

## 2005 Baillie Birdathon

This year's Birdathon was done on the way to work... in BC! I had to meet Chuck Priestley at the airport at an early hour, so the Birdathon commenced early in the morning. Things were still relatively dark at first, so most of the birding around the house was done by ear. Heard were the calling of a Downy Woodpecker and the drumming of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Also heard were some Black-billed Magpies, American Crows, American Robins, Yellow Warblers, Myrtle Warblers, Savannah Sparrows, Clay-colored Sparrows, LeConte's Sparrows, Sharp-tailed Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, a Swamp Sparrow, Purple Finches, an American Goldfinch, and Black-capped Chickadees. Not a bad start! (It's no wonder I refer to my place as the Wellington Bird Observatory.)

On the drive into Edmonton, the occupants of local wetlands and ponds could be discerned in the early morning light. Floating around out on the water were Buffleheads, Lesser Scaup, Green-winged Teals, Ruddy Ducks, Mallards, Redheads, Canvasbacks, American Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails and a pair of Horned Grebes. Perched on top of fence poles in a pond were a few Black Terns and in the cat-tails were Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. As I moved from wetland to wetland, a Wilson's Snipe shot across the road away from a shallow pond that had a few American Avocets sweeping the water for their breakfast.

As I approached Edmonton, more light allowed me to see Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks sitting on fence poles or up in trees. Further along the way, an American Kestrel



sat on top of a shrub waiting patiently waiting for his early morning meal. The odd Northern Harrier was seen hunting the fields on either side of the road.

After entering Edmonton, it wasn't long until I had spotted or heard House Sparrows, European Starlings and Rock Pigeons, birds that normally cohabitate with people. The last species noted before Chuck and I entered the airplane at the airport was a Ring-billed Gull. We were now off to Prince George, British Columbia.



After a few errands in Prince George, we headed out of town towards Chetwynd. Our route would take us from the west side of the Rocky Mountain Range to the east side. Unfortunately, the only interesting sightings along the drive were of a lazy black bear that was munching on roadside

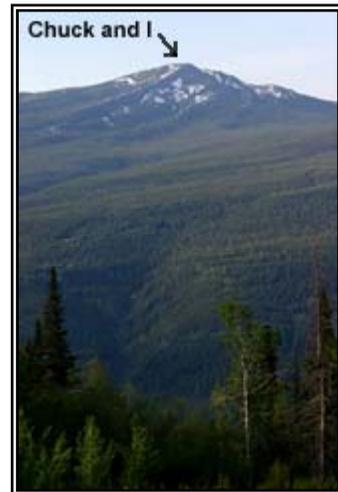
dandelions, and an immature Bald Eagle. It wasn't until we were stopped in Chetwynd before more species could be recorded. Our real job would involve a helicopter, so we had to meet the pilot at the airport. From a previous trip, I knew that near the airport we could find Violet-green and Northern Rough-winged Swallows. Rufous Hummingbirds were also seen in the area, but we did not see any this trip.



After the meeting with the pilot, we then drove to the staging area to wait for our pickup. The staging area was a cleared area in the mixed-wood forest near a small stream. Here we gathered some species that were missed back at home: Ruffed Grouse, Cassin's Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, House Wrens, Tennessee Warblers, Magnolia Warblers, Lincoln's Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and a Western Tanager. The cleared area was occupied by an old trailer that had long been abandoned. A pair of Barn Swallows had built their nest inside the shelter of the old trailer.

Judging by the number of nests inside the trailer, swallows had been using the old trailer for many years.

Without too much delay, the helicopter arrived to whisk us up to 5400 feet. Our first task of the week was to conduct radar surveillance of the bird migration around and/or over the mountain range on which we would be staying. After setting up camp, and before



commencing the radar work, we were paid a visit by a strutting male Blue Grouse. A large cousin of the Ruffed Grouse, this big Blue was in full display and was making his low deep hooting calls. To me it sounded like someone was beating on a distant drum. As the displayed continued, the light slowly diminished

and it was time to start the radar and watch birds as little blinking green lights moving across the screen. It was impossible to guess the species of birds making the blips, so it was the end of the Birdathon for the day.

