

# Marshnotes<sup>®</sup>



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY  
FALL 2018**

# 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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## **DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF MARSHNOTES**

**January 15th, 2019**

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Gift Shop Manager:	Varri Raffan
Reception:	Susan Norris
Biologist:	Dan Dixon
Maintenance:	David McClue
Part-time Assistants:	Kristina Breit Nicole Lamarche

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 years +): \$3
	School Groups:	Special discounts available; pre-booking is required.

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## Gift Shop News

Over the last 3 months I have had the pleasure of greeting tourists from many different countries such as Britain, Spain, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and many of the United States. As they stop back on their way out it's always nice to hear that they thoroughly enjoyed their visit and think our Sanctuary is one of the best sanctuaries they have visited. Since I started keeping attendance records back in the 1980's, annual visitor numbers have been steadily increasing. Last year, 2017, ended with 85,856 visitors a big difference from the 39,434 visitors of 1988.

When thinking about Christmas gift shopping and are looking for a unique gift idea for the bird-watcher or non-birdwatcher, check out our selection of merchandise in the Gift Shop. The family membership (\$50) and single membership (\$25) are still very popular gifts and membership numbers remain strong. From bird ID guides, binoculars, bird feeders, mugs, shirts, jigsaw puzzles, children's books, plush toys and our newly released 2019 Sanctuary calendar, I'm sure something will please the most difficult to buy for. I would like to give a big thank you to one of our members, Cim Macdonald, who has taken under her wing the production of our popular Sanctuary calendar for 2019. Thank you for doing a first-class job.

Don't forget to present your valid membership card at the time of purchasing your gifts in order to receive your 10% membership discount.

Text: Varri Raffan  
Gift Shop Manager



## About Our Covers

Front Cover: Green Heron © Jim Martin

Back Cover: Common Nighthawk @ Eric Ellingsley

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Varri Raffan  
Kathleen Fry

Dan Dixon  
Varri Raffan

## Manager's Report

We had 23,021 visitor days spread between July (8,779), August (7,882) and September (6,360) this year. July and August were hotter than usual, the humidity was high for most of this period. Fires in Richmond and other local areas resulted in very smoky unpleasant air conditions in late August. In spite of this, the overall total visitor use was about as expected, being slightly lower than last year (23,309) and higher than 2016 (21,952).

The International Ornithology Congress and the Vancouver International Bird Festival were held mid-way through this reporting period in late August. Our Society was one of the sponsors, and also was on the receiving end of many visits from out-of-town visitors for most of August. Bob Elner, the IOC Coordinator, reports that a summary report is still in progress but over 31,000 people attended events and displays over the event week of August 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. I attended a few of these and was quite impressed with the scientific posters summarizing many research projects and booths of everything bird-related in the festival venue at Canada Place. I am still reading through a summary of abstracts of all the presentations of the congress itself. Registrations for bus tours to Westham Island and the Sanctuary were cancelled when there was not enough sign-up, but many people from this event came out on their own, car-pooling, renting cars and taking taxis, and generally having more relaxed birdwatching visits along the Sanctuary trails. We added an extra Friday 10 am walk as well as our usual Sunday walk, and had the Museum open for 5 days especially to accommodate these international visitors. Many thanks to Brian Self, Mary Taitt, Ken Young, Jim and Joan Blair, Lauris Williams, Barb Wayte, Karen McDonald and Lynn Daoust for being at hand to help on these days.

Some waterfowl migrations seem to be delayed due to warm weather continuing well through September and into October. At time of writing in mid-October, we are still awaiting any significant flights of Snow Geese from their Arctic nesting grounds on Wrangel Island, Russia. The consensus from researchers is that they are likely working their way south more slowly than usual while warm weather persists between here and their staging areas in Alaska. We have been seeing thousands of American Wigeon and Northern Pintail now in the foreshore areas of the Fraser River estuary, but our local Mallard population is still relatively low, and October visitors have been constantly asking about the Snow Geese or lack thereof. We will all have to be patient. I remember one fall when the Snow Geese were delayed like this, then suddenly the fields all around the Sanctuary were blanketed with thousands of white birds just before Halloween.

