

# Marshnotes<sup>®</sup>



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY  
SPRING 2016**

# BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

Managers of the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary Since 1963

*- dedicated to the conservation and study of migratory waterfowl-*

## Marshnotes:

Editor: Kathleen Fry

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July 15th, 2016

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Hours of Operation: 9:00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. every day. The Sanctuary is wheelchair accessible.

Admission: Members: Free  
Non-Members: Adults: \$5 Children (2-14 yrs) and Seniors (60 yrs +): \$3  
School Groups: Special discounts available; pre-booking is required.

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# The 2016 Nature Blitz



On February 27th, an all-day “NatureBlitz” was held here to create a baseline documentation of winter plants and animals in the Sanctuary and the Alaksen National Wildlife Area and an opportunity for families to participate in this effort. Nature Canada, Nature-Kids BC, local wildlife experts, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) staff, our Society and many volunteers all worked together to provide this winter “NatureBlitz”.

Activities throughout the day were spread between the Alaksen National Wildlife Area (NWA) and the Sanctuary. Pre-registration was required, and 170 participants signed up for activities ranging from bird walks, bat and owl monitoring, nature photography, mapping of invasive species, and helping the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust with a Townsend’s Vole trapping program to monitor populations in old field habitats.

Part of Nature Canada’s national NatureHood program, the free activities were designed to provide family-friendly nature education through exploration of local flora and fauna. “Our goal is to help people appreciate the diversity of nature that’s all around them by showing them what’s there, and to have fun while doing it,” said Alex MacDonald, Nature Canada’s Senior Conservation Manager.

Judos to the event coordinator, Kristine Webber, Executive Director of NatureKids BC, Rene McKibben (ECCC) and many volunteer presenters, BCIT and Kwantlen students, the Delta Naturalists, and Sanctuary volunteers Brian Self, Istvan Orosi, Mary Taitt, Kristina Breit, Emma Turgeon, and Jean Gartner who helped out that day.

Text: Kathleen Fry, R.P. Bio.,  
Sanctuary Manager

## About Our Covers:

**Front Cover:**  
*Bufflehead* © Jim Martin

**Back Cover:**  
*Young pair of Sandhill Cranes* @ Dennis Nelson

## A Note From The Editor:

*The most useful photos for Marshnotes are those featuring birds of the three months covered by that edition. The best approach is to send thumbnails or reduced images or links to posted images. See page 2 for my email and the next deadline.* Kathleen Fry

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# Bird Highlights

January began with a continuation of the cool clear days of late December. With temperature dipping below 0° C in the first two weeks we had frozen ponds and icy conditions. The species count this month was 83, down by 12 from January 2015.



Dark-eyed Junco

Photo: Ken Young

## January 3<sup>rd</sup> – January 9<sup>th</sup>

Songbirds have been very appreciative and plentiful at our feeding stations, as these provide a concentrated food source with little expenditure of energy from the birds at this cold time of year. Large numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos are especially active at the feeders. Back in the 1970's, there used to be 6 species of Juncos in North America. Now all juncos with dark eyes are considered to be one species, the Dark-eyed Junco. The remaining Juncos that have yellow eyes make up the other species, the Yellow-eyed Junco, and are mostly seen in Guatemala, Mexico and the United States. January 4<sup>th</sup> a male Eurasian Wigeon and Wilson's Snipe were seen. On the 6<sup>th</sup> a Short-eared Owl was spotted flying over the marsh. A few Snow Geese remain offshore, but the majority of the population is now in the Skagit Valley, Washington and will stay there until about the middle of March.

## January 10<sup>th</sup> – January 16<sup>th</sup>

There was an unusual sighting of a Mourning Dove on the 13<sup>th</sup>. It was feeding with some songbirds on the grassy edge of the driveway. Up until the late 1990's we would normally see 3 to 6 Mourning Doves at this time of year, but since the arrival of the Eurasian Collared Doves at the Sanctuary in 2010, Mourning Dove sightings have been rare. At the south end of the seaward or West Dyke. 2 American Bitterns were spotted. Your best chance to view these elusive birds is when the tide is high. The high tide forces them out

of the marshes up to the grassy edges of the dykes and sometimes up on to the trails. The Swamp Sparrow is still being heard and seen around the observation Tower. On the 16<sup>th</sup> a Western Meadowlark was seen. When in flight you can see flashes of white on either side of its short tail along with a yellow breast. Look for them over grasslands and marshes January to March as they look for seeds and insects.

