

BIRDFINDING IN CANADA

July 1985

Vol. 5 - No. 4



ISSN-0229-5024

Record Keeping

For sheer concentration of birding effort, there is probably no statistically oriented venture that can compare to the "big day."

A big day project involves elements of anticipation, meticulous planning, a lot of dogged execution and infinitely variable levels of luck. And, in so many instances, it ends in hitherto unplumbed depths of disappointment as the end of the day approaches with the dreaded realization that the day's target will be missed by the narrowest of margins - and sometimes not so narrow!

A big day can be planned to fit many occasions. How many species can be observed in a consecutive 24-hour period in a prescribed area - a park, township, urban municipality - or whatever? Of course, a more elastic application would be one day anywhere in Canada, with no limit to territory.

Over the years, two locations in Canada have surfaced as most likely to produce a record day. These are the southeastern corner of Manitoba and the Point Pelee-to-Rondeau corridor in southwestern Ontario. Perhaps a helicopter-assisted jaunt (as time would be elemental) combining Victoria, Vancouver and the Okanagan Valley of B.C. would be competitive. Lack of warbler species is the nemesis there.

We've talked to birders who consider 200 species in one day in Canada as an attainable target. All factors would have to break just right. Sometimes they do.

BIRDFINDING IN CANADA's current all-Canadian big day champion is Harv Lane of Saskatoon (formerly Steinbach, Man.) who, on May 29, 1982, in southeastern Manitoba had a personal list of 192 species. Gordon Grief, of Dugald, Man. is the closest possible runner-up with 191 on May 26, 1984, in the same general area.

We belatedly congratulate these birders and cite their totals as standards aspiring challengers have to aim at.

Let's now theorize on another twist to this tale - a cross-Canada aerial and ground one day blitz. Call it jet-propelled because that's what it would have to be to cover from Atlantic to Pacific in 24 hours, and leave time for birding.

Lest anyone think the above is pure fantasy, be aware that this exact phase of bird-listing has already been tried more than once in U.S.A. hopping to and from prime birding spots, coast to coast.

Even if we arouse no takers, we'd like to hear from those who have ideas on how the day should be scheduled.

It has to be done from east to west to maximize the amount of daylight. And, remember, landing at airports that can accommodate and re-fuel jet aircraft is a requirement.

Our suggestions might include starting at St. John's, Nfld. (spotting seabirds from the air at Witless Bay or Cape St. Mary's); then including stops at Windsor, Ont. (helicopter to Point Pelee); next at Winnipeg (being met there by car by local birders for a fast look at Oak Hammock Marsh; a landing somewhere in southern Sask. or Alta. (maybe Calgary with a chopper dash to Dinosaur Park); a drop in at Penticton (if jets can be assured of fast service) - with a zap around that sector; ending with drop-ins at Vancouver and Victoria and a helicopter just offshore up to Pacific Rim. A contingent of well-briefed assistants at each stop is prime.

Perhaps, if you're the enterprising type, you could find a sponsor (Bushnell?).

Our own, admittedly negative, view is that, with so much time in the air, and with targets of 190+ already established, it would be difficult to hit a national record high. But then, they laughed at Edison! (Well they did, didn't they?)

So much for now, for one-day listing. Let's go on to the all-Canada life list. We now have 69 subscribers reporting Canada numbers of 350 species or more. They're shown on the next page.