The past three months have been very busy with maintenance projects. Every year it always feels like that, as we usually have a short but an intense window of opportunity for machinery work fitted in after nesting season is over and before the fall rains make the trails soft and easily damaged. Once the Observation Tower project was completed and opened for public use July 14<sup>th</sup>, we pressure-washed the Viewing Platform, repaired shorelines opposite the outlet control, and placed some rock for erosion protection behind the workshop and Museum where last winter's high water created a few problems. In September, we trimmed some of the hedgerows along inner trails and re-seeded some of the dead lawn grass areas at the front entrance. These new grass areas look very lush and healthy now, but each winter, any short juicy lawn grass areas get grazed by American Wigeon and the Sandhill Cranes are already digging up sod looking for grubs and worms in the soil.

The Warming Hut has a new look as of early October, with tiny dots installed across all of the windows in a grid. These are intended to help birds to avoid striking windows by changing the look of otherwise clear and reflective surfaces. Every winter, we have a few Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrows that are stunned or die from hitting the first few windows of the Warming Hut. The dots may not completely eliminate bird



Warming Hut window treatment

Photo: Kathleen Fry

strikes, as these ground-feeding sparrows usually fly low, and dart into the deck area of the Warming Hut to get away from Merlin and Cooper's Hawks. They end up trapped and sometimes disoriented between the windows and the chain-link fencing. With advice from Krista de Groot from Environment and Climate Change Canada, we obtained these Feather-Friendly Window Markers, and will watch to see if they work.

Controlling invasive plants takes time each summer, but with all the distractions of other summer projects this year, not too much removal was done. Every year, at a bare minimum, we keep thistles under control, and watch for Giant Hogweed, but Purple Loosestrife was very abundant this year and we are looking into getting more of its biological control agents released again here. This year, a volunteer organization called Direct Action Everywhere asked if they could take on a project, and we gave them the task of reducing a growing patch of English Ivy on Center Dyke on July 14th. A small group of volunteers all turned out and spent an energetic morning on a hot day detaching and removing a significant amount of it. We only have English Ivy in select spots, but in some conservation areas, it wraps and strangles trees, becomes the dominant ground cover and requires ongoing removal.

When our regular visitors return here in the fall after being away from the summer, it becomes "Question Period" when they see some of the recent large-scale projects from late summer. Most questions this past month have been about the recent machinery work done in West Field. As indicated in past editions of Marshnotes, there has been increasing concern about Cattail blocking water flows and spreading across the shallows of West Field. For the past few couple of years, we have been in discussion with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) about how to approach this. Although we did some hand clearing of Cattail in late July and early August with DUC summer students at the tower, that kind of approach is very labour intensive and not feasible for any treacherous soft areas such as ditches.

Ducks Unlimited Canada was approved in late August for a permit from ECCC to clear the perimeter ditch. They contracted Double M Excavating to bring out a large excavator for just over a week to work right in the ditch area to both reclaim the ditch and scrape out many nearby patches of Cattail. Just in case some of the Cattail consisted of an invasive form of hybrid of two species (*Typha latifolia* and *T. angustifolia*), the scraped material was kept in West Field instead of casting the scraped material out into the intertidal foreshore. The material was piled against the inner side of the seaward dyke. The machine worked on "pads" or big cedar timbers that served as a raft to distribute its weight over the soft mud. To make the dyke accessible for vehicles associated with the



*Hand-cleared cattail at Tower* Photo: Kathleen Fry

excavator, Royal Tree Services was brought out to trim the trees along the seaward dyke a few weeks before this all began.

The end result is a much more open shallow field, a cleared perimeter ditch, large almost rolls of heavy clay piled against the dyke, and a wider dyke trail. Visitors and shorebirds appear to be enjoying the more spacious surroundings. This is just a reminder though for everyone that the seaward dyke is still a No Feeding Zone, and that they should not climb on or try to feed birds on the piles of clay or from the dyke. Note also that we may see some Cattail regrowth in the scraped area and may require some additional machinery work in the next few years.

Visitors may also have wondered why about 50% of the Sanctuary's ponds were down to mudflats in early September. Southwest Marsh acts as a summer reservoir, as it can be recharged by letting water at a high tide. We accumulate water there then transfer it into the other ponds as required to flush out algae blooms in Display Ponds or avoid complete drying out of West Field mudflats. The transfer of water into other ponds usually leaves Southwest Marsh itself as mudflats for about a month until it can be recharged again. Display and House Ponds have high nutrient loading from the year-round duck use and are prone to summer blooms of algae that create toxic and smelly conditions. We transfer water regularly into those areas to flush out these problem chemicals. West Field also needs regular injections of new water, as it is so shallow that summer evaporation would otherwise reduce it to cracked mud each month. In late August, we also drew down House Pond to make alternative mudflat feeding areas for shorebirds displaced by the machine working in West Field. This resulted in a lot of mudflats in September. Once fall rains begin in earnest, the ponds will naturally fill.

