

Marshnotes®



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY
SPRING 2010**

BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

Managers of The George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary since 1963

~ dedicated to the study and conservation of migratory waterfowl ~

Marshnotes:

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Produced at Minerva House

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DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF MARSHNOTES

July 5th 2010

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Robert Butler

Education Coordinator:

Kathleen Fry

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Sanctuary Manager: Kathleen Fry
Gift Shop Manager: Varri Raffan
Reception: Laura Jordison
Habitat Maintenance: Claire de la Salle
Grounds Maintenance: Larry Kane

Hours of operation:	Sanctuary Gate:	9.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. (all year round)
	Gift Shop:	9.00 a.m. - Noon 1.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
Admission:	Members:	Free
	Non-members:	Adults: \$4 Children (2-14 years) and Seniors (60+): \$2
School group tours:	Adults: \$2	Children (2-14 years) and Seniors (60+): \$1

The Sanctuary is wheelchair accessible

School group tours by arrangement

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About Our Covers

Front Cover: Wood Duck and young © Michelle N. Lamberson

I took this photograph of the female Wood Duck and young along one of the inner streams bordering the display ponds during the late afternoon of April 24th 2010. This is believed to be one of the earliest occurrences of Wood Duck ducklings in the Sanctuary.

Back Cover: Mallard and young © Damon West

It was April 4th when we spotted the first ducklings of the year on one of the Sanctuary's inner ponds. Mother Mallard tried hard to keep her brood of thirteen close as she brought them out of the water for a bite of grass before returning to the safety of the reeds around the water's edge.

BCWS 49th Annual General Meeting

April 13th 2010



Claire de la Salle

Front row from left to right: Jim Morrison, Varri Raffan, George C. Reifel, Barney Reifel.

Back row from left to right: Douglas Ransome, Ken Thompson, Jack Bates, Gerry Oyen.



Claire de la Salle

Gift Shop Manager Varri Raffan receives recognition for 25 years of service to BCWS. From left to right: Varri Raffan, Doug Raffan, BCWS Vice-President George C. Reifel, BCWS President Jack Bates.

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Manager's Report

2010 has been a busy year so far, with a pulse of fresh visitor interest during the spectacular sunny days of the Olympics, and the draw of late winter waterfowl and songbird diversity, Northern Saw-whet Owls and tame black-capped chickadees.

In March and April, the Snow Geese flocks moved back to the Fraser delta after spending a few months in the Skagit estuary. They are now on their way north towards their nesting grounds in the Arctic. Most owls have left, warblers are passing through, night-herons have departed as usual for the summer, and waterfowl and many songbirds are nesting. Ducks have surprised us with some quite early broods this year, with the first Mallard family appearing April 11th from a nest presumably started sometime in very early in March.

Our first Wood Duck clutch hatched April 24th. As they need a month and a half for egg-laying and incubation, these birds must have moved into their nest box very shortly after we turfed out winter squirrel stashes and put new shavings in all the boxes in February. Canada Geese are just now hatching, and we expect most of these to hatch at the beginning of May.

At the beginning of May our resident pair of Sandhill Cranes settled on a small island by the main path to the Viewing Tower and are now incubating two eggs. It usually takes 33 days before crane eggs hatch. The juvenile crane which has spent the winter at the Sanctuary may have delayed our pair's nesting. It continues to feed in the Sanctuary far away from the nest. This lone bird is not the resident pair's own young from last year, but arrived with a group of cranes in the fall and has remained. It is very tame, very vocal and can follow visitors for miles some days.

We have continued our work on the front entrance of the Sanctuary trail system. All visitors start their journey past the Warming Hut and on to this initial stretch of slightly sloping gravel path, with its flowering cherry and apple trees, night-heron roosts, and views of ponds and sloughs on either side of the path. Over the winter, we continued reducing some of the blackberry on either side of this path, reclaiming trees buried in the canes, and more recently creating grassy clearings overlooking Fuller Slough. The intent is to make the area more open for both wildlife and visitors, to encourage greater plant diversity with more native species, and to make this a key area for new visitors to learn about the Sanctuary.