CANADA

Norm Chesterfield, Wheatley, Ont.	486	Mary Collins, Vernon, B.C.	393
Alex Gray, Mississauga, Ont.	472	June Smith, Willowdale, Ont.	393
Hue MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	463	John Miles, New Hamburg, Ont.	392
Jo Ann MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	462	Allen Wiseley, Calgary, Alta.	391
David Mark, N.Tonawanda, N.Y.	462	Bill Crins, Mississauga, Ont.	389
Gerry Bennett, Woodbridge, Ont.	458	Blake Maybank, Rocky Harbour, Nfld.	389
Roger Foxall, Halifax, N.S.	456	Peggy Lehmann, Toronto, Ont.	388
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	448	Martin Edwards, Kingston, Ont.	387
Luke Fazio, Mississauga, Ont.	439	George Scott, Oshawa, Ont.	386
David Stirling, Victoria, B.C.	438	Fred Helleiner, Peterborough, Ont.	383
Bruce Mactavish, St.John's, Nfld.	431	Fred Bodsworth, Toronto, Ont.	382
Al McTavish, London, Ont.	430	Mike Austin, Friendswood, Texas.	380
Bill Clark, Ottawa, Ont.	426	Chris Escott, Saskatoon, Sask.	380
John Keenleyside, Mississauga, Ont.	426	Bill Smith, Toronto, Ont.	377
Mike Force, Vancouver, B.C.	420	Tony Mason, Brantford, Ont.	376
Barry Jones, Port Dover, B.C.	420	Gordon Bellerby, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.	375
Mabel McIntosh, Pointe Claire, Que.	420	Rolph Davis, King City, Ont.	373
Doug Kragh, Vancouver, B.C.	419	Guy Gendron, Rimouski, Que.	372
Hugh Currie, Toronto, Ont.	416	Rosemary Gaymer, Oakville, Ont.	371
Brian Kautesk, Vancouver, B.C.	416	Linda Murray, Surrey, B.C.	370
Wayne Weber, Vancouver, B.C.	415	Margaret Bain, Whitby, Ont.	369
Peter Gilchrist, Toronto, Ont.	414	Mike McGrenere, Vancouver, B.C.	367
Edge Pegg, Claremont, Ont.	414	Ben Feltner, Seattle, Wash.	365
Roger Burrows, St.John's, Nfld.	412	Leon Raczkowski, Oshawa, Ont.	365
Stan Shadick, Saskatoon, Sask.	412	Angus MacLean, Alma, N.B.	362
Rick Howie, Kamloops, B.C.	410	Bill Zufelt, Orillia, Ont.	362
Roger Taylor, Ottawa, Ont.	409	Chris Siddle, Fort St.John, B.C.	361
Alan Wormington, Leamington, Ont.	408	Allen Woodliffe, Morpeth, Ont.	360
Colin Butt, W.Vancouver, B.C.	407	Ted McDonald, Port Hope, Ont.	359
Richard Cannings, Vancouver, B.C.	406	Gordon Grief, Dugald, Man.	356
Paul MacKenzie, Kingston, Ont.	406	Dennis Fast, Kleefeld, Man.	355
Don Perks, Mississauga, Ont.	406	David Milsom, Bolton, Ont.	353
Ron Scovell, Rexdale, Ont.	406	Robert Eakin, Downsview, Ont.	350
Jack Williams, White Rock, B.C.	403	Bob McDonald, Halifax, N.S.	350
Lou Marsh, Weston, Ont.	400	4 others over 340	

Let's look at all-Canada, "big-year" figures. So far, we're aware of only two instances when anyone has recorded more than 400 species in Canada in one year, both in 1980. Dave Mark had 417 and Gerry Bennett 402. Later, through reclassifications, these became 418 and 401 respectively. Dave's feat was chronicled in some length in our March '81 issue and, later, in "Birding."

In our opinion, no one could expect to successfully challenge the 400 mark without spending at least a week in prime May-time at Point Pelee. So, we must salute Bruce Mactavish, of St.John's, Nfld. for a remarkable accomplishment - a year's list for Canada, in 1974, of 361 species, without having done any of his birding whatsoever in the provinces of Ontario or Quebec.

We'd like to see someone take a real shot at the 418 record. It involves several important factors. Planning must be multi-dimensional. There has to be an original game plan that takes into account every possible species and where each species is likely to be found - and when. (Dave Mark had a professional, sophisticated computerized program using frequent informative print-outs.) The plan must be amenable to instant adjustments when certain species are found via windfall luck thus making certain geographical objectives now unnecessary. It is obvious that an unlimited amount of time must be available. Also, it can't be accomplished without some flexibility in the bank account.

Now let's go on to Life Lists for World, North America and certain Provincial figures. The heading, "North America" means "north of the Mexico/U.S.A. boundary" which some precision-oriented geographers might find unacceptable. But it's been quite workable for us.