After a morning session of radar work, we then had to walk the ridge of the mountain and determine what



bird species were in the area. There was still plenty of time left to add the species, so every new species counted! The ridge was relatively narrow and just above tree line. Most of the birds that were recorded were singing in the spruce trees in the valleys on either side of the ridge. Since we were located high above the trees, we could hear birds singing for kilometres. The most numerous species of birds were Golden-crowned Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, Dark-eyed Juncos and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. During the walks along the ridges, a few

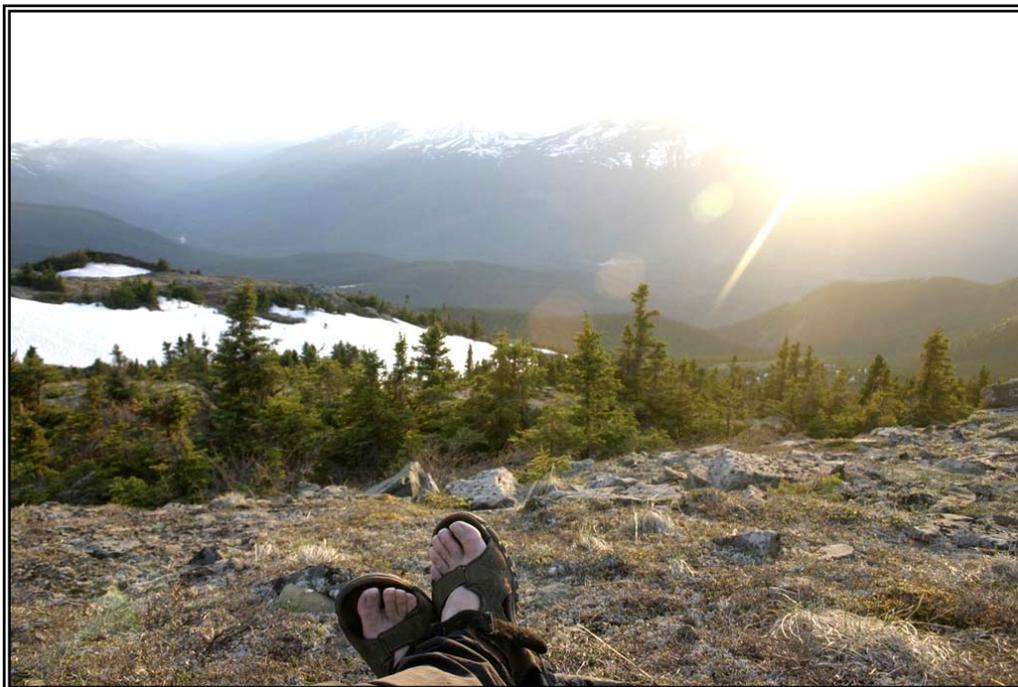


Golden-crowned Sparrow

other species were recorded: Northern Flickers, Hammond's Flycatchers, Winter Wrens, Varied Thrushes, Townsend's Solitaires, Fox Sparrows, Wilson's Warblers, Pine Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins. Like the animals of Antarctica, it seemed like many of the birds on the ridge had little fear of us humans in their territory. Many curious individuals came in close and allowed us to get great views.

As our bird counts came to an end, so did the 2005 Birdathon. In total, 101 species were recorded (see attached species below). Not the highest total ever recorded, but it was the highest in elevation I have ever done a Birdathon!

Thank you for your interest. If you would like to support my Birdathon efforts with a pledge, please send it to: Jason Duxbury, 146-52512 RR214, Ardrossan, AB, T8E 2H1. Please make cheques out to Baillie Birdathon. You will eventually receive a tax receipt from Bird Studies Canada.



Wildlife biology can take you to some pretty crummy places.... This was not one of them.



