The Yukon is a land of remarkable wilderness, diverse ecosystems, and profound beauty. It is a place where people's experiences with birds and wildlife create intimate connections to the land and to nature. *Birds of the Yukon Territory* is the result of a decade-long project initiated to gather and share what is known about the Yukon's birdlife.

This project has grown and developed hand in hand with the local birding community. It began in the absence of any natural history society or birdwatchers' group, without a nest record scheme or rare birds committee in place, and with a 75-page annotated list of birds compiled in 1946 as the only previous compilation of Yukon-wide bird information. Between the initiation of the Birds of the Yukon project in the late 1980s and the production of the book over a decade later, the Yukon has been placed "on the map" for birders and bird researchers across the continent by an enthusiastic Yukon birding community.

The idea of a book about Yukon birds came about on a cold, stormy day in January 1988 at the Canadian Wildlife Service office in Whitehorse. The entire staff (Jim Hawkings, Don Russell, and Wendy Nixon) met to talk about a proposal by Art Martell, who had recently moved to the Canadian Wildlife Service office in Delta, British Columbia. He was impressed by what he saw of *The Birds of British Columbia*, a landmark work that was soon to be published. A tremendous amount of information on Yukon birds existed in various forms, and the task of bringing it all together under one cover seemed daunting but not impossible. It was anticipated that a few years of dedicated time would be required to gather and summarize data, create distribution maps, collect photographs and illustrations, and write an account of each species known in the Yukon.

The project began with the creation of the Birds of the Yukon Database in 1989, and requests went out to individuals and institutions that held information on Yukon birds. It soon became apparent that "dedicated time" was at a premium for everyone involved. There were countless other projects, many of them seemingly more urgent compared with the huge task of compiling and summarizing the Yukon's bird data, and no sooner had the project gotten underway than its main players began having families. Despite the many demands on time, the project moved ahead, and by 1999 the data for species accounts had been compiled, first drafts had been written, and the completion of *Birds of the Yukon Territory* became a top priority of the Canadian Wildlife Service in Whitehorse. Finally, after more than a decade of work and 8 new babies born to the authors, the book is a reality and the Birds of the Yukon Database lives on.

*Birds of the Yukon Territory* shares knowledge from the past 140 years and sets a new baseline from which to develop a better understanding of Yukon birdlife. The Yukon remains a place where true discovery is still possible. The authors hope that readers are inspired to keep notes of birds wherever their travels take them in the Yukon, and to actively contribute to the Birds of the Yukon Database by submitting field notes to:

**Canadian Wildlife Service**
Mile 91782 Alaska Highway
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5B7

or

**Yukon Bird Club**
Box 31054
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5P7
Acknowledgments

A project of this magnitude is a tremendous undertaking, particularly in a remote area like the Yukon, where a small but dedicated group of bird enthusiasts are called upon repeatedly to contribute to diverse facets of the project. Practically everyone in the Yukon with an interest in birds has contributed to this book, by submitting observations or by simply being part of the wave of enthusiasm for birds created by the formation of the Yukon Bird Club in 1993. Most of the Yukon’s bird specialists have written and/or reviewed species accounts for this book, and most local bird photographers have submitted their work. In addition, there are countless contributors from all over the continent, from the many visiting birders who kindly submitted their field notes, to museum curators who took the time to identify Yukon holdings in their collections, to artists who contributed their exquisite drawings. Our gratitude goes out to all who contributed to this book, including the many observers who submitted sightings and other unpublished data. Their names appear on page 588. We apologize to anyone who may have been overlooked in this long list.

The Birds of the Yukon Territory project was initiated by Art Martell, Wendy Nixon, Jim Hawkings, and Don Russell of the Canadian Wildlife Service. Managers at the Canadian Wildlife Service granted the much-needed time to staff authors and editors. The Birds of the Yukon Database was designed by Wendy Nixon and Jim Hawkings, and managed by Pamela Sinclair and Wendy Nixon.

Museum specimens were listed, described, checked, and in some cases photographed by curators, collections managers, and their assistants at museums across North America, including: Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA (Mark Robbins), American Museum of Natural History, New York (George F. Barrowclough), Burke Museum, Seattle, WA (Chris Wood), California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, CA (Karen Cebra), Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, ON (Michel Gosselin), Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL (David Willard), Iowa State University Museum of Zoology, Ames (James J. Dinsmore), Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg (H.W.R. Copland), Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, CA (Karen Cebra, Carla Cicero, Ned K. Johnson), Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, CT (Fred C. Sibley), Provincial Museum of Alberta, Edmonton (Bruce McGillivray, Margaret R. Ballantyne), Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Ross James, Mark Peck), United States National Museum, Washington, DC (M. Ralph Browning), University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks (Daniel Gibson), University of Kansas Museum of Natural History, Lawrence (David M. Webb), University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor (David R. Golden, Janet Hinshaw, Jean Woods), and Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Los Angeles, CA (Lloyd Kiff). In addition, Doug McRae examined specimens at the Royal Ontario Museum.