...../ continued page 6

*(Continued from page 5)*

Monitoring of our Sandhill Crane family took a lot of time this summer in between maintenance projects, particularly after the older colt was killed by a mink July 9th. For most of the summer, we had someone watching over them if they had visitors nearby. In some cases, volunteers have even worn “Crane Warden” badges. Although some might question the need for this effort, we have been very careful this year to minimize visitor-related distractions for these birds. There have been no young raised successfully since 2011 and the cranes had already been subject to a lot of vehicle disruptions during the Tower project earlier this summer. Many thanks to Emma Turgeon, Janet Thompson, Jim Martin, David Bruce and many others for helping keep tabs on them.

As soon as the scaffolding and vehicles were gone from the tower, the crane family moved in to the grassy area at its base for most of the latter half of July. In August the threesome moved out to spend most of their days exploring the meadows the length of West Field, digging for various foods from the soft mud, catching dragonflies, but above all, practicing how to get airborne. On any given day the parents would lead their young on a walk through the marsh for several kilometers, then take it to the edge of openings of the Cattail then run through the shallows flapping and almost flying.

On August 18th, the young bird was seen taking its first effective flight across West Field, and from then on, the whole family has been fairly far ranging. In late August, we started to see other cranes on Westham Island as this is the time of year they explore harvested crops and socialize before they migrate. Our young crane was introduced to 5 other cranes in the barley field down the road, and there was considerable calls and posturing about all that! On August 29th, our family joined 14 other in the barley field, and at least one of the flock was another colt like ours. Early in the morning of September 13th, the excavator operator working in West Field was quite startled to see more than 30 roosting cranes take off when he started the machine. Through most of September, many cranes were seen exploring potato fields and barley fields. Our Sanctuary crane family sometimes joined them, and sometimes just seemed to want to stay here at home base. In early October, many of these extra cranes were over just west of Burns Bog, as I saw 56 of them there (with three colts) feeding in corn stubble.

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



*Sandhill Crane colt at 3 months Photo: Kathleen Fry*

## **UPCOMING CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS**

If you are new to this annual event and want to know more about the annual Christmas Bird Counts in the Lower Mainland, please contact Jude Grass at [judegrass@shaw.ca](mailto:judegrass@shaw.ca) for an overview. For those who regularly participate, the dates for Lower Mainland count areas are posted on the Bird Studies Canada and BC Field Ornithologist websites (below). Individuals can also contribute to count day data by recording bird use of their bird-feeders. More feeder-watchers are wanted in Delta, Ladner, and Tsawwassen.

Websites with count information:  
[www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cbc](http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cbc)  
[www.bcfo.ca](http://www.bcfo.ca)

Here are dates and contacts just three count areas:

**Vancouver** December 16th  
Peter Candido ( [pcandido328@shaw.ca](mailto:pcandido328@shaw.ca) )  
Adrian Grant-Duff ( [angranteduff@gmail.com](mailto:angranteduff@gmail.com) )

**Ladner** December 22nd (includes the Sanctuary)  
Jude Grass ( [judegrass@shaw.ca](mailto:judegrass@shaw.ca) )

**White Rock** December 29th  
Mark Dalton ( [mdaltonbc@gmail.com](mailto:mdaltonbc@gmail.com) )  
Gareth Pugh ( [gareth@intergate.ca](mailto:gareth@intergate.ca) )

## Some Images From The West Field Project

*Photos: Dan Dixon*

Spoil material piled against the dyke



Excavator working on pads northwest corner

Northwest corner from seaward dyke



Before



After

Mid-way south looking at Center Dyke blind



Before



After

# Bird Highlights

*July 2018 was one of the warmest on record. Cooler spots like beaches and the freezer section of your local grocery store were probably more popular than the Sanctuary some days. Noticeable lower attendance resulted in fewer eyes on the ground, so to speak, which probably contributed to a much lower species count for the month. With a total of 81 species for July 2018 this was one of the lower tallies, compared to the July 2015 high of 101 species.*

## July 1 – July 7

Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher and Lesser Yellowlegs have now returned from their summer breeding grounds. Lesser Yellowlegs (10"-11") now join the already present and similarly marked Greater Yellowlegs (14"). Since the last week of May the Hooded Mergansers have not been spotted at the Sanctuary but now are back from their breeding grounds. Although they nest from southern Alaska across southern Canada we have not had any nesting records. Like Wood Ducks, Mergansers will nest in tree cavities. The male Hooded Merganser when agitated will display his large white and black crest. Females have a shorter crest of mainly brown feathers resembling a punk hairdo of the 70's & 80's. The Trumpeter Swan, the largest waterfowl species in North America, arrived here at the beginning of June and is still being seen throughout the inner ponds. Belted Kingfisher, Blue-winged Teal, Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak and Swainson's Thrush are the highlights of the week.