## January 17<sup>th</sup> – January 23

All 3 species of Mergansers (Hooded, Common and Red-Breasted) were present this week. Mergansers are nick-named "saw bills" because of their long and tapering bill with serrations. Now that the waterways have thawed, these and other diving ducks are able to get back to fishing in them. From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> the Barred Owl was very cooperative, with visitors getting good views of it perched in the open along the trail heading towards the Ewen Slough blind. Sora and Virginia Rail were both seen this week.

American Coots winter in the Sanctuary but not in as large numbers as in 1980's and 1990's. One reason could be that the winters are a lot milder now and the Coots don't need to migrate as far as they used to from interior valleys and wetlands. People have had good views of these unusual looking birds with their lobed toes and white beaks in the Southwest Marsh this week. The Birder's Handbook (Ehrich et al, 1988) says these birds often feed in with Northern Pintails and Mallards which the authors refer to as "Beaters" because they thrash about stirring up food. The Coots are referred to as "Attendees", who take whatever comes their way. Here in the Sanctuary, Coots are more often both "Attendees" and "Beaters" with Gadwall and American Wigeon. A couple of Belted Kingfishers were seen this week, and were probably happy the ice was gone so they could once again fish for Stickleback.



Fox Sparrow

Photo: Ken Young

### January 24 – January 30

Fox Sparrows are sbundant this week. Along the trails you might come across this large dark brown backed bird with heavy streaking on its barrel chest scratching in the earth with both feet. All sparrows scratch with their feet to reveal seeds, insects and berries to eat, but the Fox Sparrow is the best equipped for the job. With larger feet and longer toes, it can scratch larger and deeper areas in the dirt revealing more food. On the 24<sup>th</sup> a large flock of up to 75 Common Redpolls were observed flying over the parking lot. Redpolls have a unique adaptation for what to do with birch and alder seeds that they have foraged for throughout the day. As they spend most of the year in the northern parts of the provinces where feeding conditions can be tough especially with snow, their *esophageal diverticulum* or small pocket in their throat which stores seed to carry them through the low overnight temperatures.

*February turned out to be a very mild month with an average of 12 degrees. Our species count this month totalled 85 species which were 5 more than February 2015. February was one of the best months for seeing owls, as 5 out of the 7 species on our checklist were present.*

### January 31 – February 6

At this time of year, Varied Thrush and Northern Flickers are feeding on seeds and berries along the road edges. The male Varied Thrush has a bright orange eyebrow stripe and orange patterning on the wings. Across the breast a black or dark gray band shows up against its rusty breast and throat. The female markings are the same but duller. Their song is distinctive and described as a long buzzy whistle. The Northern Flickers also have a black breast band which shows up against their dark spotted breast. Differentiating the sexes is easy as the male Northern Flicker sports a red moustache. When in flight they both have a noticeable white rump patch.

On January 31<sup>st</sup> one female Common Goldeneye was reported, as well as a Merlin. At first glance a Merlin resembles a miniature Peregrine Falcon, measuring between 10 and 13 inches. What it lacks in size it makes up for with swift and agile manoeuvres, catching songbirds in flight. With its dark back and heavily streaked breast it usually comes across as fast moving dark brown blur.

Greater Yellowlegs, Dunlin and Black-bellied Plovers are still present in and around the Sanctuary. At this time of year when you come across flocks of Canada Geese search through them to locate Cackling Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese. They are now

making their way up to northern ponds and streams of the tundra in order to nest. On February 5<sup>th</sup> a total of 4 Northern Saw-Whet Owls were located along the East and North Dykes.



Northern Saw-whet Owl Photo: Ken Young

### February 7 – February 13

Visitors walking the outer West Dyke have seen the beautiful male Ring-necked Pheasant while being serenaded by the singing Marsh Wrens. Out over the marsh are numerous Northern Harriers hunting for rodents. The male Northern Harrier has a silvery gray belly and breast while the females are rusty brown below. Both sexes have a noticeable white rump patch in flight. In the northwest corner across from the Tower, look for American Bitterns and Northern Shrike. At the Tower, Red-winged Blackbirds are abundant and very vocal. Viewing from the Tower with aid of binoculars or a scope you will be able to spot good numbers of Trumpeter Swans and even some of our winter shorebirds. Six Black-crowned Night-Herons are still present.

