recorded every species they observed and every nest they found in 70 specific targeted plots of 600x400 m. The sites were located in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut including Victoria Island and King William Island. The crew was based out of Cambridge Bay and Gjoa Haven, in Nunavut, mainly using helicopters.

"Arctic breeding shorebirds are declining rapidly, and they are difficult to survey in migration and winter. By doing these surveys, scientists can extrapolate breeding densities for every species found in the Canadian Arctic and gain more accurate populated estimates and monitor changes over time," the biologist explained. Of the 21 shorebird species that breed in the Canadian Arctic 13 are experiencing declining population trends, the project report noted.

As well as recording over 55 species of birds, from geese to sandpipers to snowy owls, and shorebirds, the group sighted area mammals like muskox, caribou, arctic fox and arctic hare, photos of which were shown at the January event.

Highlights from other presenters included

Gemma Richardson (very nice Merlin and Northern Harrier), Jim Hawkings (hosted a Pine Grosbeak overnight in his house!), and Jenny Trapnell (a Red-footed Booby from the Galapagos Islands, and a handsome Ruffed Grouse photographed near the Millennium Trail.)

A big thank you goes to all attendees and presenters, and to Jim Hawkings for hosting a memorable evening, with help from Glenn Rudman and Betty Sutton. 🌱



Top: Arctic shorebirds have a distinctive nest on the ground with three or four eggs all nicely arranged with the small ends together. Bottom: Lena Ware in the field

Photos: Lena Ware



Pictures continue on page 12

Borneo: Land of Pheasants, Pittas and Orangutans

By Avery Bartels, avid Yukon birder

Dawn saw us walking down the short path from the roadside to a hide that could comfortably seat a dozen or so birders. "There's coffee and tea available" our local guide, Azmil informed us. We didn't even have time to stoke our hot beverage cravings before the show began. Hopping out of the dark understory it came; a brilliant yellow breast and eyebrow over a black mask; white stripe in the wing, delicate black barring along the flanks and breast, it turned, showing off an iridescent, deep blue tail: Bornean Banded-Pitta! "That was my most-wanted bird for this trip!" exclaimed Andrew. It was mine as well.

Amazingly, this was not even the main attraction. This particular hide was created a few years ago when the near mythical Bulwer's Pheasant was discovered in the area. Now, while it

may make you wait a few hours, this regal gamebird can be seen reliably at two hides near Tambunan, in Sabah, the mostly northerly Malaysian state of Borneo.

Over the course of the morning, we enjoyed a steady parade of birds and small mammals. A covey of 22 Crested Partridges nervously paced around the clearing, White-crowned Shamas, Dayak Blue Flycatchers and Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrushes (these three all endemic to Borneo) were among a dozen or more songbird species to grace our binoculars. At least two species of Treeshrew and three of Squirrel also enjoyed the free mealworms on offer.

When we could bring ourselves to leave our seats, a more open viewing area off the back of the hide held more treasures. A pair of stunning Long-tailed Broadbills foraged in their patient, sit-and-wait fashion while Bornean Whistler and White-throated Fantail picked moths off the side of the building, without a care for our presence. The man who runs the hide pointed out a nearby cavity where we could periodically see the head of an industrious Buff-rumped Woodpecker as it popped out to release a mouthful of woodchips from its future nest.

As we were watching the woodpecker Azmil's

Bulwer's Pheasant

Photo: Avery Bartels

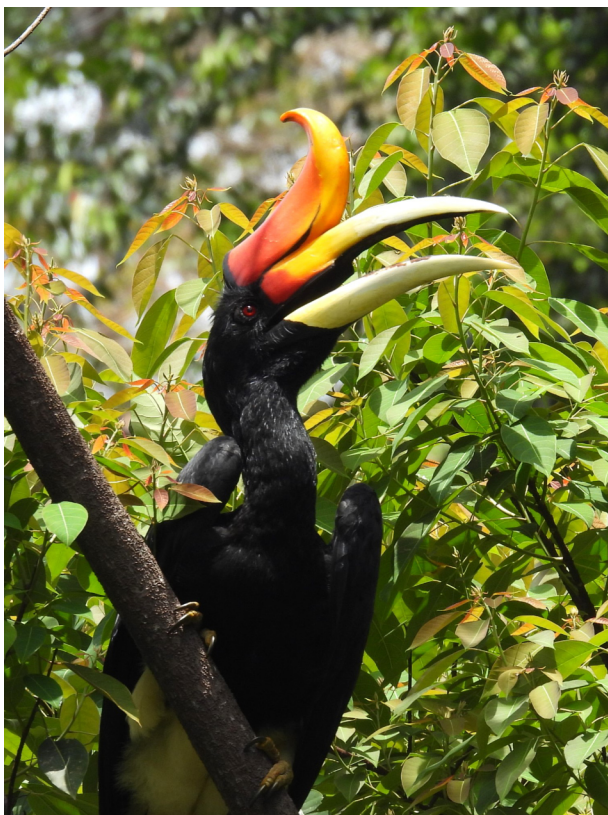
voice broke our reverie "It's here!". This could only mean one thing and we quietly rushed back to our seats in the hide. After 30 seconds of holding our breath, it cautiously walked into view. Bulwer's Pheasant, the prize jewel in this crown of a morning! Male and female both gave us a couple minutes of basking in their beauty, cameras clicking as they calmly picked at the fruit strewn along the back of the "arena".

