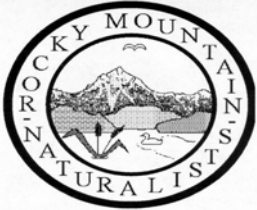


Rocky Mountain Naturalists Newsletter

RM naturalists newsletter is published quarterly

Spring 2006

Volume 3, Issue 1



Editors corner

Please send any articles or comments to
scoutfir@shaw.ca



Also, note that the deadline for articles
for the summer issue is June 21

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CLUB NEWS:

Meetings of the RMN are regularly scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month, 7:30 p.m. at the Mt. Baker School. Check your e-mail for agendas and final locations.

Outing leaders: Don't forget to jot down quick notes on your outing and pass them into the newsletter. Humour highlights, sightings and pictures work just fine.

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, How the Robin Got its Name

Written by Bob Sundstrom, from Seattle Audubon. (submitted by Greg Ross)



Behind every bird name there is a story - and often a unique bit of history.

Consider our familiar American Robin, which lives throughout much of North America but is not found in Europe. When English settlers in the New World encountered this new bird, they saw in it a reflection of the bird they knew as the Robin - or Robin Redbreast - of the old country. So they called this one a Robin, too. The Robin of the British Isles is a tiny bird with an orange face and upper breast, and only a distant relative of our much larger American Robin.

And there were more "robins" to come. One writer remarked: "Wherever the English have settled they have tended to bestow the name Robin on any bird with a noticeable amount of red or russet in the plumage." On this continent alone, Western Bluebirds, which have some orange on the breast, were called Robins by the British. Towhees were Ground Robins, and the Baltimore Oriole was called the Golden Robin.

Today the American and British Ornithological Unions work together to determine, among other things, how a given bird got its name.

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Winter outings summary

March 18, 2006

Eleven Rocky Mountain Naturalist spent a few hours looking around at Wasa today. Only 4 mallards, 1 Great Blue Heron and lots of geese at the sloughs as well as the Bald Eagle near its nest. On the lake, which is mostly still frozen, there were 48 Tundra Swans, Northern Pintail, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Common Mergansers, and Common Goldeneye. A hunt for the Pygmy Nuthatch was unsuccessful but it had been seen within the past few weeks. Usual Red-winged Blackbirds, Black-billed Magpies etc.

I know that Spring is truly here when the buttercups are blooming in Mildred's Meadow. We headed down expecting nothing with all the cold weather recently and were surprised and delighted to find dozens blooming! Some idiots have been mucking in the mud and destroying the vegetation in this area. This is becoming a far too common problem

Ruth Goodwin

April 1st

"Williamson's Sapsucker"
Meet at Happy Hands Campground
10:00 Also Wildflowers
Ruth - 427-5404

Welcome To Spring!

April 8th

"Combo" Bike trip around
Wasa Lake or birding for
those who don't have a bike
Meet: Wasa Campground
9:00 Also a trip to Mildred's
Pond Woff Cr.
Meet for Lunch at
"Black Bear Diner"
Tony - 489-1813
Kathy - 427-4784



April 19th

"Birding with Margol & Travis"
Elisabeth Lake 8:00
Trip via Moyie & Johnson Lake
ph - 426-7332

Bring a Lunch



May 13th

"Little Big Day"
6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Dinner: more info
Greg - 489-2566

May 31st

"Evening Ramble"
Southend of Bummers Flat
Mort's Marsh

Time: 7:00 p.m.
Meet: Mort's Marsh
Elaine: elainedoran@shaw.ca





June 3rd

"Hawkins Creek"
Meet: Elisabeth Lake
Time: 7:30 a.m.
Ame - 427-2595
Bring a Lunch

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Spring OUTINGS LIST (EXTRA!!!)

<p>April 26th, 8:30am. Birding in black cottonwood riparian area of St. Mary River. Wycliffe The Land Conservancy property. Meet at Kimberley Trap and Skeet Club in Wycliffe. Be prepared for walking on uneven ground and in absence of a trail. We will likely be walking through snowy and wet/boggy areas. Lewis' woodpeckers are known to nest here. Paula at 427 4711.</p>	
<p>May 9th, 8:30am. Plant and bird walk on Wycliffe grassland, The Land Conservancy property. Meet at Kimberley Trap and Skeet Club in Wycliffe. Be prepared to walk on uneven ground. Paula 427 4711</p>	<p>Sunday, May 28 1:00 - 4:30 Mother's Day Hill, Wycliffe. flowers and views of Wycliffe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cranbrook people- meet at Marianne and Daryl's - 3401 Wilks Road at 1:00 -Kimberley people - meet at the pullout at approximately 1 kilometre on the Perry Creek Road at 1:15 -uphill hike for an hour, to the top Marianne 489-1601
	

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Mail to:
Rocky Mountain Naturalists
P.O. Box 701
Cranbrook, B.C.
VIC 4J5

\$25 for family
\$20 for individual

Name _____ Phone # _____
Address _____ Postal Code _____

Rocky Mountain Naturalists Newsletter

[Spring Happenings from the Notebooks of Mildred White](#)

Submitted by Dianne Cooper

March, 2006

Here's a brief list of the earliest dates for interesting species from Mildred's notebooks.

