

# Marshnotes<sup>®</sup>



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY  
SUMMER 2019**

# 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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Submissions, articles, photographs and letters for publication may be sent to the above email and postal addresses marked for attention of Marshnotes Editor. Please include your telephone number or email and the Editor will contact you.

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

**October 15th, 2019**



*Planning a visit, but not sure if we are really busy?  
We now send out a tweet from @ReifelSanctuary  
when it looks like parking is going to be an issue.  
That account is often inactive if not needed for this.*

## Executive:

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Sanctuary Manager: Kathleen Fry  
Gift Shop Manager: Varri Raffan  
Reception: Susan Norris  
Biologist: Dan Dixon  
Maintenance: Rick Fast  
Part-time Assistants: Nicole Lamarche  
Kristina Breit

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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## Hummingbird Banding Update



*Anna's Hummingbird Photo: John Whitmore*

This spring, 103 hummingbirds were trapped and banded here at the Sanctuary during weekly sessions from May 1st to July 10th. Many thanks to volunteers Janet Thompson, Kristina Breit, David Bruce, Debbie Carr, Megan Perrett, Dominic Bourret and Francesca Wagner who turned out to help with this project.

Preliminary results, as summarized by Kristina Breit:  
 Species: 77 Rufous, 26 Anna's captured  
 Age: 98 adults, 5 juveniles captured  
 History: 76 new birds banded, 26 previously banded.

It was interesting to note that among the previously banded birds caught this year, 7 were banded in 2016, 4 in 2017, 6 last year, and 9 were caught this year after they had already been banded.

Banders Dr. Christine Bishop from Environment and Climate Change Canada and technician Azim Shariff also collected data on the overall condition of the birds and indicators of pesticide exposure.

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

Data: Kristina Breit.

## About Our Covers

*Front Cover: Mallard ducklings*

© Jim Martin

*Back Cover: Great Egret*

© John Whitmore

### Editor's Note:

*Please refer to the location map to the right to locate place names used in the Marshnotes articles.*

## Sanctuary Locations Map



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Kathleen Fry/ Kristina Breit  
 Varri Raffan  
 Varri Raffan  
 Kathleen Fry

# Bird Highlights

*The grand total of birds observed in April 2019 was 100 species. April is a good time to view shorebirds on their northern migration. You will notice the numbers and variety of ducks are fewer at this time. Owls and Trumpeter Swans have now left our area. Nesting activity for a variety of species is best in April.*

## March 31 – April 6

March 31<sup>st</sup> we saw the last lone Trumpeter Swan. We will see them return from their nesting area in Northern British Columbia, Alaska and Yukon around the middle of November. Some of our members have notice the Mute Swan sitting on her nest on the north side of the Westham Island Bridge. Mute Swans are an introduced species brought from Eurasia back in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but over the many years some wild populations have established themselves in the Pacific Northwest. They lay 2 to 5 eggs which take between 34 and 41 days to hatch, so we will wait to see how many cygnets (young swans) this pair at the bridge will have.

The first Brown-headed Cowbird was seen on the 31<sup>st</sup>. They are not a popular bird with other species, as the female lays her eggs in other birds' nests and takes no part in rearing her young. Most often Cowbirds use the nests of smaller birds such as warblers and the larger earlier hatching cowbird out-competes its nest mates for food and space. Brown-headed Cowbirds are classed as a "parasitic nester". The males have a lovely dark shiny body with a dull brown head. Females are overall dull brown. On the 4<sup>th</sup> 3 Chestnut-backed Chickadees were spotted along the East Dyke. Wilson's Snipe, American Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon and Western Meadowlark were other birds that made the highlight list.

