

# Burke Mountain Naturalists

Promoting Nature Awareness in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody - and beyond



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## Truly a "Running" Tally

By Hilary Maguire

Burke Mountain Naturalist, scientist, birder and athlete John Reynolds' latest achievement is the completion of the Vancouver Marathon on May 4th. But not content merely to run the 42.2 km, he kept a "running" tally of birds seen and heard along the route, winding up with the respectable total of 42 species!

John has been a birder since childhood and a distance runner for about five years. I asked him what motivated him to run a marathon, and after his first response - a remark about mid-life - he described a marathon as the ultimate challenge of running. The Vancouver Marathon was not his first - he completed the Gold Coast Marathon under the Australian sun last August while on a year's sabbatical there. Finding the experience was "not as horrible as I thought it would be", he decided to participate in the Vancouver Marathon this year.

John is a very skilled birder, with powers of observation that put some of us to shame. This man is so attuned that he can identify birds reflected in a fellow birder's sunglasses! Though he intended to keep a bird list during his Australian marathon, he found it became too difficult to focus on his list due to the "brain fog" that can affect marathoners as the kilometers pass. This year, however, he transcended that problem and, though he lost track of his total while running, he was able to recall all species, and even the numbers of each species, entering the data to eBird from home after the race.

What's next for this accomplished BMNer? John will always be a birder and will continue to observe and record all birds he sees, but now that a major focus of his recent birding efforts, the 5-year BC Breeding Bird Atlas project is finished, he plans to turn his attention to identifying and photographing the butterflies he comes across in his travels around the province.

What are his next physical challenge goals? The Vancouver Half Marathon is coming up, and he looks forward every year to the Ocean Man competition at Jericho Beach (a triathlon of swimming, kayaking and running). Then there's the Victoria Marathon this fall. His ultimate goal is the "Diez Vistas 50" (a grueling 50 km endurance test run along the hilly terrain of the Diez Vistas trail in Anmore) which he says he will do "when I reach my prime". I'm looking forward to his Diez Vistas 50 butterfly list!

Species	Count	Comments
Canada Goose	6	
American Wigeon	4	Stanley Park seawall
Mallard	1	Stanley Park seawall
Surf Scoter	8	
Bufflehead	6	Stanley Park seawall
Common Merganser	3	Stanley Park seawall
Double-crested Cormorant	1	Stanley Park seawall
Pelagic Cormorant	3	Stanley Park seawall
Great Blue Heron	2	Stanley Park seawall
Glaucous-winged Gull	20	
Rock Pigeon	3	
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	Pacific Spirit Park
Rufous Hummingbird	1	
Northern Flicker	2	Pacific Spirit Park
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	1	Pacific Spirit Park
Northwestern Crow	25	
Common Raven	1	Pacific Spirit Park
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	3	flying into holes in bank at Stanley Park seawall
Tree Swallow	2	Pacific Spirit Park

Barn Swallow	1	Coal Harbour, just before the marathon finish line
Black-capped Chickadee	15	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	3	Pacific Spirit Park
Bushtit	2	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Pacific Spirit Park
Pacific Wren	1	
Bewick's Wren	1	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	Pacific Spirit Park
American Robin	15	
European Starling	10	
Orange-crowned Warbler	2	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	3	
Black-throated Gray Warbler	4	Pacific Spirit Park
Wilson's Warbler	1	
Spotted Towhee	3	
Song Sparrow	6	
White-crowned Sparrow	3	
Black-headed Grosbeak	1	Dunsmuir
Red-winged Blackbird	1	Coal Harbour
House Finch	3	
Pine Siskin	15	
American Goldfinch	3	
House Sparrow	5	

## Nature And Feederwatch

By Liz Thunstrom

Sightings and experiences of all kinds have come in this month! Nesting time is in full swing!

**At the April meeting**, the Whiteboard recorded a Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebirds and a Sora seen at Colony Farm and also Sooty Grouse on Burnaby Mountain by Dave Schutz; a Bobcat near the Coquitlam river, by Susan Lundahl; and a Rufous Hummingbird display flight seen at Deboville Slough!

**On April 6th**, Hilary had a very interesting walk in Pitt Meadows. As well as a beaver, she saw 7 Mountain Bluebirds, 2 Sandhill Cranes, 2 Townsend's Solitaires and numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Newly arrived Common Yellowthroats were singing. What a great day!

**Young Naturalists on a walk at Como Lake** found Red-winged Blackbirds showing their distinctive shoulder flashes, a late pair of American Widgeon, a Pied-billed Grebe and the highlight, several Bushtits actively building a nest in a pine tree! A Bushtit nest is an amazing structure - a 6-12 inch hanging pouch with an entrance at one side near the top. It is woven of plant materials such as lichen and moss held together with spider web silk and covered with material of the tree the nest is in! It was completed from the inside and we could see a bird moving inside. Bushtits are co-operative breeders - individuals beyond the breeding pair assist with the nest building (we saw 4) and feeding of the young. Up to 7 eggs are laid in this cozy home!

**Don Gillespie saw a Turkey Vulture** flying 1-3 m over Finnie's garden, Don reckoned - unusually low. He also has located four American Dipper nests in the Coquitlam area!

**Bill Aaroe**, who keeps detailed notes of birds near his home, found the shell of a Robin's egg on April 16, a month earlier than any previous record he had.

**Kiyoshi Takahashi notes the Osprey pair** is nesting on Pylon D at Rocky Point this year, a little further away from the pier and its horde of photographers. Canada Geese have taken over the nearer pylon.