### February 14 – February 20

The first Barn Swallows showed up on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

..... Continued page 6

(Continued from page 5)

The first Tree Swallows followed on the 20<sup>th</sup>. A Barred Owl was located on the 17<sup>th</sup> and a Barn Owl on the 18<sup>th</sup>. We will lose sight of these two owls soon as the Barred Owls nest by the middle of March and Barn Owls usually nesting in the first week in March.

#### February 21 – February 27

The Violet-green Swallows have now joined the other two swallow species. Barn Swallows are easy to recognize with their forked tail and rusty orange belly. The Tree and Violet-green Swallows look similar with both having white bellies. The Tree Swallows have a lovely metallic blue back while the Violet-green Swallows have an iridescent green and purple back. I find the easiest way to tell the two apart in flight is that the Violet-green Swallows have the white from the belly curving up to form a white rump patch. The 22<sup>nd</sup> was the last day we were able to locate the pair of Great Horned Owls that have roosted together near the end of the East Dyke. On the 26<sup>th</sup> a Hutton's Vireo was seen along the driveway. Northern Shrike, Common Goldeneye and Cackling Goose were other highlights from this week that ended with 72 species.

*March is a great month at the Sanctuary. Trees are starting to show new green growth, early flowering Salmon Berry are attracting Rufous Hummingbirds along with lots of pleasing songs from birds looking for mates. March 2016 had a count of 90 species.*

#### February 28- March 5

The first Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. These warblers are usually the first to show up in the spring and last to leave in the fall. On the 4<sup>th</sup> our first male Rufous Hummingbird appeared at the house feeder. This is an early record for this species, as they traditionally arrive on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of March. Males show up first in order to establish a nesting territory. The Anna's Hummingbirds are still around. Since they are early nesters and have already raised their young by the middle of March, they are often gone by mid-summer. Both Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs are found this week. A Bushtit nest was discovered along the East Dyke. Bushtit nests are uniquely shaped looking much like a wool sock hanging at the end of a branch. In all, four of these nests were active by the end of March.

#### March 6 – March 12

Ring-billed Gulls, Glaucous-winged Gulls and Mew Gulls are found this week. Gulls are probably one of the most difficult species to identify as they have different plumage every year until maturity at 4 years old. There are also some birds that are hybrids or in

moult making them even harder to identify. They are definitely a challenge. March 10<sup>th</sup> the Short-eared Owl was spotted again flying offshore. Also seen offshore were Horned Grebe and Surf Scoter. A single female Common Goldeneye is still being reported in the West Field closer to the Tower

#### March 13 – March 19

This week had a high count of 78 species. On March 13<sup>th</sup> a Red-breasted Merganser was seen. On the 16<sup>th</sup> a Sora was reported. On the 17<sup>th</sup> a flock of 14 Greater White-fronted Geese were found. Then on the 19<sup>th</sup> the same Greater-white Fronted Geese were seen in with some Cackling Geese. It is getting more difficult now to find the Northern Saw-Whet Owls as they are moving out of our area heading to nest. On the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> we could only find 2 of these small owls. There was a single report of a Wilson's Warbler.

#### March 20 – March 26

The last of the Trumpeter Swans were seen this week. Flocks of Lesser Snow Geese are now arriving and feeding throughout farm fields of Westham Island. A Barn Owl made this week's sighting list but not in a way that we liked. As one of our first visitors of the day made his way along the lower grassy Northeast corner paths, a Red-tailed Hawk had just dropped his partly-eaten prey, the Barn Owl. Along this same trail there are many pairs of Wood Ducks perched in trees checking out the nest boxes that we have provided for them. Visible large numbers of Spotted Towhees are being noticed throughout the Sanctuary this week.

#### March 27 – April 2

March 28<sup>th</sup> ended up being the last date we were able to locate any Saw-whet Owls. They will be back around the Sanctuary by middle of October. The 28<sup>th</sup> of March was the first sighting of Purple Martins, flying around the older nesting boxes. This is another bird that is earlier arriving than last year, when none were seen until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April. Five Pied-billed Grebes were found fishing in Ewen Slough on the 31<sup>st</sup>. There is only one remaining juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron now. As they don't reach breeding maturity until they are 2 years old this one is probably not in a hurry to reach the breeding ground.