# The Official Canada-Wide Baillie BIRDATHON Checklist

Birder Jason Duxbury and Chuck Priestley

Date May 27/28 2005

Location Edmonton AB to Chetwynd BC

Number of Species 101

Red-throated Loon  
 Pacific Loon  
 Common Loon  
 Yellow-billed Loon  
 Pied-billed Grebe  
 Horned Grebe  
 Red-necked Grebe  
 Eared Grebe  
 Western Grebe  
 Clark's Grebe  
 Northern Fulmar  
 Gr Shearwater  
 Sooty Shearwater  
 Manx Shearwater  
 Wilson's Storm-Petrel  
 Fork-tailed St-Petrel  
 Leach's Storm-Petrel  
 Northern Gannet  
 Am White Pelican  
 Great Cormorant  
 Dab-crest Cormorant  
 Brandt's Cormorant  
 Pelagic Cormorant  
 American Bittern  
 Least Bittern  
 Great Blue Heron  
 Great Egret  
 Snowy Egret  
 Little Blue Heron  
 Tical Heron  
 Cattle Egret  
 Green Heron  
 Black-crown N-Heron  
 Yel-crown N-Heron  
 Glossy Ibis  
 White-faced Ibis  
 Turkey Vulture  
 Mule Swan  
 Gr Wh-fronted Goose  
 Snow Goose  
 Ross's Goose  
 Brant  
 Cackling Goose  
 Canada Goose  
 Tundra Swan  
 Trumpeter Swan  
 Wood Duck  
 Eur Wigeon  
 Am Wigeon  
 Am Black Duck  
 Mallard  
 Blue-winged Teal  
 Cinnamon Teal  
 Northern Shoveler  
 Northern Pintail  
 Gadwall  
 Green-winged Teal  
 Canvasback  
 Redhead  
 Ring-necked Duck  
 Tufted Duck  
 Greater Scaup  
 Lesser Scaup  
 King Eider  
 Common Eider  
 Hairy-tail Duck  
 Surf Scoter  
 White-wing Scoter  
 Black Scoter  
 Long-tailed Duck  
 Bufflehead  
 Common Goldeneye  
 Barrow's Goldeneye  
 Hooded Merganser  
 Common Merganser  
 Red-br Merganser

Ruddy Duck  
 Osprey  
 Northern Harrier  
 Sharp-shinned Hawk  
 Cooper's Hawk  
 Northern Goshawk  
 Red-shouldered Hawk  
 Broad-winged Hawk  
 Swainson's Hawk  
 Red-tailed Hawk  
 Ferruginous Hawk  
 Rough-legged Hawk  
 Bald Eagle  
 Golden Eagle  
 American Kestrel  
 Merlin  
 Peregrine  
 Gyrfalcon  
 Prairie Falcon  
 Chukar  
 Gray Partridge  
 Ring-neck Pheasant  
 Ruffed Grouse  
 Herring Gull  
 Gr Sage Grouse  
 Spruce Grouse  
 Willow Ptarmigan  
 Rock Ptarmigan  
 Wh-tailed Ptarmigan  
 Blue Grouse  
 Sharp-tailed Grouse  
 Wild Turkey  
 Mountain Quail  
 California Quail  
 Northern Bobwhite  
 Yellow Rail  
 Virginia Rail  
 King Rail  
 Sora  
 Common Mooten  
 American Coot  
 Sandhill Crane  
 Whooping Crane  
 Am. Golden-Plover  
 Black-bellied Plover  
 Semipalmated Plover  
 Piping Plover  
 Killdeer  
 Mountain Plover  
 Black Oystercatcher  
 Black-necked Stilt  
 American Avocet  
 Greater Yellowlegs  
 Lesser Yellowlegs  
 Sottery Sandpiper  
 Willet  
 Wand Tattler  
 Spotted Sandpiper  
 Upland Sandpiper  
 Whimbrel  
 Long-billed Culfew  
 Hudsonian Godwit  
 Marbled Godwit  
 Ruddy Turnstone  
 Black Turnstone  
 Surf-bird  
 Red Knot  
 Sandpiper  
 Semipalm Sandpiper  
 Western Sandpiper  
 Least Sandpiper  
 Wh-rmp Sandpiper  
 Baird's Sandpiper  
 Peckoral Sandpiper  
 Purple Sandpiper  
 Rock Sandpiper  
 Dunlin