## April 7 – April 13

The first Common Yellowthroat was heard this week along the outer seaward dyke. Males have a bold black mask and yellow throats while the female lacks



*Common Yellowthroat*

*Photo: Sandy Cameron*

the black mask. Their song is loud and distinctive and sounds like it is calling "whichity, whichity, whichity" The first Orange-crowned Warbler was reported on the 7<sup>th</sup>, but don't look for the orange crown. As its name in Latin (*vermivora celata*) implies it is hidden and virtually invisible. Both sexes look similar with an olive green back, a yellow green belly and no wing bars. This time of year most of the Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser and Greater Scaup are gone.

The American Goldfinches have now come into their spring breeding plumage. The females have an overall greenish yellow body with dark wings and tail. Males also have dark wings and tail but their bodies are a bright lemon yellow sporting a black crown. The first arrival of Barn Swallows was noted this week. With a rust colored belly and an iridescent cobalt blue back, Barn Swallows are our only fork tailed Swallow. A few other highlights this week were Hutton's Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Savannah Sparrow and Western Sandpiper.



*American Goldfinch*

*Photo: Melissa Hafting*

## April 14 – April 20

Cliff Swallows have now been seen over the Sanctuary skies. At a quick glance these swallows although lacking the fork tail, do resemble the Barn Swallow. Cliff Swallows have beige to rusty colored rump, a rusty triangle shape on the forehead and a dark throat. Large flocks of Lesser Snow Geese are still being spotted in the outer marshes. Of the 72 species reported this week, some of the noteworthy sightings include Merlin and Western Sandpiper on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Purple Martins on the 16<sup>th</sup>, Hermit Thrush and Barn Owl on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and Rough-legged Hawk, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Purple Finch on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

## April 21 – April 27

April tends to have one of the highest species counts for spring bird sightings. We ended with 85 different birds reported in this week alone. Contributing factors for this higher count is the larger variety of shorebirds and warblers that pass through on their spring migration northward. The resident Sandhill Crane





*Canada Goose goslings* Photo: John Whitmore

family are present every day. Still in a nesting mode, the parents are still attempting to establish a nest site that will not be done in by predators. One would think the environment of the Sanctuary would be an attractive nesting area for additional Sandhill Cranes, but according to a pamphlet named “Wildlife in British Columbia” from the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks they like to have a 20 to 80 hectare territory (49 to 197 Acres) in which they can secure enough food resources for them and their young. Thanks to helpful visitors, 2 Hummingbird nests and 3 Bushtit nests were located. The first hatching of Canada Geese was spotted along the Auger Trail on the 26<sup>th</sup>. First Spring returns of Cinnamon Teal, Osprey, Turkey Vulture, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Townsend’s Solitaire, Yellow Warbler and Wilson’s Warbler and the exit of Pied-billed Grebe, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, Common Raven, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Dark-eyed Junco all happened this week.

*May is the month to spot ducklings and goslings. The majority of the spring migrants have moved on and we will have mostly resident birds for the summer. The total species count for May 2019 was 99.*

#### April 28 – May 4

The last sighting of the Northern Goshawk was on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Snow Geese numbers have really declined with only 275 left to be seen on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the sky above the parking lot 3 Turkey Vultures were spotted on the 1<sup>st</sup>. We are up to 3 batches of Canada Goose goslings. Morning is a better time to locate goslings and ducklings. With the heat of midday most of them retreat to the tall grass for shade and a nap. Black-bellied Plover, Common Raven and Virginia Rail were highlights for this week.

#### May 5 – May 11

May 5<sup>th</sup> just north of the Observation Tower a male Yellow-headed Blackbird was spotted in the marsh. May 6<sup>th</sup> at the front gate a Black-headed Grosbeak was found. Most of the time, like a lot of birds species, you hear them before you spot them. The call

of the Black-headed Grosbeak is much like an American Robin but louder and quicker. Since their return in early April, Barn Swallows have now picked out nest sites and are ready to build. Both male and females take part in constructing their mud nests which can take up to 1,000 trips to collect mud and grasses that they roll in their beaks to form a pellet which they adhere to eaves of wooden structures. A few areas to check for Barn Swallow nests are in some of the Bird Blinds, under the eaves of the Viewing Platform and the Warming Hut. Barn Swallows also have nests underneath the deck of the Warming Hut, which is a good protected area from any marauding Northwestern Crows. Five Blue-winged Teal and one pair of Cinnamon Teal were reported this week. Appearing on the 8<sup>th</sup> was the first hatch of 10 Mallard ducklings. May 11<sup>th</sup> had reports of both Harris’s Sparrow and Nashville Warbler. Out of the 82 species on the week’s list, shorebirds include Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher and Long-billed Dowitcher.