Text: Varri Raffan  
Gift Shop Manager

#### **References:**

Elrich, P., Dobkin, D..S., and Wheye, P. 1988.  
**The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds.**

# BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

## Report on the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

The 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday April 12, 2016 in the Lecture Hall of the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary. BCWS President Jack Bates called the Meeting to order at 7:30 pm and welcomed everyone. He declared a quorum in attendance. Moira Moore acted as Secretary.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 54<sup>th</sup> AGM:** The Minutes of the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held on Tuesday April 14, 2015 were approved.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:** The financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2015 along with the Accountant's Report prepared by KPMG, were presented by the Society's Treasurer Jim Morrison together with a brief summary of the highlights. Questions from the floor were responded to by the Treasurer.

**APPOINTMENT OF THE ACCOUNTANTS FOR 2016:** KPMG were appointed as the Society's Accountants for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2016, with remuneration to be determined by the Board.

**REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The Chairman introduced the Society's Directors that were present, and gave a brief report on the Society and the Board's activities for the year 2015, noting the Society remains in a strong financial position. He thanked the staff, the Directors and all of the other volunteers for their contributions during 2015.

The Chairman noted all of the projects successfully completed in the past year, which included a complete renovation of the washrooms, new drainage and resurfacing of the picnic area among other general maintenance activities at the Sanctuary.

**SANCTUARY MANAGER'S REPORT:** Kathleen Fry reviewed the Manager's report on the 2015 activities. The report noted there are 2,626 Members as of December 31, an increase over last year's 2,507 members and most of these are family memberships. There were 85,820 visitors to the Sanctuary in 2015. May saw the busiest month with 9,777 visitors followed by April, with 8,634 then February with 8,533 through the gates. The attendance figures above only refer to visitors paying admission to walk the trails plus member attendance. The figures do not include the many families, seniors and cyclists who stayed in the parking lot or picnic area to feed the ducks and/or use the washrooms. Numbers of students in our school programs were down slightly in 2013 and 2014, but were back to normal in 2015, especially with funds provided by Nature Canada from EC's Connecting Canadians to Nature program to fund visits by classes from inner city schools.

The traditional Sunday 10 am walk was continued all year led by volunteers Mary Taitt and Brian Self, with assistance from Istvan Orisi. A special thank you is due to Bill Topping who has consistently kept the Museum open for the public every Sunday morning during the year. Many of our members, most notably Brian Self, Jim Martin, Emma Turgeon, David Bruce and Karl Pollak, have been very helpful on high visitor use days, acting as interpreters along the trails, adding considerable value to the visitor experience and helping to remind visitors of basic Sanctuary rules.

**ELECTION OF DIRECTORS:** In accordance with the Society's Bylaws, three Directors were elected for a two year term by acclamation: Wayne Diakow, Jim Morrison and Gerry Oyen.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.**  
Coffee, tea and refreshments followed the meeting.

The British Columbia Waterfowl Society  
*gratefully acknowledges the continuing support of its Accountants*

KPMG Peat Marwick Thorne Inc.,  
*Suite 400, North Tower, 5811 Cooney Road, Richmond, B.C. V6X 3M1*

# Manager's Report

Happy New Year! 2016 has been very busy so far, with a 23,516 visitors counted in its first three months. Last year, a Great Grey Owl doubled visitor numbers in February. This January and February, attendance was about normal (6,231 and 7,192), but March had a record-breaking 10,093 people through the gates, the highest peak for any given month for years.

January started off cold, but then it rained, and much staff time was spent ensuring the trails did not flood to the extent of last fall. The outlet control on North Dyke is still not working at 100% and is due for repairs this summer, but in the meantime, we ran a gas powered pump to help with drainage. We thank all visitors for their patience with the pump noise. By February, Ducks Unlimited Canada came up with a much quieter and gas-saving siphon hose arrangement that just drains water out at low tide.

To ensure that all winter rains did not overtax the outlet, we periodically allowed Southwest Marsh to drain directly out into the ocean. It is not an exact science when we just leave a pipe open like this, so visitors were surprised to see mudflats off and on from January to early April.

In February it can rain for days, then hundreds of visitors come out on the first sunny day. On February 8th, Family Day, this happened and visitors peaked at 1,650. We were not expecting or able to accommodate that number of people, and parking along Robertson Road made it almost impassible. There is now a notice on our website that we may have to turn people away at the front gate on extremely crowded days if we have reached our capacity for visitors and for the birds.