This was the beginning of a 14-day tour to northern Borneo that I was leading for Avocet Tours. While I could write 500 words about each of our mornings birding (in fact I am, that trip report will be available by early May at <https://avocettours.wordpress.com/>) I will summarize the remainder of the tour a bit more concisely here.

After our time around Tambunan we visited the highlands of Mount Kinabalu. Many of Borneo's 60+ endemics occur in the highlands, and we were fortunate to have spectacular encounters with the otherworldly Whitehead's Broadbill (including a female in her nest and male perched nearby!), Whitehead's Trogon, the odd Bare-headed Laughingthrush and two sightings of the rare Mountain Serpent-Eagle. A pair of nest-building Fruithunters reminded me a bit of our Townsend's Solitaires but with broad brushstrokes of black across the breast and face. A dawn walk gave us a delightful Brown Wood-owl, en route to its roost.

Into the lowlands we went for the remainder of the trip. At Sepilok we were canopy dwellers along with the Black-and-yellow Broadbill, Violet Cuckoo and the unique

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Whitehead's Broadbill

Photo: Avery Bartels

Bornean Bristlehead. Our vantage point from the canopy walkways and towers giving us eye-level views of the birds that would otherwise give us serious “warbler neck”. We had a memorable few minutes with a pair of North Bornean Gibbons as they swung past us through the canopy; the male taking a 30-foot plunge into the subcanopy below us while the more sensible female scaled down a vine to achieve her descent. Our last gift here was a shy female Rufous-collared Kingfisher, perched unobtrusively just off the trail, hoping we would pass by without noticing her.

The Kinabatangan River is a destination on its own worthy of travelling half-way around the world for. From our comfortable lodge (where we quickly found a roosting Colugo, also known as “Flying Lemur”!), we made several boat cruises along various quiet tributaries. On one cruise we encountered three young critically endangered Storm’s Storks being fed by a parent in this their last stronghold. Another cruise gave us a prolonged encounter with the rare White-crowned Hornbill. The Kinabatangan is a wonderful area for hornbill viewing and we spotted 6 species over our two days. The protected forests here hold healthy populations of several primates and Long-tailed and Pig-tailed Macaques,

Silver leaf Monkeys and the bulbous-nosed Proboscis Monkey were seemingly ever-present. Our last morning saw us surprise a roosting Buffy Fish-Owl from her day-time perch along the shores of the Menanguul tributary.

The finale of the tour was the world-renowned Borneo Rainforest Lodge in the Danum Valley. A two-and-a-half-hour drive from civilization, this area holds an extraordinary wealth of biodiversity. Much of our time was spent simply birding the quiet entrance road which was alive with birds. A shock of fiery orange; Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher. A vibrant sky-blue cap among the lush green undergrowth; Blue-headed Pitta. An iridescent carmine belly on the Black-crowned Pitta, perched in a sapling at the roadside. It was a cornucopia of colour.

And Babblers, babblers everywhere! Black-throated Wren-babbler, Fluffy-backed Tit-babblers, Bornean Black-capped Babbler strutting along the ground, Horsefield’s Babblers hopping in the undergrowth, Scaly-crowned Babblers in the canopy!

A walk up the remnants of an old trail along the slopes of the hills brought us to the incredibly scarce Cinnamon-rumped Trogon, a lifer even for the lodge guide who had worked here for 5 years! And, less desirable; leeches that several of us had the misfortune to donate a little blood to. We were paying for our ticket to paradise.