Culfew Sandpiper  
 Still Sandpiper  
 Buff-br Sandpiper  
 Ruff  
 Short-billed Dowitcher  
 Long-billed Dowitcher  
 Wilson's Snipe  
 Am Woodcock  
 Wilson's Phalarope  
 Red-neck'd Phalarope  
 Red Phalarope  
 Pomarine Jaeger  
 Parasitic Jaeger  
 Long-tail Jaeger  
 Laughing Gull  
 Franklin's Gull  
 Little Gull  
 Black-headed Gull  
 Bonaparte's Gull  
 Mew Gull  
 Ring-billed Gull  
 California Gull  
 Herring Gull  
 Thayer's Gull  
 Iceland Gull  
 Lesser Black-back Gull  
 Western Gull  
 Glaucous Gull  
 Glaucous-winged Gull  
 Gr Black-back Gull  
 Black-legged Kittiwake  
 Sabine's Gull  
 Ivory Gull  
 Caspian Tern  
 Roseate Tern  
 Common Tern  
 Arctic Tern  
 Forster's Tern  
 Black Tern  
 Dovekie  
 Common Murre  
 Thick-billed Murre  
 Razorbill  
 Black Guillemot  
 Pigeon Guillemot  
 Mottled Murrelet  
 Ancient Murrelet  
 Cassin's Auklet  
 Rhinoceros Auklet  
 Atlantic Puffin  
 Horned Puffin  
 Tufted Puffin  
 Rock Pigeon  
 Band-tailed Pigeon  
 Mourning Dove  
 Black-billed Cuckoo  
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
 Barn Owl  
 Flammulated Owl  
 W Screech-Owl  
 E Screech-Owl  
 Great Horned Owl  
 Snowy Owl  
 N Hawk Owl  
 N Pygmy-Owl  
 Burrowing Owl  
 Spotted Owl  
 Bared Owl  
 Great Gray Owl  
 Long-eared Owl  
 Short-eared Owl  
 Boreal Owl  
 N Saw-whet Owl  
 Common Nighthawk  
 Common Poorwill  
 Chuck-will's-widow

Whip-poor-will  
 Black Swift  
 Chimney Swift  
 Vaux's Swift  
 Wh-throated Swift  
 Rby-thr Hummingbird  
 Bk-chin Hummingbird  
 Anna's Hummingbird  
 Callio Hummingbird  
 Rufous Hummingbird  
 Belted Kingfisher  
 Lewis's Woodpecker  
 Red-hd Woodpecker  
 Red-bell Woodpecker  
 Williamson Sapsucker  
 Yel-bel Sapsucker  
 Red-nap Sapsucker  
 Red-br Sapsucker  
 Downy Woodpecker  
 Hairy Woodpecker  
 W-head Woodpecker  
 Th-toed Woodpecker  
 Bl-back Woodpecker  
 Northern Flicker  
 Pileated Woodpecker  
 Olive-sided Fly  
 W Wood-Pewee  
 E Wood-Pewee  
 Yel-bel Flycatcher  
 Acadian Flycatcher  
 Alder Flycatcher  
 Willow Flycatcher  
 Least Flycatcher  
 Hammond's Fly  
 Gray Flycatcher  
 Dusky Flycatcher  
 Pac-slope Flycatcher  
 Eastern Phoebe  
 Say's Phoebe  
 Gr Crested Flycatcher  
 Western Kingbird  
 Eastern Kingbird  
 Loggerhead Shrike  
 Northern Shrike  
 White-eyed Vireo  
 Bell's Vireo  
 Cassin's Vireo  
 Bl-headed Vireo  
 Yel-throated Vireo  
 Hutton's Vireo  
 Warbling Vireo  
 Philadelphia Vireo  
 Red-eyed Vireo  
 Gray Jay  
 Steller's Jay  
 Blue Jay  
 Clark's Nutcracker  
 Black-bill Magpie  
 American Crow  
 Nor-west Crow  
 Common Raven  
 Eurasian Skylark  
 Horned Lark  
 Purple Martin  
 Tree Swallow  
 Violet-green Swallow  
 N Rough-wing Swallow  
 Bank Swallow  
 Cliff Swallow  
 Barn Swallow  
 Black-cap Chickadee  
 Mountain Chickadee  
 Ch-back Chickadee  
 Boreal Chickadee  
 Tufted Titmouse  
 Bush-tit

