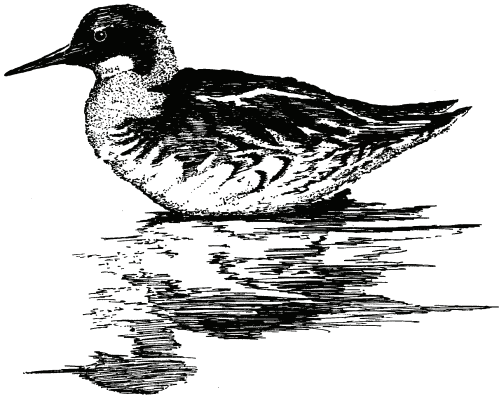
The Yukon Birdathon

Supporting conservation education



Spring marks the return of our birds of summer, and the Yukon **Birdathon** is a special way to celebrate! Initiated in 1986, the **Birdathon** is an exciting 24 hour birdwatching festival and an annual highlight of spring for many Yukon birders. Participants collect sponsors on a dollars-per-species basis in their quest to observe as many species as they can anywhere in the Yukon within the specified 24 hour period. The *Yukon Bird Club* and the *Yukon Conservation Society* share the proceeds in support of conservation education projects in the Yukon.

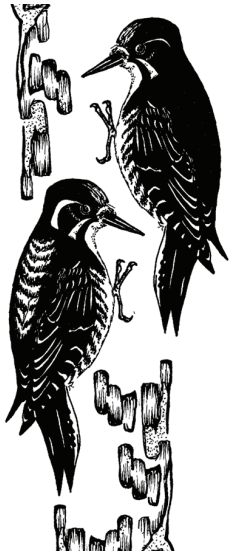
The **Birdathon** is held on the last weekend in May beginning at 5:00 pm. on Friday and finishing at 5:00 pm. on Saturday. You do not have to be an experienced birdwatcher, and beginners are most welcome! Whether you spend all day prowling mountains for pipits and searching marshes for Soras, or just spend an hour or two at your favorite birding location, your participation is important!

Birdathon Basics

The goal of the **Birdathon** is to have fun while celebrating our diverse and beautiful bird life in support of conservation education. The rules are few, 1) Count all species that you confidently identify by sight or sound in the Yukon within the 24 hour period. 2) Follow Yukon Bird Club's code of ethics which guide responsible birders.

You can bird alone or in a team. Not only is birding with others socially enjoyable but fewer birds go unnoticed! Teams can be any size but keep in mind that team members must bird together in order to contribute to the team's total. More than ever, participants are opting for an "**Environmental Birdathon**" relying solely on bikes, canoes or their own two feet for transportation.

The Scientific Value

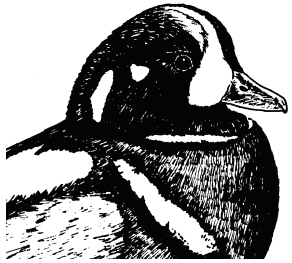


The **Birdathon** has significantly added to our knowledge of Yukon bird life. Each year the **Birdathon** provides a snapshot of diversity and abundance during the peak of bird activity in the Yukon. The group total for all participants is usually about 130 species. The **Birdathon** provides excellent information about the occurrence of many of our common species. As well, the unusual sightings always add to the excitement. A few of the notable species sighted over the years includes Yellow-billed Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Bar-tailed Godwit, Smith's Longspur, Brant, Sandhill Crane, Tennessee Warbler, Western Kingbird, Western Tanager, House Finch, and Brewer's Sparrow!

Finding Sponsors

Many people would like to contribute to conservation education in the Yukon and sponsoring a **Birdathon** participant is an excellent way for them to do so. There are two ways to sponsor **Birdathon** participants; either by the number of species or with a flat donation. If sponsors prefer to make a flat donation then encourage them to write a cheque right away - it saves having to do it later. Cheques should be made payable to either the *Yukon Bird Club* or *Yukon Conservation Society*. **Birdathon** donations are tax deductible and receipts will automatically be sent out for all donations over ten dollars. However, this can only be done if the full names and addresses of all your sponsors are clearly noted.

Collecting Pledges



Collecting pledges quickly is critical to the success of the **Birdathon**. The longer that pledges are left, the more difficult it becomes to collect them. An effective way to collect your pledges is to make up a form letter indicating how much your sponsors owe. Try making it rewarding for your sponsors by providing highlights of your count with the complete list of birds you observed. Consider giving sponsors a copy of a Yukon or Whitehorse checklist as a token of thanks.

There may be sponsors who do not send in their pledges after your first call or letter. Don't let this become a point of frustration. If it is a small pledge then consider letting it go. For a larger pledge try a second friendly reminder. Try to collect all your donations with a week or two of the **Birdathon** and please drop off or send in the money as soon as possible to either the *Yukon Bird Club* or *Yukon Conservation Society*.

Birdathon Barbeque

After the **Birdathon** rendezvous at Wolf Creek Campground (11 km south of Whitehorse on the Alaska Hwy) for a potluck Barbeque. Bring something for the grill and potluck table and share the excitement of another successful **Birdathon**!

To find out more contact:

- **Yukon Bird Club**
  Box 31054, Whitehorse, YT,
  Y1A 5P7

- **Yukon Conservation Society**
  302 Hawkins St, Whitehorse, YT,
  Y1A 1X6, Ph. 867-668-5678

The *Yukon Bird Club* and *Yukon Conservation Society* are registered non-profit, charitable organizations which share a commitment to promoting awareness, appreciation and conservation of Yukon birds and their habitats.

Birdfinding tips ...

- ✓ McIntyre Creek: Golden-crowned Kinglet, Warbling Vireo, N.Rough-winged Swallow, Belted Kingfisher.
- ✓ La Biche River: Canada Warbler, Western Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ovenbird, Le Conte's Sparrow.
- ✓ Judas Creek: Black-bellied Plover, Brant, Least Flycatcher, Killdeer, Least and Semipalmated Sandpiper
- ✓ Wye Lake: Red-necked Grebe, Common Loon, Bonaparte's and Mew Gull, Savannah Sparrow.
- ✓ Dezadeash River: Northern Waterthrush, Western Wood-Pewee, Gray-cheeked Thrush.
- ✓ Dome Hill: Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warbler.
- ✓ Dempster Highway: Long-tailed Jaeger, Surfbird, Northern Wheatear, Gyrfalcon, Golden Eagle.
- ✓ Nares Lake: Hudsonian Godwit, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Plover, Alder Flycatcher.
- ✓ Teslin Lake: Surf and White-winged Scoter, Pacific Loon, Rusty Blackbird, Bald Eagle, Arctic Tern.
- ✓ Tagish Road ponds (km 7): American Coot, Red-necked and Wilson's Phalarope, Wilson's Snipe.

HAPPY BIRDING!

Birdathon Pledges

Birdathon donations are tax deductible and receipts will automatically be sent for all donations over ten dollars. This requires the full name and address of all sponsors. Donations under $10 can receive a receipt if indicated with a check-mark under "receipt?". The *Yukon Bird Club* and *Yukon Conservation Society* are registered non-profit, charitable organizations. The Yukon Birdathon supports conservation education in the Yukon.

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Participant or Team Name: _____

Sponsor's Name	Address	Pledge/ species	Flat sum	Amount owed	receipt?