#### May 12 – May 18

On the 12<sup>th</sup> the first brood of Wood Ducks were reported. On the 13<sup>th</sup> we had another fly by from a Turkey Vulture. A Western Wood Pewee was seen on the 16<sup>th</sup>. On the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> we had a special guest, a beautiful Great Egret standing in the House Pond. It ended up staying with us well into the next week. Our last visit from a Great Egret was August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, and it stayed until the middle of October that year. May 18<sup>th</sup> marked the return of Willow Flycatchers and Pacific-slope Flycatchers. There are still 28 Lesser Snow Geese being seen far out in the tidal marsh.

#### May 19 – May 25

One Stilt Sandpiper and 8 Wilson’s Phalaropes have now joined the 9 other shorebird species that appeared last week. The best place to watch shorebirds is in the West Field and the Southwest Marsh when the tide is high. After a lengthy absence the Cedar Waxwings, one of our more attractive songbirds, have now returned to our area. Adult birds have a sleek soft beige body, a tufted crown, yellow tipped tail and a black mast. Sometimes, when wings are spread, you might notice red tips, resembling red sealing wax. As a result the name Cedar Waxwing is fitting. Juvenile Cedar Waxwings lack the black mask and have a streaked chest. Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln’s Sparrow and Swainson’s Thrush were other good finds on the list of 68 species.

#### May 26 – June 1

A bit of a dip in the number of species spotted this week, which ended with only 55 different birds. September 2004 was the last sighting of a Blackpoll Warbler at the Sanctuary but on the 26<sup>th</sup> one was

(...../continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)



*Blackpoll Warbler* Photo: Cameron Eltringham

reported at the Northeast corner. Also on the 26<sup>th</sup> an adult Great Horned Owl was found along the entrance driveway. On June 1<sup>st</sup> we had an usually high count of 31 Blue-winged Teal spotted mainly on Fuller Slough and Robertson Slough. From the outer dyke viewing north visitors noticed 22 Purple Martins flying in and out of both sets of nesting boxes. The Great Egret is still being located in various spots throughout the trails. Peregrine Falcon, Warbling Vireo, Swainson's Thrush and Black-headed Grosbeak round out the highlights for this period. Regardless of the low species count we still ended up with some out of the ordinary and interesting finds.

*June 2019 had a total of 82 species. Waterfowl are heavily molting now, unmistakably so with the many feathers covering the ground. Viewing of both swallows and warblers are good this month.*

#### June 2 – June 8

Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Townsend's Warbler and Bullock's Oriole were new arrivals in this week. As Warblers and Flycatchers are mainly insect eaters (insectivorous) the best place to look for them is in deciduous trees where they will be checking the leaves for any insect life. Other great eaters of insects are Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Bank Swallows, Cliff Swallows and Barn Swallows, which are all present now. Most swallows can eat up to 720 insects per day making them one of nature's best bug zappers.

#### June 9 – June 15

Atop bushes along the grassy trail behind the Observation Tower, 3 Eastern Kingbirds were spotted on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Northern Harriers have been absent from view along the outer marsh for the past few weeks. The slow, low flying hawk with the white rump patch will now be looking after young. They nest on platforms of vegetation in the marsh and tend to be very secretive, not wanting to attract predators to their nest sites. Every year at this time we start to look for

the fledged young Great Horned Owls. On the 15<sup>th</sup> we did locate one adult bird that was trying to hide in the trees by the picnic area but was given up by the crows that were harassing him.