It's a rather long list but because the next issue of the newsletter won't be out until July, the May species are included to give you a head start.

Each species is placed in the month where it had the most firsts-of-the-year. In other words, the month it is most likely to arrive based on past years' earliest dates. For a few species, the earliest date is in the previous month; but the majority are in the month in which it is placed. Remember though that these are one person's records and yours will vary from these.

Someday someone will have the time and experience to really have a look at these and figure out if the yearly differences were across the board of many species and how global warming is having an effect.

March

Here's what you should have seen in March already. If you haven't, get out there! (I promise to look for a Meadowlark tomorrow)

And don't forget to try to write down the last time you saw the winter visitors, like Bohemian Waxwing.

<i>March</i>	Code	Earliest Date in March	Location
Killdeer	B-KILL	24-Mar-74	Pond W of Hwy 93 & 95 at Prairie Rd
Say's Phoebe	B-SAPH	27-Mar-00	6600 block Wasa Lake Park Drive, OBS_ID 53
Horned Lark	B-HOLA	16-Mar-96	Porteous Rd
Mountain Bluebird	B-MOBL	23-Mar-76	Bear Pond - Wasa Sloughs S
Western Bluebird	B-WEBL	22-Mar-92	Mission Wycliffe Rd
American Robin	B-AMRO	06-Apr-74	7900 block Joe Sun Rd, Sun Property and Residence
Varied Thrush	B-VATH	21-Mar-78	Kootenay River at W Creston Bridge
Bohemian Waxwing	B-BOWA	24-Mar-76	White Property
Western Meadowlark	B-WEME	23-Mar-76	Bartholomew Marsh

March or April

Some years these ones arrive in their own month rather than ours.

<i>March or April</i>		Earliest Date in March or April	
Trumpeter Swan	B-REDH	21-Mar-78	Duck Lake
Osprey	B-OSPR	15-Apr-78	on Wasa Lake
Tree Swallow	B-TRSW	07-Apr-76	Prairie Rd
Violet-green Swallow	B-VGSW	29-Mar-92	Ta Ta Creek
Spotted Towhee	B-SPTO	30-Apr-74	White Residence before December 1974, Archibald St

Some years these species are earlier, like this year, the Trumpeter Swans are already at Wasa Lake.

And on 21/03/2006 I popped outside for a minute and heard the distinct trumpet right above my house in Marysville. About 100 swans were flying north east, probably going from Saint Mary's Lake to Wasa. A snow shower was coming down the Saint Mary's Valley so perhaps they were tired of winter's last breath, just like most of us.

April

You still have these species to look forward to but remember it's not a race (unless you enjoy that kind of thing).

This is the month for the hardy grebes and the desperate shorebirds.

<i>April</i>		Earliest Date in April	
Pied-billed Grebe	B-PBGR	06-Apr-74	Reed Bed - Wasa Sloughs
Red-necked Grebe	B-RNGR	28-May-97	Reed Bed - Wasa Sloughs
Great Blue Heron	B-GBHE	14-Mar-92	Large Open Area
Ring-necked Duck	B-NOSL	05-Apr-00	Island Pond
Northern Harrier	B-NOHA	31-Mar-94	North Star Landing
American Kestrel	B-AMKE	26-Mar-97	Street between McDougal and Trail, OBS_ID 34 and 93I
American Coot	B-AMCO		
American Avocet	B-AMAV	22-Apr-99	Elizabeth Lake
Black-necked Stilt	B-BNST	26-Apr-01	Elizabeth Lake
		26-Apr-01	Elizabeth Lake
Long-billed Curlew	B-LBCU	28-Apr-74	Skookumchuck Prairie S
Red-naped Sapsucker	B-RNSA	20-May-74	W of Lower Pond - Wolf Creek
Marsh Wren	B-MAWR	21-Apr-74	Sun Marsh near White Property
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	B-RCKI	21-Apr-74	White Property
White-crowned Sparrow	B-WCSP	28-Apr-74	Kimberley
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	B-GCRF	10-Apr-95	Kimberley

April or May

This is the time for the delicate grebes and the hardy warblers and sparrows.