The Fuller Slough Blind area and the sign kiosk are both likely to be revised in this upcoming year so that the vision for the Sanctuary, its history, its wildlife and plants,



Kathleen Fry

New handyman Larry Kane (extreme right), Varri Raffan, Mary Taitt and visitors enjoy the colourful benches which Larry has made for the Sanctuary.

and views of the former Reifel house at Alaksen NWA can be more obvious to visitors and help tell the story.

Blackberry hedges have considerable value as winter cover and year-round food for songbirds. In areas where we have removed them, however, we will be aiming to address other wildlife needs by creating quiet loafing space for birds off the trail system (critical during the flightless season for waterfowl), and more herbaceous flowers and ground cover in open meadows for the wildlife not dependent on berries and shrubbery.

It may not work exactly as planned, but we can modify our approach to suit. After months of work and some related physiotherapy, the blackberry is trying to come back (but not much), but the grass has started to grow (but not much).

Larry Kane has recently joined our work team. Larry is a retired construction worker from the pile-driving industry, now working part-time at the Sanctuary on site maintenance. He brings some much-needed machinery and carpentry skills. Larry started in December 2009 just in time to get out the chainsaw to clear some wind-blown fallen trees across the driveway, and has tackled a long list of repairs to structures in the Sanctuary. His more noticeable handiwork consists of the colourful benches he refers to as "Larryondacks" by the Gift Shop, and some newly installed cedar split rail fences at the entrance.

Kathleen Fry, Sanctuary Manager

The Volunteer Corner

A Special Thank You to the following Volunteers

- Angela Bedard and Trish Lee and Delta Senior secondary students who have kept our bird feeders filled regularly these past months
- Justin Malkonin, Martha Davis, Elaine Whittaker, Shurli Tylor and Eric Rossicci for their timely assistance bagging bird seed.
- Ken Hall and Peter Ward for their songbird nest boxes and assistance monitoring them.
- All those members who kept a careful watch over the crowds around the Saw-whet Owls this spring, and who have helped host visitors on busy weekends, especially Brian Self, Mary Taitt, Al Russell, Liz Bredberg and Jim Martin.
- Ivy Li for her excellent editorial input into the Chinese part of our translation project.
- Liz Bredberg for her plumbing expertise on the day the wheelchair accessible toilet broke.
- Pam Hathaway for bringing her enthusiasm and (bonus) bilingual capabilities to the school program in recent months.
- Doug Fiddick who brought his energy and humour and spent a day helping us put rock, gravel and topsoil in one of our new clearings.
- Dan Paquette, who watched some pruning one day and spontaneously asked for tools and gloves and helped out for several hours.

- Marshnotes "mail-out" Team.
- Last, but not least, the "garden ladies" Barbara Warwick, Irene Banack, and Arlie Darby, who have spent weeks to make the gardens around the Lecture Hall and washroom facilities a real showcase this spring.

Volunteers are needed for the following

- Hosting visitors along the trails on weekends from May to July. You don't have to do much, just walk the trails wearing a volunteer vest, answer visitor questions, and report back if there are problems. We are hoping to have a few volunteers specifically for long weekends and dates such as Fathers' Day.
- Hosting visitors in the Museum on weekends and answering basic questions about the Sanctuary and birds.
- Bagging bird seed, which people can volunteer for just an hour or sign up for a regular schedule.
- Work parties for some periodic trimming of blackberries when they start to snag visitors along trails in the next few months. No real expertise required. It is nesting season, so we will be careful and use hand tools only.
- To volunteer for the above activities, please leave your name and number at the Sanctuary Office 604 946 6980 and we will connect to pick a suitable date for you.

Kathleen Fry, Sanctuary Manager

Submissions invited for BCWS 2011 Calendar



2011 will be the eighth year the British Columbia Waterfowl Society has produced a calendar with images submitted by our membership. Each year the calendar's popularity grows and we now sell approximately 125 calendars between the beginning of September and year end.

Once again we ask for submissions of Sanctuary subjects for consideration for the 2011 calendar. Please leave your images at the Sanctuary Gift Shop for the attention of Varri Raffan. We receive submissions in a format of either 4x5" or 5x7" printed photographs or Jpeg disc.

Deadline: Saturday, July 17th 2010

PLEASE NOTE: due to time constraints please send only your top five favourite images for consideration.