#### June 16 – June 22

As you might have experienced in your own backyard, you go from filling hummingbird feeders daily to now having to change out the syrup because of lack of use. Now that the Anna's Hummingbirds have had their 1 or 2 broods some will now move up the mountain sides feeding on the natural wildflowers. They will be back down with the cooler temperatures of fall. Most of the Rufous Hummingbirds will have already started their journey south to Mexico for the winter.

I occasionally have members ask me what bird is making that sound in my yard. The most inquired about bird is the Spotted Towhee (old name, Rufous-side Towhee). Mostly in the morning it emits a buzzy electric sound, "zhreeee". Their other call "cheweeee" probably is how it got its name Towhee. You will find them doing a type of two-step to expose food hidden under leaves. The males have black head and back with white spotted wings, rusty sides, pale belly and a red eye. On the 16<sup>th</sup> the beautifully colored male Bullock's Oriole was found once again near the beginning of the East Dyke trail. With a bright orange and black body it really stood out.

#### June 23 – June 29

June 26<sup>th</sup> a Wilson's Phalarope was spotted at the north end of the West Field. On June 29<sup>th</sup> we had a very unusual amount of Marbled Godwits, 8 in all, showing up in the West Field. Having this many and so early in the shorebird migration is very rare. Also on the 29<sup>th</sup> we had a Semipalmated Sandpiper, Barn Owl, Black Swift and Orange-crowned Warbler all making the highlight list. Visitors have mentioned a lot of trees, mainly Hawthorne and Crabapple, appear to be dead along the Cross Dyke and Seaward Dyke. These trees are not dead but the leaves have all been eaten by Webworms. When walking along these trails you may have noticed their long hanging webs. When they are grown up they are a moth. In the fall the adult moths lay eggs on the underside of leaves which they wrapped in a silken cocoon. They will pick mainly fruit trees to deposit their eggs which have leaves that are higher in protein. When the larvae hatch they spin a web around the leave to protect their high protein food source. If the web is broken they will be open to predators such as lady beetles, yellow jackets, ants, chickadees and bushtits. In the end the tree is not dead but just devoid of its juicy leaves and will make a comeback next year.

Text: Varri Raffan  
Gift Shop Manager



## Feather Feature



*Some sample feathers*

*Note: The research I did for this piece comes from several sources, but one that I enjoy and find very informative is named “A Guide to North American Species– Bird Feathers”, by S.David Scott and Casey McFarland. published by Stackpole Books out of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. If you ever need a feather identified this is the book to use.*

Besides insulating and covering the body of a bird, feathers provide protection from sun, rain, and injury so it is very important that they are kept in good shape. Colorful nuptial plumage helps in courtship. Dark or earth tone feathers serve to camouflage. Tail feathers act as a prop for woodpeckers when they are in position for their powerful pecking. Tail feathers also help Ruddy Ducks swim underwater and when Grebes eat feathers this helps line their stomachs against the sharp bones of the fish they eat. When building nests downy feathers come in handy to line the nests which insulate eggs and young.

One of the most important functions of feathers is for flight. Flight feathers on the wings are divided into two categories – primaries and secondaries. Primaries are the larger and outermost flight feathers while the secondaries are closer to the body. On the down stroke, primaries provide lift while the secondary feathers remain close together giving lateral stability.

A feather is made up of the shaft (rachis) from which intricate flexible vanes extend outward and on these vanes are barbs and barbules. When in alignment they are much like being zipped up. So when a bird hits a branch or twig they simply re-join the barbs and barbules by drawing their beak over the feather during preening.

Owls have specialized primary feathers. Instead of a smooth edge, owl feathers have a serrated edge which disrupts the flow of air over the wings in flight. This serration helps eliminate the noise created by airflow from smooth feather edges. This gives an advantage to the owl as they can be upon their prey without a sound.