We've been asked to open up some additional life-list departments such as Pan-America, Central America and so on. We have to say, "No." This is a publication concentrating on the Canadian scene. We're going to stick with two types of geographical areas: (a) those which are a part of Canada or (b) those of which Canada is a part.

WORLD

Norm Chesterfield, Wheatley, Ont.	6161	Gerry Bennett, Woodbridge, Ont.	1345
Martin Edwards, Kingston, Ont.	4202	Fred Bodsworth, Toronto, Ont.	1334
Lou Marsh, Weston, Ont.	3286	June Smith, Willowdale, Ont.	1312
Paul MacKenzie, Kingston, Ont.	2673	Steve Charlton, Pierrefonds, Que.	1250
David Stirling, Victoria, B.C.	2315	Roger Taylor, Ottawa, Ont.	1245
Hue MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	2240	Alex Gray, Mississauga, Ont.	1244
Jo Ann MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	2169	David Mark, N.Tonawanda, N.Y.	1220
Barry Attridge, London, Ont.	2145	Peter Gilchrist, Toronto, Ont.	1204
Luke Fazio, Mississauga, Ont.	2092	Roy Smith, Richmond Hill, Ont.	1198
Ron Scovell, Rexdale, Ont.	1897	Paule Hjertaas, Regina, Sask.	1149
George Scott, Oshawa, Ont.	1754	Tony Mason, Brantford, Ont.	1112
Lorelie Mitchell, Oakville, Ont.	1735	Andrew Slater, Calgary, Alta.	1059
Frank Bell, Ottawa, Ont.	1489	Mabel McIntosh, Pointe Claire, Que.	1028
John Keenleyside, Mississauga, Ont.	1417	Herb Elliott, Toronto, Ont.	1024
Wilfred Botham, Cottam, Ont.	1354	Chris Escott, Saskatoon, Sask.	1019
Hugh Currie, Toronto, Ont.	1346	Art Rusnell, Kleinburg, Ont.	1014
		Margaret Rusnell, Kleinburg, Ont.	1014

NORTH AMERICA

Larry Peavler, Indianapolis, Ind.	749	Wayne Weber, Vancouver, B.C.	583
John Keenleyside, Mississauga, Ont.	702	Peter Gilchrist, Toronto, Ont.	578
Bob Lewis, Basking Ridge, N.J.	689	Gerry Bennett, Woodbridge, Ont.	574
Luke Fazio, Mississauga, Ont.	681	Lou Marsh, Weston, Ont.	559
Bill Zufelt, Orillia, Ont.	672	Roger Taylor, Ottawa, Ont.	559
David Mark, N.Tonawanda, N.Y.	664	Bill Smith, Toronto, Ont.	557
Roger Foxall, Halifax, N.S.	662	Rolph Davis, King City, Ont.	555
Tony White, Bethesda, Md.	658	Bill Crins, Mississauga, Ont.	548
Jo Ann MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	656	Jack Williams, White Rock, B.C.	547
Mike Austin, Friendswood, Texas.	655	Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	544
Paul MacKenzie, Kingston, Ont.	650	Martin Edwards, Kingston, Ont.	536
Hue MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	648	Stan Shadick, Saskatoon, Sask.	534
George Scott, Oshawa, Ont.	640	Scott Connop, Camlachie, Ont.	533
Hugh Currie, Toronto, Ont.	630	Mary Collins, Vernon, B.C.	529
Ron Scovell, Rexdale, Ont.	620	Peggy Lehmann, Toronto, Ont.	524
Mabel McIntosh, Pointe Claire, Que.	611	John Miles, New Hamburg, Ont.	524
Bob Odear, Jamestown, N.C.	610	Linda Murray, Surrey, B.C.	524
Don Perks, Mississauga, Ont.	606	Guy Gendron, Rimouski, Que.	517
Alex Gray, Mississauga, Ont.	604	Barry Cherriere, Hamilton, Ont.	513
David Stirling, Victoria, B.C.	596	Allen Wiseley, Calgary, Alta.	510
Colin Butt, West Vancouver, B.C.	592	Gordon Grief, Dugald, Man.	506
Edge Pegg, Claremont, Ont.	588	11 others over 475	