Borneo of course is most famous for one animal above all others, and a trip there would not be complete without encountering the gentle,

ruddy countenance of an Orangutan peering uninterestedly down at you from the canopy. We were lucky enough to spot two siblings, on separate days, feeding contentedly in a fruiting tree. As we passed by the tree in question for the last time on our visit Alan called out “mammal!”. Out of the roadside vegetation ambled “Lom” (the local orangutans are all named by the lodge staff and researchers), the younger of these two siblings. He was clearly none too perturbed by the presence of nine gawking birders as he shuffled across the road mere metres from us, leaving us all picking our jaws off the floor!

We had spent just 14 days on this astounding island but we had reaped a treasure trove of wonderful bird and wildlife encounters. Nearly 300 species of bird crossed our paths along with a support cast of over 30 mammals and countless wonderful insects, reptiles and flowers (did I forget to mention we made a special visit to see the world’s largest flower, the Rafflesia?). The Malaysian people were friendly and the food delicious.



Bornean Peacock-Pheasant

Photo: Avery Bartels

Continues on page 11

Isabelle Theriault receives the Yukon Bird Club Conservation Scholarship



Photo: Courtesy of Jim Hawkings

By Isabelle Theriault

I wanted to express my sincere gratitude for being awarded the Yukon Bird Club Conservation Scholarship for the 23/24 academic year. While I have always had an interest in birds and their fascinating and often mischievous behaviours, this has continued to grow. Joining Yukon University's Northern Conservation and

Environmental program with the truly amazing ornithology course furthered my interest. I was excited to learn about the Yukon Bird Club, and I look forward to participating in more events hosted by the Club in the future as I think the mix of people who are part of this amazing community, from hobby birders to professionals in the industry, is truly inspiring. It's also amazing to see a shared

passion that unites so many, with one even joining the AGM meeting through Zoom from my hometown in Quebec City. As I continue in my studies, I am excited to see where it leads me and, hopefully, will allow me to integrate my passion for conservation with that of birds. In the meantime, however, I'll happily continue bombarding my friends with interesting/weird bird facts. 🌿

Continued from page 10

As I began this write-up with our first visit to a bird hide it seems fitting to finish it with our second bird hide (about half-way through the trip). This was for an even rarer and more spectacular pheasant, the Bornean Peacock-Pheasant. We had to work a bit more for this one. It required a 2km hike in, the first half through oil palm plantations, then up the slopes of the surrounding hills. Once settled in, there was not much bird life to

keep us entertained but luckily we didn't have to wait too long. After giving a few calls, the stunning male strutted out into the clearing, posing briefly, but not remaining in view for long. After a further half hour, we spotted him again, lurking quietly at the edge of the undergrowth. This time we got more prolonged views, though the shadows made for more difficult photography. Eventually, he again sauntered across the clearing

in a final show of splendour.

More photos from this trip can be found on my facebook page (look me up and friend me). I will be guiding further trips next winter, to Guyana in November and Sri Lanka in late February/early March. If anyone is interested in joining me, please get in touch at averybartels@hotmail.com. 🌿

Yukon Bird Club's Raven Award 2024

By Cameron Eckert

The Yukon Bird Club is pleased to present the 2024 Raven Award to the Haines Junction birdwatching community, with special recognition of Julie Bauer as the community's birding cornerstone.

The Raven is an annual award presented by the Yukon Bird Club to recognize outstanding contributions to the Yukon birding community, our knowledge of Yukon birds and their habitats, and bird conservation. The spirit of the award reflects the mission of the Yukon Bird Club – which is to promote awareness, appreciation, and conservation of Yukon birds and their habitats.

The community of Haines Junction has always welcomed birders from across the Yukon, Canada, and the globe to explore and enjoy the region's unique bird life. However, this became next level in 2020 with the arrival of Canada's first Hawfinch to Wolf and Sharyn Riedl's yard on the now famous Rainbow Street. Over the ensuing months Haines Junction birders kept track of the Hawfinch, and a steady stream of birders traveled to the community to view this celebrity rarity. We were so graciously welcomed by local residents to wander their neighbourhoods, watch their feeders, and quite often invited inside for a hot drink when temperatures



Bobolink (left) and Lesser Goldfinch in Haines Junction

Photos: Cameron Eckert

plunged. Since then, a mind-boggling parade of rarities has continued to draw birders to Haines Junction – Bobolink, Lesser Goldfinch, Black-headed Grosbeak, and multiple Bramblings – what next!? And throughout, the Haines Junction community has warmly welcomed the many birders seeking a glimpse of these rare jewels.