Non-vocal sounds are another way feathers are used by birds. By altering the spacing of wing or tail feathers and causing them to vibrate, birds can create a variety of whistling, rattling, buzzing, or other sounds as air passes through those feathers in flight. In trying to attract a female the male Anna’s Hummingbird emits an explosive noise made at the bottom of its U-shaped dive as it passes near a perched female. This noise is produced by the air flowing through their tail feathers.

Feathers do eventually wear out so each year a lot of birds go through a moult which is the process of shedding worn out feathers and growing new healthy plumage. For “synchronous moulters” such as ducks, geese, swans and grebes, they change their feathers all at once which will take just over a month and leaves them flightless for this period. Song birds molt a bit differently. They moult from winter plumage to nuptial (breeding) plumage in spring which takes about 5 to 12 weeks. (Example: American Goldfinch).

As you can see feathers are essential to a bird’s existence.

Text and Photo: Varri Raffan,  
Gift Shop Manager

# Manager's Report

Visitor numbers for April, May and June 2019 totalled 26,190, compared to 25,423 in 2018 and 24,960 in 2017. After the exceptional weather of March, April was slightly cooler than usual, with a few rainy periods, May was warm but about the same as most recent years, and June set some temperature records when it reached 33 degrees on the 12th.

During these months we have been monitoring certain bird species, cleaning up after the crowds of visitors in early spring and watching the departure of many of our ducks for nesting areas elsewhere. It is a natural part of their life cycle for many bird species to migrate out of here in spring. Certain northern and interior habitats are much richer environments, for example, for waterfowl to nest in, whereas coastal areas generally have milder climates, so they are good areas for those same birds to spend their winters. Some of our visitors are still asking in July "Where did all the ducks go?" If they keep asking long enough it will be fall and the ducks will be back.

April in particular is a month of transition. Small flocks of key species such as Snow Geese loitered into early May, but by the time they left, so had 90% of wintering Mallards, all diving ducks, and nearly all of the American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and Northern Shovelers. This left just a few Gadwall, Wood Ducks, Canada Geese and some local Mallards to nest for the summer. Many other species that attract visitors over the winter also depart in this month. For example, the concentration of hawks, eagles and owls vanishes. Bird diversity still remains high, though, as during this period, the Sanctuary is visited by thousands of migrant songbirds and shorebirds during their migration to northern breeding grounds.

Over these past three months, we have been tracking nesting success and behavior of the following species, with varying degrees of detail:

### Waterfowl:

Mallard nests started hatching from May 8th onwards, and we recorded 23 broods up to the second week in July. June was the main hatch month, with 12 broods compared to the 7 in May and the 4 late broods seen in July.

Canada Goose nests seem to have experienced a lot of predation or some form of disruption in March and April, as we initially only saw three broods (April 26th and May 1st) out in the open near the entrance. Only 2 more broods hatched in May and only 2 in June, with less than 30 goslings in total produced. Mallards and geese are both ground nesters, and during March and April, there were many Raccoons and Mink seen, as well as some prolonged periods of

high visitor use. Between predation and possible disruptions by crowds near nests, the sense is that many birds may have abandoned nesting attempts this spring.

Wood Duck broods have also been scarce this year, with only 3 broods noted, hatching May 12th and 20th, and June 1st. This caused us to do a quick check of the nest boxes in July to investigate. Only 3 or 4 boxes shown any signs of successful hatches, and the remainder of the boxes used by the Wood Ducks contained predated or abandoned eggs. We suspect Mink may be the main predators.

We have not yet seen any Gadwall broods this year. They nest later in the summer than Mallards, but generally we have seen at least a few broods by July.



Mallard ducklings

Photo: Kathleen Fry

### Sandhill Cranes:

Every year, there are dramas associated with our Sandhill Cranes. This year, the pair laid at least five eggs and seem to have now officially given up nesting this year.