It was with some trepidation, then, that we entered into planning for the Natureblitz at the end of February (see page 3). The event was well-received though, and is part of a continuing partnership with Nature Canada, who sponsored over 700 students from inner city schools in MetroVancouver to visit the Sanctuary over the fall and winter.

At the beginning of January, we tried another kind of partnership, offering college student opportunities to learn their birds through participating in regular bird counts at the Sanctuary. Notices were circulated to BCIT and Kwantlen, and the following team has been practicing surveys and learning their birds this spring: Andy White, Madeleine Weafer, Anastasia Lashkova,

Nida Kazmi, Brianna Knowles, Nicole Lamarche, Eric Lotto, Ikumi Takada, Tanjot Chahil., Alicia Elgert, Shiming Tsu, and Connie Siu. Many thanks, folks!

March was extremely busy with many children out of school during various Spring Break weeks for local schools and the Easter Long weekend. The month was also not as wet as usual. In spite of the crowds, some shoreline repairs have been completed in the "stepping stones" area along the main path, fallen trees cleared away, a few extra songbird boxes put up, the wood duck boxes were set up for spring nesting, and we have begun the annual basic pruning of vegetation along pathways.

The favourite birds drawing visitors in these first 2016 months seem to have been the owls and the Sandhill Cranes. We did not have a Great Grey Owl visit like last year, but there were regular sightings of up to four Northern Saw-whet Owls, the pair of Great Horned Owls, as many as three Barred Owls, intermittent sightings of Barn Owls and Short-eared Owls, and two fleeting glimpses of a Long-eared Owl December 10th and again recently on March 31st. Page 9 shows this winter's typical pattern of owl observations.

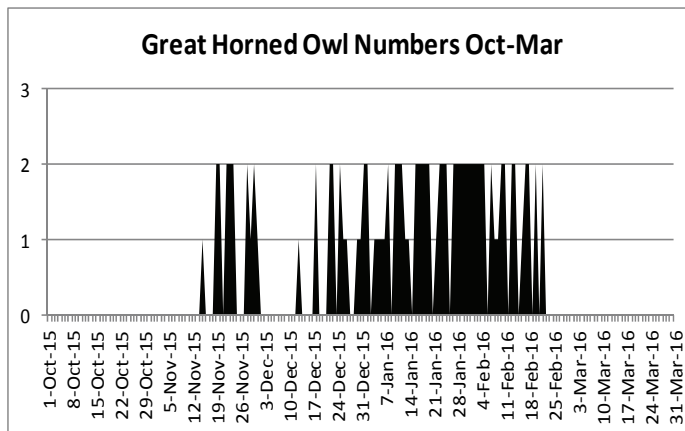
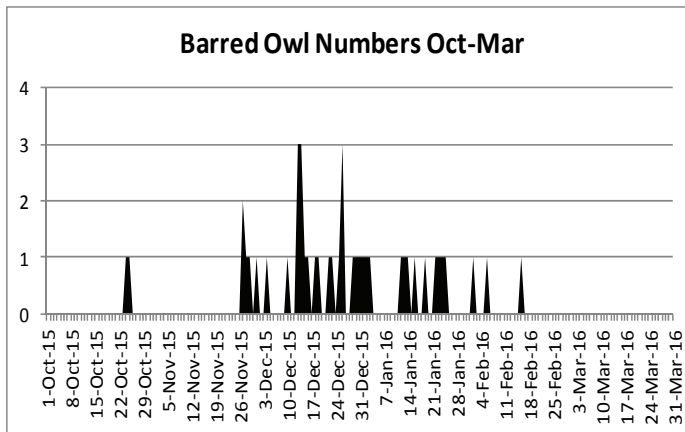
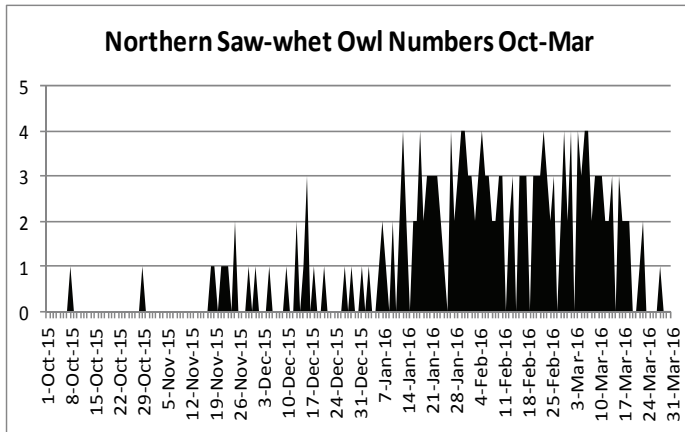
There is never a dull moment when it comes to the Sandhill Cranes, whether they are violently digging up the grass on the front lawn, vandalizing potted plants, or claiming various apparently mobile territories as they transition from wintering together to spring squabbles. The extra bird that had joined the nine regulars gave up trying to join the gang and has not been seen since January 28th. The gang of seven younger birds began splitting up at that time as well. Our 2010 colt and another older bird left at the end of January, and the other younger five seem to come and go often in recent months. Two of them are strongly paired now and seem to be wanting to find a territory here and to sometimes ditch the rest of the gang.