## July 8 – July 14

As July is one of our quieter months, it is no big surprise that this week ended with only 57 species. Sadly the first born Sandhill Crane colt, hatched on June 11<sup>th</sup>, was killed by a mink on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. On the 8<sup>th</sup> a Pied-billed Grebe, a small brown stocky bird with a pale tail and a 2 tone beak is spotted on Fuller Slough diving for crustaceans, small fish and insects. They breed in southern British Columbia from May to July but we have not had a nesting record for many years. Many visitors miss the interaction of hand feeding the Black-capped Chickadees in the summer. As most of the chickadees pull out of our area moving to higher elevations to nest, we don't sell the \$1.00 bags of Black-oiled Sunflower seed in the summer. The remaining chickadees are busy raising young and are feeding them high protein insect life. Come late fall we will again see bigger flocks return to spend the winter and will then sell Black-oiled Sunflower seed for them and the Red-winged Blackbirds who have figured out what the chickadees are up to.

## July 15 – July 21

This week was the last we saw of the California Quail that was popular with many of our visitors. Reports of a small flock of 4 or 5 California Quail have been



*Immature male Belted Kingfisher Photo: Janet Thompson*

reported at Brunswick Point, located at the end of River Road West. Hopefully he has met up with some of his kind. The Sandhill Crane family are spending more time in the open West Field. From there they have a better unrestricted view of potential mink or other devious predators sneaking up on them. On an unrelated bird report, as staff left for the evening on the 16<sup>th</sup> two Mule Deer were spotted along the driveway. Over the years an occasional deer has been seen at the Sanctuary. Being good swimmers, during a low tide they can make their way from the small islands located off the South Arm Marsh of the Fraser River. On the 20<sup>th</sup> a single Barred Owl was sighted along the shady inner grassy trail.

Anywhere from July 4 to July 27<sup>th</sup> we can expect to see Black-crowned Night-Herons returning from their nesting ground. This year the first one to show up was on the 21<sup>st</sup>, returning to the usual roost area across from the Warming Hut. The Black-crowned Night-Heron is nocturnal and sleeps most of the day, much to the chagrin of photographers who have numerous shots of the same pose; sleeping with head tucked in. On the 18<sup>th</sup> both the Red-necked Phalarope and Wilson's Phalarope showed up. They are only in our area on and off for roughly 3 months before they move on to their wintering grounds. A Pacific-slope Flycatcher was seen on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## July 22 – July 28

In this third week of July, until roughly the end of September, we start to see a variety of shorebirds coming through our area. Twelve different species were reported in this week alone. Generally, our mid- to late- summer flocks consist of Western Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, plus Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers. There are small numbers of Least Sandpipers and Semipalmated Sandpipers in with the Western Sandpiper flocks, and Killdeer are

local nesters and present all summer. These eight species are present nearly every week of this three-month reporting period, with additional species joining them. On July 22<sup>nd</sup> a Baird's Sandpiper and a Pectoral Sandpiper were spotted in a flock of Western Sandpipers, and there were sightings off and on of both phalarope species that were seen last week.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> we had another spotting of the Mule Deer in the grass at the front gate and one Coyote sighting as it darted across the parking lot. Coyotes surround our area and are heard yipping at night and even through the day as they keep in touch with other family members or warning others of some threat or disturbance. Coyotes are the one responsible for the very dark scat especially along the outer grassy West Dyke. On the 27<sup>th</sup> an American Bittern and Osprey were two other highlights.