Eggs were laid April 3rd and 5th on a log boom and lost by April 11th. At least one egg was laid on a pile of Cattail Easter Sunday and was already broken eggshells by the next day. Another egg was laid in the same Cattail marsh April 28th and was gone the next day, and then the pair waited for the Canada Goose nest to hatch on their usual island. The geese hatched out 4 goslings on May 4th, and the Cranes had adopted the island by the next morning and had laid another egg by 6 pm. They incubated this egg for three weeks, but on May 27th they had left the nest and there were egg fragments on the shoreline.

The only good thing that happened that whole period was that their last year's colt Louie finally found two other young cranes to hang around with on May 4th, instead of constantly calling and seemingly wanting attention from its parents. Since early May, people have been able to see all five birds here every day.





*Barn Swallow making its nest Photo: Sandy Cameron*

**Barn Swallows:**

In 2014, we tracked Barn Swallow nest sites in the Sanctuary to verify preferred locations, the timing of nesting, and whether there are multiple clutches over the summer. That year, we determined there were at least 60 nest sites, and at least 45 of these were active sometime over that summer, but not all at the same time. More than 20 nests of these were below the deck of the Warming Hut attached to supporting beams.

This year, on July 4th, Dan and Kristina did a quick survey of the Sanctuary’s sites to see how this species was faring. This one-time count showed 40 nests in use to date (25 still active nests and 20 finished). A revisit to some sites the following week showed new clutches starting in some of the “finished” nests, so we suspect use will be about the same as last time.

These birds prefer to attach their mud nests to wooden structures, and nests are found all over the Sanctuary above and below decks and inside and outside of blinds. The most popular spots were the out of sight locations such as the underside of the Warming Hut deck (22 nests), the boarded up SW Marsh blind (8 nests), and the Center Dyke Blind (7 nests).

These birds are particularly susceptible to disturbance and seem to abandon nest sites if there are people constantly too close to a nest or a watchful predator such as a Northwestern Crow visits the area. We saw early interest and mud-gathering for nests above the deck of the Warming Hut and Viewing Platform, for example, but the birds abandoned some of these sites for more than a month and are just in July exploring their potential again.

**Great Horned Owls:**

Each year in mid-winter, a pair of Great Horned Owls starts roosting together along North Dyke or East Dyke, then they disappear for several months and we assume that they are nesting nearby in the Alaksen

(..... /continued on page 10)

**Special Notices**

**2020 Sanctuary Calendar**

If you have taken some interesting bird photographs at the Sanctuary and would like to offer them for use in our upcoming Sanctuary 2020 Calendar, please talk to Varri at the Gift Shop for details.

**A Big Thank You to Dave McClue**

Dave McClue, our maintenance staff since 2011 retired at the end of April. We all would like to convey our thanks for his hard work and professional approach to repairs and construction projects here at the Sanctuary. Best wishes for a happy retirement, Dave.



*Dave McClue*

*Photo: Kathleen Fry*

**Bus Subsidies for Class Field Trips**

Although the details are yet to be worked out, we are likely to have a broader scope to the grant we have been receiving from Nature Canada for the past 4 years to support school class visits to the Sanctuary. If you are a teacher who needs some support for field trips out to the Sanctuary, please visit our website for more information on how to apply for a full or partial bus subsidy to defray costs.

(Continued from page 9)

National Wildlife Area, so we wait for the results. It is always exciting when the pair shows up again in mid-summer, as they often bring recently-fledged young with them and confirm our theories.

This year, as usual, our pair of owls was seen together consistently until Valentine's Day then disappeared. In mid-June a lone adult bird was sometimes behind the Museum. On June 22nd, our survey team was looking for it back there and encountered the adult pair and three newly-flying youngsters! Since then, the family has been moving about and has been seen along East Dyke, the inner trails and the picnic area.

The species profile from **Birds of North America**<sup>1</sup> indicates that Great Horned Owl pairs are mostly resident on their territories year-round and nest very early in the year, laying up to 4 eggs in cavities or trees with large horizontal branches to support the nest and chicks. Incubation lasts 30 to 37 days and is done exclusively by the female, with the male delivering food for her during this period. If we assume that our local pair had a nest underway by the beginning of March 2019, then incubated into the first week of May, the resulting chicks then would be expected to be venturing from the nest in 6 or 7 weeks, making it the third week in June, and lo and behold, there they were, all on one branch behind the Museum!