Our older resident pair of cranes claimed the front lawn as their territory for most of January, then in mid-February, moved to the back meadow behind the house, where they kept away from the rest and spent a lot of time dancing, catching voles and staining their feathers. By the second week in March, they moved their land claim over closer to the nest island in Display Pond, and started actively ousting the younger cranes from this area. On March 24th, there was a big fight amongst all cranes, with the next-in-line male sporting blood on its neck and leg and tail feathers. Ever since then, the pair seems to have firmly established their claim to their usual territory, and have laid two eggs (April 21st and 24th). Stay tuned.



## Summary of Owl Sightings

The graphs below summarize the collective owl sightings by our biologist Dan Dixon and myself over the winter. One thing we noticed this winter was the possible relationship between the presence of a Barred Owl, particularly in the Northeast corner, and the temporary disappearance of Northern Saw-whet Owls. As the one eats the other, this is understandable.



## Some Probable Early Nest Initiation Dates

Canada Goose– The last week in March. One brood (4 young) hatched as of April 26th. Eggs would have been incubated about 25 to 28 days, with the start of laying of the clutch of eggs a week or so before that.

Mallard– About the same as above. We have two early broods now, one hatching Apr.23rd (8 young), and one hatching Apr. 26th (13 young).

Wood Ducks– First week in April for the first nests, as one early brood of 6 ducklings has hatched as of April 28th. An egg was found on the East Dyke path the first week in April underneath a duck box.

Bushtits– Nest-building was first noted in the last week of February. By the end of March, we had found 4 nests, and all had parent birds either still building or moving in and out of nests. Eggs were probably laid in the last week of March or first week of April. Bushtits can lay between 4 and 10 eggs, and these are incubated for only 12 or 13 days before they hatch. On April 26th, nearly all nests had parent birds carrying food, so they have all have hatched young, possibly even half-way to fledged, as they grow fast are flying a mere 18 days after hatching. We might see young Bushtits the first of May onwards.

Great Horned Owls- Mid-February would seem to be when they were no longer seen roosting together here, presumably nesting nearby in Alaksen NWA or some other local spot with dense tree cover. Generally, when we have a pair of these owls roosting in the same tree in January and February, they are paired but not on a nest yet. Note their abrupt disappearance in the graph to the left. There was a lot of daytime hooting between the two birds the day before they stopped roosting in the Douglas Firs near the Northeast corner.

Text and Graphs:

Kathleen Fry, R. P. Bio.,  
Sanctuary Manager

# What's In A Name?

Have you ever wondered “how did that bird get its name?” Well as far back as 1758 when a Swedish Zoologist named Karl Linnaeus started to sort birds, plants and animals, he gave them two Latin names. One for genus (kind) and the other for its species (individual characteristic).

On a daily basis we don't refer to birds using this Latin “binomial nomenclature”. There are varied sources that we pull from to compile the names we now use in this day and age. Many birds are named after Naturalists or Ornithologists. Some birds are named for the calls they make, while some are named for their geographic location, physical structure or simply their color.

Wilson's Phalarope, Wilson's Warbler and Wilson's Storm Petrel are named after a Scottish Naturalist and Ornithologist Alexander Wilson. John Townsend, an American Naturalist, was responsible for naming the Townsend's Solitaire and Townsend's Warbler along with a few mammals.

A German Naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller named the Steller's Jay (British Columbia's Provincial Bird) along with some other animals.