Text: Varri Raffan, Gift Shop Manager
Image: BCWS 2010 Calendar
Sandhill Crane © Eric Rossicci

My Favourite Duck

Twenty-two years ago I started to build a cabin, single-handedly, on a high altitude lake in British Columbia's Central Coast Range. The lake is 1580 metres high and accessible only by float plane or on foot. It was only later, when people started asking me "why?", that I learned that most people would consider such remote cabin building an unusual activity for a 41-year-old woman. But I loved nature, had rudimentary experience with a chainsaw, had nothing else I wanted to do more - so why not? There are now three cabins beside the lake; they are a base camp for a small ecotourism business for naturalists and hikers, which I have called the Nuk Tessli Alpine Experience.

Although I had happily observed the birds and wildflowers that inhabited the rural area of England in which I was raised, I had no training as a naturalist. My first love was, and still is, wildflowers, particularly alpine plants. I learned taxonomy by drawing them. They have the wonderful attribute of staying in front of you for as long as you wish! The birds were just as fascinating, but a lot harder for me to sort out as there was nobody close by to consult. So it was with considerable pride that I identified a somewhat prosaic duck. Every year it would putter around my lake in front of my cabins, and I frequently saw it above the treeline as soon as the ice went out of the alpine tarns. It was apparently female, and most likely a goldeneye, at first I wasn't sure as it could have been either a Barrow's or a Common Goldeneye. It was only when I was finally able to quit tree-planting as a spring money-earner and spend breakup at Nuk Tessli that I was able to observe any males. I had to incarcerate myself with three months' supplies before the pilots at the nearest charter company 50 km. north took the skis off their planes, which was usually at the beginning of April. My lake would be good for another four weeks at least, but unless I forked out for a prohibitively expensive helicopter, I would be stuck there until the ice went out in late May or early June, and a plane could arrive on floats.

After months of snow and ice, it is always tremendously exciting to see the first spring migrant. Pecking like a miniature chicken around the door, leaving amazingly long-toed footprints in the snow, the tubby little Junco seems to think that spring has arrived even though there is a metre of ice on the lake and almost as much snow on the ground. This occurs around the end of March. Soon, although the bulk of the ice is like concrete and will be for some time, small pools begin to show where creeks run into the lake and where the river exits. As soon as a puddle is open, in plops a duck. Mallard, Common Merganser, Bufflehead, Green-winged Teal, and Barrow's Goldeneye. Most are just passing through, but the goldeneyes congregate in small numbers and do a pretty little dance. They bob their heads from side to side, sometimes on their own, and sometimes in sync with a partner of the opposite gender. It all seems to be a bit haphazard as there are usually single males parked at different places among the breaking ice floes of the river, and rafts of unaccompanied females hanging about in a separate area like a bunch of teenage girls at the mall.



Barrow's Goldeneye

Once the ice has gone, the males disappear. The females then perform a curious antic. Periodically, three or four of them fly round and round the cabin in circles half a kilometre across giving little grunty quacks. They will do this for about half an hour and repeat it daily for some weeks. The odd thing is that they are often accompanied on these excursions by female Common Mergansers. Indeed, it was some time before I was sure which duck was doing this.

Because I generally see this duck above the treeline, I was enormously surprised to find that it nests in trees. The cabins at Nuk Tessli are 300 metres below the treeline, but individuals in the scrubby whitebark pine forest can grow to 20 metres in height, and on a tiny island not far from the cabins is a snag. It is only about chest high, but it often seems to be in the centre of this daily exercise pattern.

Occasionally, a duck will land briefly on this snag before flying round and quacking again. It was not until 2009, however, that I actually saw a juvenile goldeneye, half grown and swimming with its parent not far from the island. I had birders staying with me - it was absolutely wonderful having someone who could help me identify all those little brown birds I had never been able to ask anyone about before - and I had also acquired a digital camera with an 80 x zoom, which was a valuable tool for identification. It was the birding visitors who spotted the young goldeneye. Unfortunately, the only pictures we managed to snap of it are too poor to publish.

This year, I am fortunate to have found some birding guides who are offering a tour for the public starting on July 10th. Who knows what exciting tidbits of information I will learn this time?