#### **Barn Owl:**

Sometimes, staff are unobservant. While we were looking for the Great Horned Owl family out behind the Museum in early July, there was some scrabbling inside the old Barn Owl box on the post back there, and we could see an adult Barn Owl and two owlets that were clearly going to be big enough to fly by the

end of July. Calculating back through 50 to 55 days from hatch to fledging, and 29 to 34 days of incubation outlined by Birds of North America<sup>2</sup>, we calculated the Barn Owls had been busy in that box unnoticed by us since late April!

#### **Red-tailed Hawk:**

Those of us hoping to see Red-tailed Hawk chicks in the nest built March 30th were probably quite stymied when the nest tree leafed out and visibility became quite reduced. The sharp-eyed adults, though, seemed to have a keen sense of people spying on them from below among the parking spots along the driveway and regularly took off with many screeching calls. Red-tailed Hawks lay 2 or 3 eggs, and incubation lasts 28 to 35 days, so this nest probably hatched in the first two weeks in May. It usually takes 6 or 7 weeks to fledge young, and we started to see just one juvenile Red-tailed Hawk with a begging call starting at the end of June moving around the driveway trees. Apparently "Junior" will expect most of its food still to be provided by its parents or other adult birds until about 6 weeks after leaving the nest.

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

#### References:

1. Artuso, C., C. S. Houston, D. G. Smith, and C. Rohner (2013). Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*), version 2.0. In *The Birds of North America* (A. F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bna.372>
2. Marti, C. D., A. F. Poole, and L. R. Bevier (2005). Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), version 2.0. In *The Birds of North America* (A. F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bna.1>



Three Great Horned Owl young and one adult

Photo: Kristina Breit



# The Volunteer Corner

## Special thanks to:

- ◆ Mary Taitt for leading our regular Sunday Bird Walk.
- ◆ Jim Martin, Brian Self, Emma Turgeon, and David Bruce for helping visitors along trails.
- ◆ Justin Makonin, Eric Rossicci, and Eileen Axford and students Gavin Cui, Kevin Li and Isabella Tom for bagging seed and filling bird feeders.
- ◆ Our spring newsletter mailout team of Eileen Ryan, Debbie Carr, Jim Martin and Su Langlois.
- ◆ Brian Self, Nicole Lamarche, Kristina Breit, and and BCIT students Brooklyn Hillman and Sarah Yeomans for their assistance with our bi-weekly Sanctuary Bird Surveys.
- ◆ Megan Perrett for helping with pruning.

## Volunteers needed:

- ◆ Sanctuary visitor hosts on busy weekends such as the August BC Day or Labour Day weekends.
- ◆ Museum host for Sunday mornings.

- ◆ Helping to remove invasive plant species in August and September.
- ◆ Helping with bird surveys every two weeks.
- ◆ Picking up and delivering of small trees from North Vancouver to the Sanctuary.

For more information, ask at the Gift Shop or visit our website. [www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com](http://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com) and explore the Volunteer page.

Please leave your name and contact information at our office 604-946-6980 or send me an email.

Kathleen ([kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com](mailto:kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com).)



**A Special  
Thank You**  
TO 8 YR OLD

**ANANYA SRIVALLI**

FOR DONATING HER  
BIRTHDAY FUNDS TO THE SANCTUARY

## 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.

### Enclosed is my cheque or VISA/MasterCard number for:

SINGLE Membership:  **\$25**

FAMILY Membership:  **\$50**

LIFE Membership:  **\$500**

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Name: (Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_

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Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to **British Columbia Waterfowl Society**  
5191 Robertson Road, Delta BC V4K 3N2

Telephone: 604 946 6980 Fax: 604 946 6982

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

# BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

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