We offer our sincere thanks – and look forward to the next jaw-dropping rarity to show up in the Junction!

To read about past years' Raven Award recipients – <https://yukonbirds.ca/raven-award/> 🌿

Continued from page 8



Pine Grosbeak at the Hawkings house

Photo: Jim Hawkings



Avery Bartels' sightings in Columbia: Plate-billed Mountain Toucan and Paradise Tanager



Photos: Avery Bartels

What kind of Spring are we Having (so far...)?

By Jim Hawkings

At this time of year winter is on the run and I always wonder how this spring compares to the previous ones – is it earlier, later, or much the same?

I'm particularly interested in the conditions for our returning Trumpeter Swans and other waterbirds, so I look at how much open water is present in the places they like to gather in spring. In the case of Swan Haven (and pretty much anyplace in the Yukon), one can look at images from the Sentinel series of European Space Agency satellites, launched in 2015. These images are available four to five times a week, so they provide an excellent record in areas like the Southern Lakes where we have lots of clear skies in the spring. Below is the most recent image from Swan Haven, compared with similar dates in 2018-2023. Note these images have slightly different

dates each year, ranging from 17-25 April. This is mostly due to cloud cover obscuring the landscape, sometimes for days at a time.

What do I think? Well, it looks like this year there is more open water than we've had since 2018, except 2019. However, there's not an awful lot more open water this year than last year. We know this year we definitely had less snow than we've had in the previous few years, and you can clearly see from the images there is less snow cover on the land this spring. The swans arrived right on time and their numbers quickly rose above normal and have stayed well above normal since April 5. The weather forecast is for above-normal temperatures for the next week (19-25 April).

What happens from here on is anyone's guess as things usually change very quickly at this time of year. I'll stick my neck out and predict that by the time most of you read this I'm guessing we will be quite a bit ahead of a normal spring.

Feel free to look at any of these images yourself, it's quite easy to do. The easiest place to find them is the [Sentinel Hub EO Browser](#). (This link should open to show Swan Haven). 🌿

2024
Images: Courtesy of Jim Hawkings



2018



2019



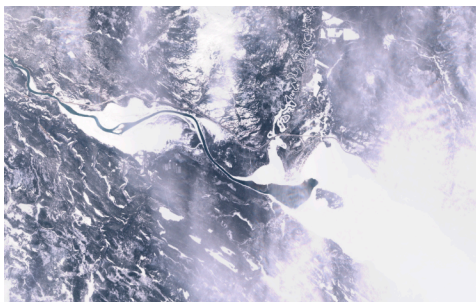
2020



2021



2022



2023



Carcross Christmas Bird Count Trend-Through-Time

By Clive Osborne

Each spring for the past three years, I have presented a short summary of observations of a Yukon Christmas Bird Count throughout most of its history. This year's summary of the Carcross CBC is the fourth Yukon Count to be summarized in this way (Trend-through-Time); the Whitehorse, Haines Junction and Marsh Lake Counts were featured in the Spring 2021, 2022 and 2023 Warbler newsletters respectively. Table 1 reports the data for Carcross CBC counts that were conducted for 17 years from 2003 to 2019 inclusive.

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

The spreadsheet used to create this table shows a more in-depth picture of population changes. The centre of the Carcross CBC is in the centre of town so the circle encompasses parts of the Southern Lakes (Bennett, Nares, Crag and Tagish). Close proximity to the coast influences the humidity, precipitation and winds in the area and there are often small patches of open water in early winter where the lakes drain so unusual sightings of waterfowl, sparrows, thrush, grouse, kinglets, creepers and Steller's Jay have been made in a few years. The central location of the town in the Count circle results in sightings of doves, House sparrows and a pheasant. The Count was established by Janet Rushant in 2003 and she has been ably assisted by the late Dan Kemble over the years. 🌿



Screenshot: Courtesy of Clive Osborne

Table 1: Number of Birds Observed per Party-Hour for the Carcross Christmas Bird Count from 2003 -2019.