Text: Chris Czajkoswki

Image: Barrow's Goldeneye © Chris Czajkoswki

To enquire about the Nuk Tessli tour in July or for a bird list, visit Chris's website, www.nuktessli.ca and go to the directory on the left. The bird species list are itemized near the top.

BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

Report on the 49th Annual General Meeting

The 49th Annual General Meeting took place on April 13th, 2010 in the Lecture Hall of the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary. BCWS President Jack Bates called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm and welcomed everyone. He declared a quorum in attendance. BCWS Administrator Robert Butler acted as Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 48th AGM: The Minutes of the 48th Annual General Meeting, held on April 7th, 2009 were approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: The financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2009 along with the Accountants' Report, prepared by our auditors, was presented by the Society's Treasurer James Morrison. A brief summary of the year's highlights was provided and some questions from the floor followed.

APPOINT OF THE ACCOUNTANTS FOR 2010: KPMG were appointed as the Society's Accountants for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2010, with remuneration to be determined by the Board.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: President Jack Bates introduced the Society's Directors present, and gave a brief report on the Society and the Board's activities for the year 2009 noting the Society remains in a strong financial position. The President thanked our staff, the Directors and all the volunteers for their contributions during 2009. President Bates thanked Patricia M. Banning-Lover for her work on Marshnotes production and distribution, and, although not in attendance this year, he thanked Roy Hamaguchi for his wonderful images in Marshnotes. President Bates also thanked Gift Shop Manager Varri Johnson and staff for their work during 2009. He also thanked our Acting Sanctuary Manager, Kathleen Fry for all her efforts during the past year..

SANCTUARY MANAGER'S REPORT: Acting Sanctuary Manager, Kathleen Fry, reviewed the Manager's report briefing members on the 2009 activities and noted there are 2,229 members as of December 31, up from 2,119 from the prior year end. There were 66,469 visitors to the Sanctuary in 2009, with April 10th being the best day at 963 visitors. May with 8,542 visitors was the best month, with April next at 8,181 through the gates. There were 261 school group bookings in 2009 up from the 240 school groups in 2008. As in previous years, many people buy seed and remain in the parking area to feed the birds. The report acknowledged Varri Johnson and all the other staff and volunteers who, through their hard work, contribute to making the Sanctuary such a popular destination for visitors.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: In accord with the Society's bylaws, three Directors were elected by acclamation. The Directors are: F. Wayne Diakow, James A. Morrison and Gerald O. Oyen.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm

Following adjournment, Dr. Sean Boyd, Research Scientist with CWS, provided an update and overview on the migration and increasing numbers of the Wrangel Island Snow Geese population. Coverage of Dr. Sean Boyd's presentation "Recent increase in Wrangel Island and Snow Goose population wintering on the Fraser and Skagit deltas: causes, implications and management prescriptions" at the Annual General Meeting will be featured in the Summer issue of Marshnotes. Refreshments followed Dr. Boyd's presentation.

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

January 17th-January 23rd

On January 17th and 19th, four Canvasback were still in the area. One female Redhead was reported on January 20th. At first glance these two ducks, Redhead and Canvasback look similar. The Canvasback has a pronounced sloped forehead tapering into a long black bill and is one our largest diving ducks.

January 24th-30th

On the 24th nine Greater White-fronted Geese were seen amongst a flock of Canada Geese in the grass field on the left of the driveway as you enter the Sanctuary. Also on the 24th there was a sighting of a White-throated Sparrow feeding with a flock of White and Golden-crowned Sparrows. The not often seen Harlan's Hawk (subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk) was observed on the 24th. This hawk is dark black-brown with a bit of light mottling on the tail and a dark band at tail tip. The female Redhead was still being seen on January 24th, 26th, and 31st.

There were still ten Sandhill Crane at the Sanctuary during this week but numbers fell as they pulled out of the Sanctuary to find their own nesting territory leaving our not always successful breeding pair.

I wanted to share this interesting fact posted on The International Crane Foundation website. A Miocene Age crane fossil thought to be around ten million years old was found in Nebraska and is the same structure as the modern day cranes making it the oldest known bird species still surviving.