Red-br Nuthatch  
 White-br Nuthatch  
 Pygmy Nuthatch  
 Brown Creeper  
 Rock Wren  
 Canyon Wren  
 Carolina Wren  
 Bewick's Wren  
 House Wren  
 Winter Wren  
 Sedge Wren  
 Marsh Wren  
 American Dipper  
 Golden-crown Kinglet  
 Ruby-crown Kinglet  
 Bl-gray Gnatcatcher  
 Northern Wheatear  
 Eastern Bluebird  
 Western Bluebird  
 Mountain Bluebird  
 Townsend's Solitaire  
 Veery  
 Gr-cheek Thrush  
 Bicknell's Thrush  
 Swainson's Thrush  
 Hermit Thrush  
 Wood Thrush  
 American Robin  
 Varied Thrush  
 Gray Catbird  
 N Mockingbird  
 Sage Thrasher  
 Brown Thrasher  
 American Pipit  
 Sprague's Pipit  
 Bohemian Waxwing  
 Cedar Waxwing  
 European Starling  
 Crested Myna  
 Blue-wing Warbler  
 Golden-wing Warbler  
 Tennessee Warbler  
 Or-crown Warbler  
 Nashville Warbler  
 Northern Parula  
 Yellow Warbler  
 Chest-sided Warbler  
 Magnolia Warbler  
 Cape May Warbler  
 Black-thr Blue Warbler  
 Yel-rumped Warbler  
 Bl-thr Gray Warbler  
 Bl-thr Green Warbler  
 Townsend's Warbler  
 Blackburnian Warbler  
 Yel-throated Warbler  
 Pine Warbler  
 Kirkland's Warbler  
 Prairie Warbler  
 Palm Warbler  
 Bay-breasted Warbler  
 Black-poll Warbler  
 Cerulean Warbler  
 Black-&-white Warbler  
 American Redstart  
 Prothonotary Warbler  
 Worm-eating Warbler  
 Ovenbird  
 N Waterthrush  
 Louisiana Waterthrush  
 Kentucky Warbler  
 Connecticut Warbler  
 Mourning Warbler  
 MacGill Warbler  
 Common Yellowthroat  
 Hooded Warbler

Wilson's Warbler  
 Canada Warbler  
 Yell-breasted Chat  
 Summer Tanager  
 Scarlet Tanager  
 Western Tanager  
 Eastern Towhee  
 Spotted Towhee  
 Am Tree Sparrow  
 Chipping Sparrow  
 C1-colored Sparrow  
 Brewer's Sparrow  
 Field Sparrow  
 Vesper Sparrow  
 Lark Sparrow  
 Lark Bunting  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Grasshop Sparrow  
 Baird's Sparrow  
 Henslow's Sparrow  
 Le Conte's Sparrow  
 NelsShip-tail Sparrow  
 Fox Sparrow  
 Song Sparrow  
 Lincoln's Sparrow  
 Swamp Sparrow  
 Harris's Sparrow  
 Wh-throat Sparrow  
 Wh-crown Sparrow  
 Gld-crown Sparrow  
 Dark-eyed Junco  
 McCown's Long  
 Lapland Longspur  
 Smith's Longspur  
 Chest-collar Longspur  
 Snow Bunting  
 N Cardinal  
 Rose-br Grosbeak  
 Black-head Grosbeak  
 Lazuli Bunting  
 Indigo Bunting  
 Dickcissel  
 Bobolink  
 R-wing Blackbird  
 E Meadowlark  
 W Meadowlark  
 Yel-headed Blackbird  
 Rusty Blackbird  
 Brewer's Blackbird  
 Common Grackle  
 Brn-headed Cowbird  
 Orchard Oriole  
 Baltimore Oriole  
 Bullock's Oriole  
 Gr-Crown Rosy-Finch  
 Pine Grosbeak  
 Purple Finch  
 Cassin's Finch  
 House Finch  
 Red Crossbill  
 Wh-winged Crossbill  
 Common Redpoll  
 Hoary Redpoll  
 Pine Siskin  
 Am Goldfinch  
 Evening Grosbeak  
 House Sparrow