Table: Clive Osborne

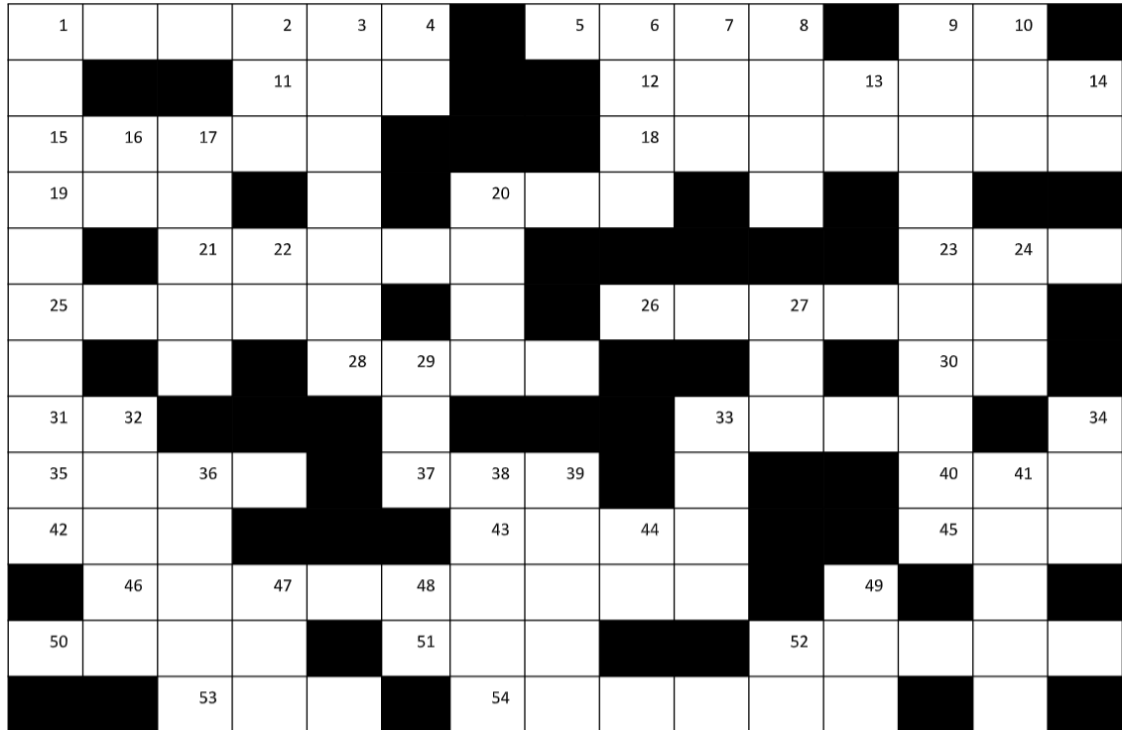
	No. of Years Observed	Max.	Min.	Mean
Number of Participants	17	17	8	12
Number of Party Hours		45.0	13.0	25.6
Number of Species Reported		22	8	17
Pine Grosbeak	17	6.21	0.16	3.17
Black-capped Chickadee	17	4.23	0.58	1.67
Common Raven	17	4.19	0.31	1.28
Boreal Chickadee	17	4.09	0.13	1.01
Black-billed Magpie	17	1.82	0.17	0.74
Gray Jay	16	0.68	0.04	0.28
Mountain Chickadee	15	1.02	0.02	0.28
Ruffed Grouse	14	0.57	0.03	0.13
Hairy Woodpecker	14	0.22	0.03	0.10
American Dipper	14	0.20	0.04	0.08
Common Redpoll	12	2.41	0.32	1.11
Downy Woodpecker	12	0.26	0.04	0.09
Dark-eyed Junco	11	2.85	0.02	0.37
Common Goldeneye	9	0.67	0.03	0.26
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9	0.29	0.02	0.12
White-winged Crossbill	8	11.92	0.07	2.19
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	8	0.31	0.04	0.12
Common Merganser	6	0.22	0.04	0.14
Red Crossbill	4	4.33	0.53	1.57
chickadee sp.	4	0.92	0.05	0.52
Spruce Grouse	4	0.31	0.03	0.14
Bohemian Waxwing	3	3.53	0.33	1.58
Mallard	3	0.35	0.05	0.19
Great Horned Owl	3	0.15	0.04	0.09
Snow Bunting	3	0.15	0.03	0.09
Northern Goshawk	3	0.14	0.04	0.08
Bald Eagle	3	0.04	0.02	0.03
Hoary Redpoll	3	0.04	0.02	0.03
finch sp.	2	1.78	0.20	0.99
crossbill sp.	2	0.81	0.34	0.58
Steller's Jay	2	0.35	0.08	0.21
Willow Ptarmigan	2	0.34	0.07	0.21
Trumpeter Swan	2	0.22	0.07	0.14
Eurasian Collared Dove	2	0.19	0.07	0.13
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	0.12	0.12	0.12
Red-breasted Merganser	2	0.14	0.04	0.09
House Sparrow	2	0.07	0.07	0.07
ptarmigan sp.	2	0.10	0.04	0.07
Bufflehead	2	0.10	0.04	0.07
Lesser Scaup	2	0.04	0.04	0.04
woodpecker sp.	2	0.04	0.04	0.04
White-crowned Sparrow	2	0.03	0.03	0.03
duck sp.	1	0.36	0.36	0.36
Pine Siskin	1	0.36	0.36	0.36
White-tailed Ptarmigan	1	0.22	0.22	0.22
kinglet sp.	1	0.08	0.08	0.08
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0.07	0.07	0.07
owl sp.	1	0.05	0.05	0.05
American Robin	1	0.05	0.05	0.05
Greater Scaup	1	0.04	0.04	0.04
Dusky Grouse	1	0.04	0.04	0.04
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	0.04	0.04	0.04
Brown Creeper	1	0.04	0.04	0.04
Barrow's Goldeneye	1	0.03	0.03	0.03
Am. Tree Sparrow	1	0.03	0.03	0.03