*August 2018 had a grand total of 108 species. We are now past the summer doldrums and have the early fall migrants such as warblers, flycatchers and continued migration of shorebirds. Mallards remain a constant and are now coming out of their summer eclipse plumage.*

#### July 29 – August 4

One Greater White-fronted Goose, who should be nesting in the Arctic Tundra, was spotted among a flock of Canada Geese flying over the Gift Shop on the 29<sup>th</sup>. On August 1<sup>st</sup> panic ran through the songbird population at the entrance to the trails when a Merlin made a low threatening pass. Merlin (a type of Falcon) is a very swift flyer and catches prey mid air. In the picnic area both Western Tanager and a young Dark-eyed Junco were spotted on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. We haven't had any previous Dark-eyed Junco nest records or had any observed since the second week in May, but having a young bird show up makes you think they must have been nesting locally. We'll keep an eye open next spring. A single Bullock's Oriole was also seen on the 3<sup>rd</sup> around the Observation Tower. A few years ago we had an active Bullock's Oriole nest in that area. Orioles are very secretive nesters. Their nests resemble a hanging pouch constructed of plant fibers and don't usually become obvious until the leaves fall off the trees. If it is still in good shape next spring they could use it again. A single Spotted Sandpiper was seen on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### August 5 – August 11

Spotted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper and Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes were present among our usual shorebird mix this week. On the 5<sup>th</sup> an Osprey was seen as it flew over the parking lot. Three Cinnamon Teal, one Black-headed Grosbeak and one Bullock's Oriole were all spotted on the 6<sup>th</sup>. As you look from the Fuller Slough fenced lookout into the water below you might notice a lot of good size fish. These are Common Carp. They are found in freshwater and adapt to a variety of water conditions. Being bottom

feeders these Carp will be scavenging seeds that have been missed by the ducks. With barbells (whiskers) on either side of their large mouths they are not the prettiest of fish.

#### August 12 – August 18

The first White-crowned Sparrow and Pied-billed Grebe was on the 12<sup>th</sup>. An immature Green Heron was released by Wildlife Rescue Association on the 16<sup>th</sup>. It was found in Langley after prematurely falling out of its nest. It was looked after until it could fly and fend for its self then released here at the Sanctuary. It spent most of its time fishing along the edge of the Southwest Trail. Green Herons are one of the bird species that use "tools" to lure in and catch fish. They cast twigs or other plant material into the water then crouch in wait for a curious fish to inspect the lure. Some older Green Herons have been known to even trim down twigs to achieve the right size. The released Green Heron was observed with a 6"-8" long stick and was trying to swallow it lengthwise. Being an immature bird it probably hasn't yet honed its fishing skills. If it is not careful it will be heading back to Wildlife Rescue Association with a different problem. On the 15<sup>th</sup> we saw the first American Coot back from summer nesting grounds in southern interior valley wetlands. On the 17<sup>th</sup> some of the highlights were Northern Waterthrush, Bullock's Oriole, Cassin's Vireo and Pacific Wren.

#### August 19 – August 25

Visitors had a second sighting for both the Osprey and the Western Tanager on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Also on the 19<sup>th</sup> a female American Redstart was seen near the Vewing Platform, and a Solitary Sandpiper by the Observation Tower. A rare visitor, the American Redstart hasn't been seen here since September 2014. An Olive-sided Flycatcher and one Turkey Vulture were seen on the 24<sup>th</sup>. As fall approaches we will see growing numbers of Sandhill Cranes gathering in preparation for migration. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> four other Sandhill Cranes in addition to our family of three Sandhill Cranes were present. On the 26<sup>th</sup> a House Wren, also a



*Northern Waterthrush*

*Photo: Kathleen Fry*

*...../ continued page 10*

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rare visitor was found along the Center Dyke. I had to go back as far as March 2002 for the last report of a House Wren in our Sanctuary records. A Black-throated Gray Warbler was also seen on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### August 26 – September 1

The Green Heron is still doing okay. The Bullock's Oriole was last seen at the Sanctuary on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Stilt Sandpipers have now turned up and join the Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe and the two phalarope species. The Northern Waterthrush and American Redstart were seen again. We now have fourteen other Sandhill Cranes in nearby farm fields. The recently harvested barley fields on Westham Island are good spots to check for our family of cranes and others as they pick up leftover grain. A group of ten Hooded Mergansers, females and juveniles, were found on September 1<sup>st</sup>. As soon as the male Hooded Merganser has courted and breed with the female he takes off. Come fall the males will again join up with the females. Also on the 1<sup>st</sup> four young Pied-billed Grebes and a female Ruddy Duck were spotted. Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, Caspian Tern, Wilson's Snipe, Lincoln's Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird were other birds of note in this week with 77 species.