FEBRUARY was an unusually mild month and much like January for the species list. Towards the end of the month we noticed early activity of Canada Geese as they paired up and staked out their territory for nesting. The daffodils also showed early colour by blooming a couple of weeks early. During February 80 species were recorded.

January 31st-February 6th

On Sunday, January 31st a Short-eared Owl was spotted flying along the foreshore and a Hermit Thrush was seen in a holly bush on the east dyke. This thrush has a gray-brown back, large dark spots on the breast, a white eye ring and a reddish-brown tail and has a habit of cocking it up and down when it is perched. This bird has a lovely song and is considered by many to be one of the finest singers amongst all North American birds. This week we had an early report of a Yellow-rumped Warbler. Sixteen species of duck were recorded this week.

February 7th-February 13th

Pine Siskin were seen this week. In winter you will see these heavily streaked finches in flocks of goldfinches, juncos and crossbills. They have light yellow wing bars and a notched tail and feed on insects, seeds from coniferous and deciduous trees and backyard feeders. in the southwest corner of the Sanctuary. The Northern Saw-whet Owl was still being seen roosting in the northeast corner generally in holly trees.

continued overleaf....

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 issues 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 members and visitors (70,000+ visitors in 2009).
- 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.
- Provide support for like-minded organizations who are working on waterfowl-related projects.

Enclosed is my cheque or VISA/Mastercard number for:

- SINGLE Membership: \$20
- FAMILY Membership: \$40
- LIFE Membership: \$500
- Donation: (tax deductible) \$ _____

VISA
Mastercard
Expiry Date: _____

VISA or Mastercard # _____

Name: (Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.) _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Please mail to: **British Columbia Waterfowl Society**
5191 Robertson Road, Delta, BC, V4K 3N2
Telephone: 604 946 6980
Facsimile: 604 946 6982



Image courtesy of the Husband family

Robert C. Husband (1924-2010)

With the passing of Life Member Robert Husband on February 23rd 2010, the British Columbia Waterfowl Society lost one of its most dedicated and respected volunteers.

Robert served as a BCWS Director continuously from 1965-1994. He held the position of President from 1978-1981.

As a resident of Westham Island, Robert was always nearby to provide whatever advice or assistance was required at the Sanctuary, particularly during the fledgling years when its resources were limited.

Robert was always proud to have been one the founders of what has become the annual Pig and Corn Roast, and he enjoyed the camaraderie as both a cook and later as an attendee with his children and grandchildren at this popular fundraising event over the past 21 years. Robert's wise counsel, hard work and dedication to BCWS and to the Sanctuary will be greatly missed

Sanctuary Highlights

JANUARY starts another birding year. For many it is time to start a new species checklist for the year. During January 80 species were recorded.

January 3rd-January 9th

Thirteen species of duck were reported in this first week of 2010 with the Red-breasted Merganser and Ring-necked Duck being more unusual. On January 8th a Yellow-shafted Flicker was spotted. This bird is very similar to the Northern Flicker of which it is a basic subspecies. It has yellow on the underside of the wings and tail whereas the Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) has reddish orange. They both have a white rump patch which can be seen when flying. On January 8th and 9th a Bohemian Waxwing was seen amongst a flock of Cedar Waxwings. The Bohemian Waxwing is larger and more gray in color than the Cedar Waxwing. Other high-

lights for the week were, Glaucous Gull, Barn Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Northern Shrike.

January 10th-January 16th

January 13th and 16th had reports of up to eight Canvasback with most sightings recorded on one of the centre display ponds. Four species of owls, Barn, Northern Saw-whet, Long-eared and Short-eared were also recorded this week. Along the center dyke a Downy Woodpecker was seen excavating for a nest in a dead birch tree.

The Bohemian Waxwing was still being seen in the area mixed in with Cedar Waxwings. Other good sightings for this week were Western Grebe, Pileated Woodpecker and Pine Siskin.

continued on opposite page

Sanctuary Highlights/continued....

We are starting to see more of the Pied-billed Grebes feeding on Robertson Slough. This is the waterway on the right as you drive down the Sanctuary driveway. These small tailless diving birds eat aquatic insects, frogs, snails, fish and their own feathers. This odd behaviour of eating their own feathers is thought to protect the stomach lining by acting as padding so the sharp fish bones they ingest don't damage before they are digested and pass into the intestine. Other highlights for this week were the report of an immature Northern Goshawk seen in the southwest corner of the Sanctuary. The Northern Saw-whet Owl was still being seen roosting in the northeast corner generally in holly trees.