Springtime Crossword Puzzle

By Jeremy Baumbach

ACROSS

1. Also known as a butcher bird
5. Symptom of an allergic reaction
9. Lav
11. Wordy collection (abbrev.)
12. One of the salmon species found in the Yukon River
15. They could be financial or spiritual
18. Common _____
19. Letters found on a "Wanted" poster
20. Bird feeder treat: _____t
21. Red-eyed _____
23. Church seating
25. Leaking like a _____
26. Cold water bather
28. Red-throated _____
30. Last two letters of YBC's url
31. Zoning often used to protect farmland from development (abbrev.)
33. Red-tailed _____
35. See 29 Down
37. German article
40. Où le soleil se lève
42. Famous gardens in London, England
43. Add a vowel for the high IQ society
45. ___ headed or handed
46. Red-winged _____
50. Age group prone to untempered actions
51. A geographical feature
52. Completely useless: No good to man or _____
53. Mini stroke (abbrev.)
54. Tributary of the Yukon River



DOWN

1. A Rendezvous favourite
2. A pledge to repay (abbrev.)
3. Previously known as a sparrow hawk
4. A currently beleaguered YTG dept.
6. Land measure
7. As opposed to "he" or "they"
8. Hidden place for bird watching
9. Red-bellied _____
10. A gap
13. Internet slang for "you're welcome"
14. Kiloliter (abbrev.)
16. Migration to Cda. from this country was especially high in the early 1900s
17. In 1985 this bird was adopted as the Yukon's official bird
20. On one's own
22. 4
24. Length of time shorter than an "eon" but longer than a "period"
27. Sweet Clover, an invasive species, is a member of this family
29. With 35 Across this may be the place elderly corvids go to retire?
32. Red-necked _____
33. A kind of duck: Red ____
34. Category of disease that has had a recent upsurge (abbrev.)
36. Baby raptor
38. Scope
39. Make a nasty comment to or about someone
41. Common _____
44. Junior's dad (abbrev.)
47. Black bird not found in the Yukon (yet)
48. Ultra-processed pasta meal (abbrev.)
49. Marshy land, habitat of a homonym for 39 Down
52. One of LGBTQ

Crossword puzzle solution

S	H	R	I	K	E		R	A	S	H		W	C	
U			O	E	D			C	H	I	N	O	O	K
G	U	R	U	S				R	E	D	P	O	L	L
A	K	A		T		S	U	E		E		D		
R		V	I	R	E	O						P	E	W
S	I	E	V	E		L		D	I	P	P	E	R	
H		N		L	O	O	N			E		C	A	
A	G				L				H	A	W	K		S
C	R	O	W		D	A	S		E			E	S	T
K	E	W				M	N	S	A			R	E	D
	B	L	A	C	K	B	I	R	D		F		N	
T	E	E	N		D	I	P			B	E	A	S	T
		T	I	A		T	E	S	L	I	N		E	

Yukon Warbler back issues online!

By Jim Hawkings

For a treat, why not browse our huge collection (over 50) of electronic Yukon Warbler issues stretching back to the beginning of the Yukon Bird Club in 1993! Each issue entry on the list has a short synopsis of articles to help you find items of interest. You can download any of them to enjoy at your leisure. There is a lot of interesting history here!

See <https://yukonbirds.ca/warbler/>

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