*The first half of September is still good for spotting shorebirds. The second half of the month we start to see more sparrow species moving back into our area for the winter. The species count for Sept 2018 was 111, averaging 80 species per week.*

#### September 2 – September 8

Most Mallards have finished moulting and now have new feathers for the winter. Visitors have commented that they have been hearing owls calling as they walk the trails. Owls seldom call through the day as it attracts unwanted attention from various songbirds and crows that pester owls while they are trying to sleep. This similar owl sound is instead coming from the Eurasian Collared-dove. We saw all three species of Teal this week. Teal are best seen dabbling in the shallow waters of the West Field. A female Ruddy Duck was spotted on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The sighting of a Northern Waterthrush was on the 7<sup>th</sup> along the East Dyke. This week was the first fall return of both Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Golden-crowned Sparrows and Fox Sparrows. Numbers of already present Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrows are increasing now.

#### September 9 – September 15

On the 13<sup>th</sup> there are 30 Sandhill Cranes now in the area. A family of Sora were also spotted on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Moving unnoticed in the marsh vegetation they are more often heard than seen. High tide will increase your chances of spotting them as they get pushed in

closer to the dykes. Lowered water levels in the House Pond are providing good shorebird habitat, and from the deck of the Gift Shop visitors had great close-up views of the Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, and Long-billed Dowitchers. Some folk worry that some of the birds might be missing a leg as they noticed them hopping on or standing with only one leg. When shorebirds and other bird species are relaxed or sleeping they will pull up one leg into the body which helps to reduce heat loss from their un-feathered legs.

#### September 16 – Sept 22

On the 18<sup>th</sup> a Common Nighthawk was spotted laying flat along a branch blending in well with the bark (see back cover photo). On the 22<sup>nd</sup> a single Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was found in the Southwest Marsh. In a flock of Canada Geese who were feeding in the potato field behind the picnic area, there was one lone Snow Goose. Cackling Geese, the smaller relative of Canada Geese, are now being seen. The first fall sightings of Ring-necked Duck, Black Swift, Hermit Thrush and Pacific Wren were this week. There is still only one Black-crowned Night-Heron being seen off and on. On it's off days it has been seen at the other end of Fuller Slough in the next door property.



*Sharp-tailed Sandpiper*

*Photo: Lou Davidson*

#### September 23 – September 29

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> a Red-necked Phalarope was seen in the West Field. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper reappeared. A Turkey Vulture was found on the 26<sup>rd</sup>. Also on the 26<sup>th</sup> a Barred Owl was spotted at the Center Dyke Bird Blind and then again along the driveway on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Between various songbirds and a Cooper's Hawk scolding the Barred Owl for being along the driveway, it wasn't getting any peace. Listening for a ruckus made from other birds can often clue you in as to where an owl is perched. Further in to the fall and winter we could be lucky enough to see 6 different species of owls. Birds of prey are best viewed from November to March.

Text: Varri Raffan  
Gift Shop Manager

## The Volunteer Corner

### *Special thanks to:*

- ♦ Mary Taitt for leading our regular Sunday Bird Walk.
- ♦ Justin Makonin, Ben Lambert, Justin Huang, Chelsea Faulkner, Eric Rossicci, and Eileen Ax-ford for bagging seed, filling bird feeders, and various other weekend tasks.
- ♦ Our summer newsletter mailout team of Jim Martin, Debbie Carr, Su Langlois, and David Bruce.
- ♦ Nicole Lamarche, Kristina Breit, and Brian Self for their assistance with bird surveys.
- ♦ De Zaurinni for helping with the garden.

### *Volunteers wanted for:*

- ♦ Helping with crowded visitor days, particularly weekends in November.
- ♦ Bird surveys every other Saturday.

For more information, visit our website page [www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/volunteer.html](http://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/volunteer.html). Please leave your name at our office or send an email to [kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com](mailto:kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com).

## Special Thanks For Donations

Geraldine Sang, who donated many bags of bird feeder seed.

Brad and Ellen Hines who donated a beautiful framed Robert Bateman limited edition print of swans which is now hanging in the hallway of the Museum.



**A SPECIAL THANK  
YOU TO 2 YR OLD**

**EVIE SUI**

**WHO COLLECTED  
TOONIES TO DONATE  
TO THE SANCTUARY AS PART OF  
HER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.**

Many thanks for these generous donations!

## Why be a Member?

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

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

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### *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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Website: [www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com](http://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com)

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