 Now to Provincial lists. Five subscribers have reached the "300" mark in more than one province. These are Hue MacKenzie (321 in B.C.; 340 in Ont.); Jo Ann MacKenzie (322 in B.C.; 344 in Ont.); David Mark (329 in B.C.; 316 Ont.); Mabel McIntosh (330 in Que.; 300 in Ont.) and Eric Tull (304 in Ont.; 300 in Alta.)
 See Page 23 for more about Provincial lists.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

David Stirling, Victoria.	374
Mike Force, Vancouver.	366
Brian Kautesk, Vancouver.	362
Doug Kragh, Vancouver.	360
Wayne Weber, Vancouver.	358
Richard Cannings, Vancouver.	343
Chris Siddle, Fort St. John.	343
Colin Butt, West Vancouver.	342
Rick Howie, Kamloops.	340
Dale Jensen, Vancouver.	332
David Mark, N.Tonawanda, N.Y.	329
Jo Ann MacKenzie, Surrey.	322
Hue MacKenzie, Surrey.	321
Ray Williams, Victoria.	315
Mary Collins, Vernon.	314
Tony Greenfield, Sechelt.	314
Jack Williams, White Rock.	312
Gary Davidson, Nakusp.	309
Mike McGrenere, Vancouver.	309
Roger Foxall, Halifax, N.S.	299
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	297
Alex Gray, Mississauga, Ont.	294
Phil Ranson, Armstrong.	263

ALBERTA

Allen Wiseley, Calgary.	315
*	304
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	300
Andrew Slater, Calgary.	290
David Stirling, Victoria, B.C.	270
Hue MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	230
Jo Ann MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	226
Wayne Weber, Vancouver, B.C.	218
Fred Helleiner, Peterborough, Ont.	213
Luke Fazio, Mississauga, Ont.	201
Leon Raczkowski, Oshawa, Ont.	201

* Report of 304 received but signature undecipherable.

Figures for provinces from Ontario east through Newfoundland will be reviewed in the September issue. If you have any updating you wish included, please let us know by July 25th.

SASKATCHEWAN

Stan Shadick, Saskatoon.	295
Chris Escott, Saskatoon.	293
Chris Adam, Regina.	292
Guy Wapple, Biggar.	275
Blake Maybank, Rocky Harbour, Nfld.	221
Harv Lane, Saskatoon.	211
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	210
Gordon Grief, Dugald, Man.	209

MANITOBA

Gordon Grief, Dugald.	321
Dennis Fast, Kleefeld.	313
Harv Lane, Saskatoon, Sask.	306
Angus MacLean, Alma, N.B.	275
David Mark, N.Tonawanda, N.Y.	265
Rob Walker, Alma, N.B.	253
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	241
Bill Clark, Ottawa, Ont.	227
Stan Shadick, Saskatoon, Sask.	218
Bob Odear, Jamestown, N.C.	211
Hue MacKenzie, Surrey, B.C.	209
Mary Collins, Vernon, B.C.	208
David Stirling, Victoria, B.C.	204
Ben Feltner, Seattle, Wash.	201

YUKON

Richard Cannings, Vancouver, B.C.	154
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	133
David Stirling, Victoria, B.C.	105
Joel Ellis, Kingston, Ont.	104
Alex Gray, Mississauga, Ont.	102

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Phil Ranson, Armstrong, B.C.	169
Rolph Davis, King City, Ont.	166
Alan Wormington, Leamington, Ont.	155
Eric Tull, Westmount, Que.	151

BIRDFINDING IN CANADA is published six times a year by G.Bennett, R.R.# 2, 10780 Pine Valley Drive, Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada. L4L 1A6.

Business address is "BIRDFINDING IN CANADA, P.O.Box 519, Kleinburg, Ont., Canada. L0J 1C0."

All articles are prepared and written by G.Bennett unless stated otherwise.

Copyright 1981. All rights reserved. ISSN-0229-5024. Second Class Mail Registration #5563.

1985 Subscription rates: To addresses in Canada - \$12.00 per year; to U.S.A. - \$12.00 U.S. per year; to all other countries - \$15.00 U.S. per year or equivalent local currency at time of remitting.