Samples of birds that are named after the sound of their call are as follows: Black-capped Chickadee, Killdeer, Whip-poor-will, Piping Plover, American Coot and Western Wood-pewee.

There are many birds named for their habitat preferences or location. Some of them include Marsh Wren, Cliff Swallow, Western Grebe, Pelagic Cormorant, Mountain Bluebird and Northern Shrike.

Tufted Titmouse, Double-crested Cormorant, Red Crossbill, Great Horned Owl, Rough-legged Hawk are some birds we are familiar with that are named because of a physical trait.

The list of birds named because of their colours is a long one. Here are a few examples: Redhead, Red-winged Blackbird, Spotted Towhee, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Black-crowned Night-Heron and Purple Martin.

While doing research for this article I came across a few fun and interesting facts on how some birds got their names that don't fit into the above categories.

- Limpkins are named because of how they walk favoring one leg.
- The Anglo-Saxon name for starling was “staer”. The suffix “ing” was added later to form starling. When in flight they look star shaped and in winter the plumage of the starling is very speckled, resembling stars against a black sky.
- In the eighteenth century, cowbirds were noticed feeding in cattle pens and were given their name Brown-headed Cowbirds.
- The Turnstones got their name because when they look for food they flip over the stones with their beaks in search of small marine animals.
- Cedar Waxwings have red tips on their inner wings which resembles drops of red sealing wax.
- Canvasbacks gets their name from the waistcoats that men wore in the olden days. The male Canvasback has a white back much like the waistcoats back in the time when cloth was expensive and the backs of men's vests were made from less expensive plain canvas.
- The Cranes name stems back to an Indo-European root of “kar” or “gar” meaning to “cry out”. Their guttural cry comes from their very long trachea which is over a yard long.
- The term “sitting duck” relates to one who has lost its flight feathers and cannot fly.
- Nuthatches are named from an Old English word “hakken” meaning to “break or cleave”. They wedge nuts into crevices to hold them while they break in to them.
- According to American Indian legend the Painted Bunting is so colorful because the Great Spirit ran out of pigment by the time he got to the last bird – the Painted Bunting – and had to use all of the remaining colours.

Text: Varri Raffan  
Gift Shop Manager

Correction:  
**Winter 2016 Edition of Marshnotes on page 10, in the “One Hit Wonders” article.**

The Philadelphia Warbler should have been a Philadelphia Vireo.

# The Volunteer Corner

## Special Thanks To:

- ◆ Kristina Breit for her unflagging help with the shoreline reconstructions this spring.
- ◆ Our regular Sunday birding team of Mary Taitt and Brian Self, as well as Jim Martin, Istvan Orosi, Emma Turgeon, and David Bruce for helping host visitors along the trails.
- ◆ Justin Malkonin, Eric Rossicci, and Eileen Axford for bagging seed and filling bird feeders.
- ◆ Our winter newsletter mailout team of David Bruce, Jean Gartner, Eric Rossicci and Eileen Axford.
- ◆ The team of Arlie Darby, Irene Banack, and Barbara Warrick for all the garden work.
- ◆ Ivy Whitehorne, Stacey Hilton, and BCIT and Kwantlen students who have helped with bird inventories..
- ◆ Sebastion Godbout for helping out on weekends.
- ◆ James Soules for the donation of a lovely antique display cabinet.

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

- ◆ Our ongoing needs for upcoming months are for trail maintenance work parties and weekend hosting of visitors. Visit our website page [www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/volunteers.html](http://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/volunteers.html).

For more information or to confirm volunteer times for these opportunities, please phone our office 604-946-6980 or email Kathleen ([kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com](mailto:kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com).)



A SPECIAL THANK-YOU to Logan Saucier who donated funds given to him as presents on his third birthday.

# Why be a Member?

## As a Member, you receive the following benefits:

FREE admission to the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary 365 days a year.

Quarterly issue of the BCWS publication "Marshnotes".

A 10% discount on purchases in the Sanctuary Gift Shop.

Membership in one of British Columbia's most respected conservation organizations.

## With your support, the British Columbia Waterfowl Society is able to:

Staff, maintain and expand facilities at the Sanctuary for the benefit of its visitors and members; provide interpretive and education programs, including guided tours for organized groups of all ages; contribute towards important scientific research on waterfowl to determine their life cycle needs for survival; and provide support for like-minded organizations who are working on waterfowl-related projects.

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