<i>April or May</i>		Earliest Date in April or May	
Eared Grebe	B-EAGR	19-Apr-76	Prairie Rd
Horned Grebe	B-HOGR	18-Apr-99	on Wasa Lake
American White Pelican	B-AWPE	07-May-93	Sewage Effluent Fields
Sora	B-SORA	11-May-77	Sun Marsh near White Property
Virginia Rail	B-VIRA	29-Apr-80	Sun Marsh near White Property
Sandhill Crane	B-SACR	17-Apr-93	Bummer's Flats
Barn Swallow	B-BASW	30-Apr-77	White Property
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	B-NRWS	13-Apr-97	Culvert at N End - Wasa Sloughs
Gray Catbird	B-GRCA	16-Apr-99	Peavine Bridge
Yellow-rumped Warbler	B-YRWA	29-Apr-79	Wasa W
Western Tanager	B-WETA	17-Apr-95	White Property
Savannah Sparrow	B-SAVS	28-Apr-74	Skookumchuck Prairie S
Vesper Sparrow	B-VESP	28-Apr-74	Skookumchuck Prairie S
Yellow-headed Blackbird	B-YHBL	23-May-76	Sun Marsh near White Property

May

This is the month for hummingbirds, although last year I saw a Rufous in April, flycatchers, the rest of the warblers and the delicate sparrows. (Hey, I don't remember other people's FOY)

Look at that Goldfinch way down there at the bottom of the list. This year Goldfinch was seen on the Cranbrook Christmas Bird count. And many have seen it already out at Wasa. And last year, late, in August or September, I think, I saw a dozen juveniles in a couple of places, like Prairie Rd and Kelly Rd.

<i>May</i>		Earliest Date in May	
Western Grebe	B-WEGR	12-May-75	Kootenay River Mud Flats
American Bittern	B-AMBI	28-Mar-76	Waite Creek at LD Ranch Rd (N)
Wilson's Phalarope	B-WIPH	12-May-74	Pighin Rd N
Spotted Sandpiper	B-SPSA	23-Mar-97	Aspen Rd and Balsam Rd
Black Tern	B-BLTE	26-May-74	Sun Marsh near White Property
Black-chinned Hummingbird	B-BCHU	18-May-78	Wasa, village and or lake
Calliope Hummingbird	B-CAHU	14-May-00	White Property
Rufous Hummingbird	B-RUHU	07-May-78	White Property
Lewis's Woodpecker	B-LEWO	23-May-76	Sun Marsh near White Property
Alder Flycatcher	B-ALFL	26-May-74	Foster Rd (S)
		26-May-74	White Property
Dusky Flycatcher	B-DUFL	23-May-01	Elizabeth Lake
Hammond's Flycatcher	B-HAFL	04-May-96	Pighin Rd S
Least Flycatcher	B-LEFL	20-May-79	Sun Marsh near White Property
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	B-PSFL	20-May-74	Wolf Creek
		20-May-74	W of Lower Pond - Wolf Creek
Willow Flycatcher	B-WIFL	28-May-99	Elizabeth Lake
Eastern Kingbird	B-EAKI	11-May-97	Columere Rd turnoff, Hwy 93 & 95
Western Kingbird	B-WEKI	05-May-94	Wycliffe at highway to McClure's Pond
Western Wood-Pewee	B-WWPE	20-May-74	Wolf Creek
Swainson's Thrush	B-SWTH	29-May-93	S East Kootenay
Cassin's Vireo	B-CAVI	25-Apr-99	Hanson Creek - Wasa Lake
Red-eyed Vireo	B-REVI	30-May-95	Moyie Lake W, Mineral Lake
Warbling Vireo	B-WAVI	13-May-93	Mark Creek Fitness Trail (S)
American Redstart	B-AMRE	22-May-77	Waite Creek near White Residence
Orange-crowned Warbler	B-OCWA	29-Apr-79	White Property
Tennessee Warbler	B-TEWA	04-May-96	Pighin Rd S
Townsend's Warbler	B-TOWA	23-May-01	Elizabeth Lake
Wilson's Warbler	B-WIWA	26-May-74	Sun Marsh near White Property
Yellow Warbler	B-YEWA	20-May-74	Lower Pond, W of dike - Wolf Creek
Northern Waterthrush	B-NOWA	24-May-79	Prairie Rd
Common Yellowthroat	B-COYE	26-May-74	Bartholomew Marsh
Chipping Sparrow	B-CHSP	30-Apr-77	White Property
Harris's Sparrow	B-HASP	09-May-98	White Property

Bullock's Oriole	B-BUOR	30-May-99	400 block Cranbrook St, OBS_ID 69
American Goldfinch	B-AMGO	02-May-94	White Property