February 14th-20th

The first report of a swallow this year at the Sanctuary was the Tree Swallow seen on February 19th. Offshore on February 14th were two Horned Grebe, 20 Red-Breasted Merganser and a Common Loon. During this week, on the inner display ponds, we still saw Redhead, Canvasback and Ring-necked duck. Pileated Woodpecker, Lincoln's Sparrow, Common Raven and Golden-crowned Kinglet were other birds of note for this week

February 21st-27th

On the 21st we had the second report for the month of a Yellow-rumped Warbler. Larger numbers of Tree and Violet-green Swallow showed up during this period. Quite a few swallows like to perch on the power lines at the front gate in the early morning. A nice addition to your walk around the Sanctuary at this time of year, are the various bird songs. Red-winged Blackbird, Black-capped Chickadee, Song Sparrow, Kinglet and Marsh Wren all contribute to the sounds of spring. On February 25th three male and two female Ring-necked Duck and a Canvasback were recorded by our Sunday morning guided bird tour.

MARCH is the beginning of the spring migration northward. We lose the Trumpeter Swans from the surrounding farm fields but gain the return of the Lesser Snow Goose as they fuel up in preparation for their migration to Wrangel Island Russia for nesting season. During March 89 species were recorded.

February 28th-March 6th

A Eurasian Wigeon, a bird not often seen at the Sanctuary, was spotted twice this week. One report recorded the bird in the ditch paralleling the east dyke and on Robertson Slough on the right as you enter the Sanctuary. The Eurasian Wigeon is similar to the American Wigeon but the Eurasian Wigeon male has a rusty-red head with a buffy-colored crown. The females look alike. Winter is a better time for seeing these birds at the Sanctuary. The Eurasian Wigeon nests in Iceland and across North Europe and Asia and straggles to North America in the winter (October-March). On February 28th there were three male and two female Ring-necked Duck still in the area. Also on the 28th a Red-throated Loon was spotted offshore. On March 1st and 5th the Pileated Woodpecker was around. A high count for this winter was of 13 Canvasback on March 5th.



Varri Raffan

Bushtit Nest

March 7th-March 13th

One report of a nesting Bushtit came in this week. These small brownish-gray birds nest as early as mid-March in a nest they make themselves from woven lichens, moss, spider webs, insect cocoons and plant down. The nest hangs like a sock 20-25cm. long with a small circular entrance near the top. Since they start nesting early in the spring and the eggs only take 12 days to hatch the Bushtits can often have up to three broods a year.

continued on opposite page....

On March 13th a Belted Kingfisher was reported and a small flock of Greater White-fronted Geese was seen on the southwest marsh. Ring-necked Pheasant, Virginia Rail, Double-crested Cormorant, Golden-crowned Kinglet and American Bittern were a few of the other species seen in this week.

March 14th-March 20th

Like clockwork every year the first Rufous Hummingbirds appear either on March 15th or 16th. This year on March 15th a male Rufous Hummingbird was seen at a feeder by the Gift Shop. The males migrate earlier than the females to the breeding grounds. On March 17th along the east dyke a Red-breasted Sapsucker showed up. This bird really stands out in the bare trees with its bright red neck, head and breast and white longitudinal patches on each wing. On the same day an Osprey was seen flying over the Sanctuary. A few of the other birds of note for this week were Peregrine Falcon, Rough-legged Hawk, Red-necked Grebe, Killdeer, Barn Owl, Brown Creeper and a Yellow-rumped Warbler.

March 21st-March 28th

One of the first spring sightings of the Greater Yellowlegs at the Sanctuary was on March 21st along with one female Redhead and two pairs of Ring-necked Duck. On March 22nd the Eurasian Wigeon showed up again. On March 27th a Northern Saw-whet Owl was reported. It is getting harder to locate these owls at this time of year, as they take off to nest elsewhere. Black-bellied Plover, Ring-billed Gull, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Western Grebe, Merlin, Northern Shrike and a Red-eared Slider Turtle which was seen sunning itself on a log were a few other species of interest in this week.

Text: Varri Raffan, Gift Shop Manager

Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan (1910-2010)

On April 18th 2010, the conservation community lost one of its icons with the passing of Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, a pioneer of wildlife management and research and also one of the 14 original founding members of the British Columbia Waterfowl Society (BCWS) in 1961.

During the first few years of BCWS, he served as the Society's Vice-president with President Fred Auger. By 1965, after helping the Society to establish the Sanctuary, he became an Honorary Director as many other pressing tasks kept him busy at UBC and elsewhere.

Of the many initiatives of common interest with BCWS Dr. McTaggart-Cowan was involved with, one of the most notable examples is the completion of the massive work now summarized in the four volume series "The Birds of British Columbia" (UBC Press).

During his lifespan of almost 100 years, including 25 years as a Professor of Zoology at the University of BC, Dr. McTaggart-Cowan had far-reaching influences through his dedicated, scientific approach and promotion of public awareness of conservation issues.

In his "retirement years", he served as Chancellor of University of Victoria, and on the boards of many conservation organizations. He received both the Order of Canada and the Order of BC in recognition of his contributions. He leaves a legacy of biology and conservation studies and museum collections at universities; thousands of inspired wildlife ecology students working in the conservation community, and significant leadership through his directorships in the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, Nature Trust of BC, and the National Research Council of Canada.

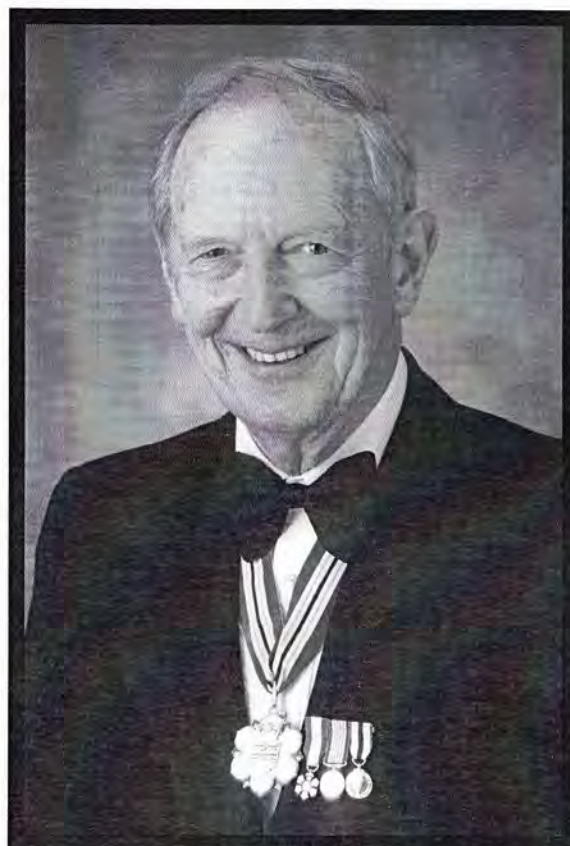
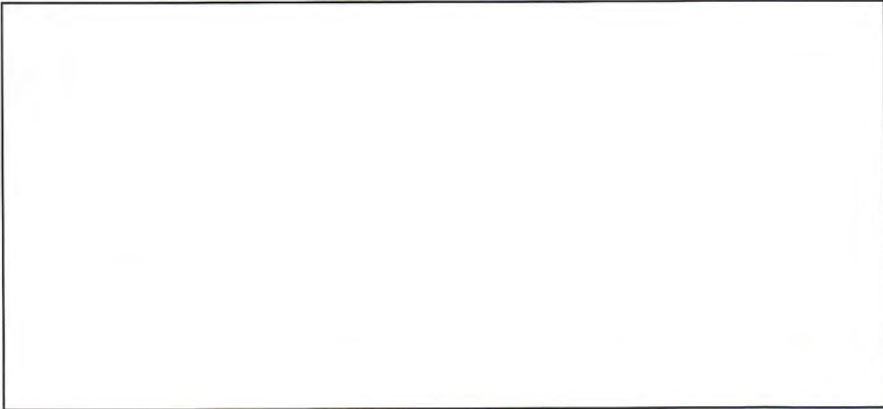



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