During 1994-96, field data on birds in remote (and some not so remote) areas of the Yukon were collected by several volunteers, including Dick Cannings, René Carlson, Dave Fraser, Helmut Grünberg, Margaret Holm, Greg Kubica, Lee Kubica, Leah Ramsey, and Mary Whitley.

Data transcription and data entry were completed over a period of about a decade, by Bruce Bennett, Carla Burnell, Danielle Chassé, Kelly Hayes, Andy Hyde, Kim Jansen, Marylene Jules, Katie Kuiper, Andrew Laurence, Pat MacRae, Marty Mossop, Richard Mueller, Frances Naylen, and René Rivard.

Records of casual and accidental species were reviewed and evaluated by the Yukon Bird Club Checklist Committee, consisting of Cameron D. Eckert, Greg Kubica, Lee Kubica, Helmut Grünberg, and Pamela Sinclair.

Species accounts for regularly occurring species were written by Stuart Alexander, Frank Doyle, Cameron D. Eckert, Helmut Grünberg, Nancy Hughes, Dave Mossop, Wendy Nixon, and Pamela Sinclair (their individual contributions to the species accounts are listed on page 587). Species accounts for casual and accidental species were written by Pamela Sinclair and Cameron D. Eckert.
The sections on the use of birds in Yukon First Nations culture and history were written by Ingrid Johnson and Marilyn Jensen (LegendSeekers Research, Inc.) and reviewed by Julie Cruikshank. The Inuvialuit accounts were compiled by Wendy Nixon with assistance from the Yukon Archives and references provided by Catherine Pinard.

The chapter on the Yukon environment was adapted by Sarah Locke from “Ecoregions of the Yukon Territory: A Compendium of Technical Information on the Biophysical Properties of Yukon Landscapes,” by the Yukon Ecoregions Working Group. All other introductory chapters and the appendices were written by Cameron D. Eckert, Nancy Hughes, Wendy Nixon, and Pamela Sinclair.

Early drafts of species accounts for certain species groups were reviewed by Sean Boyd, André Breault, Rob Butler, Myke Chutter, Lynn Dickson, Cheri Gratto-Trevor, Jim Hawkings, Jim Hines, Geoff Holroyd, Gary Kaiser, Judith Kennedy, Rick Lanctot, Craig Machtans, Kathy Martin, Carol McIntyre, Myrna Pearman, Austin Reed, Dan Rosenberg, Pippa Shepherd, Declan Troy, and Debbie van de Wetering.

Pen-and-ink drawings were contributed by artists David Beadle, Peter Burke, and Jennifer Staniforth (their contributions are listed on page 587).


Tamie Hucal and Jennifer Staniforth assisted with the compilation and selection of photographs. Joe Inverarity scanned photographs for draft layout. Distribution maps in the book were developed by Stuart Alexander, with earlier “working” versions developed by Debbie van de Wetering and Gerry Perrier. Reference maps were developed by Gerry Perrier.

Yukon place names were provided from the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base for Western Canada, by Heather Ross of Geomatics Canada.

Technical services in the development of the draft manuscript were provided by K-L Services of Whitehorse.

Our sincere thanks go to all who have contributed to making this book a reality.
Introduction
The Yukon Territory is home to a diverse and unique assemblage of birds. As of the fall of 2002, 288 bird species have been documented in the Yukon, with 223 occurring regularly. Forty-two species are known to winter annually in the Yukon, many of these in small numbers. Birds that make the journey north to breed in our harsh climate do so relatively free of disturbances from introduced species, industrial development, and urbanization. The vast areas of natural habitat with limited road access can make the study of birds challenging, but are key in defining the character of Yukon birdlife.

**Some Avian Highlights**

Much of the Yukon Territory is remote wilderness, and some of our most spectacular natural events occur in areas that are far beyond the network of roads. Few people witness the gathering of hundreds of thousands of Snow Geese on the Coastal Plain in northern Yukon in September, the staging of hundreds of thousands of waterfowl at Old Crow Flats in late summer, or the incredible spring chorus of songbirds in the La Biche River valley in the southeast. On the other hand, a number of Arctic birds reach the southern limit of their breeding range in the Yukon, and can be accessed by road here. In central Yukon, the Dempster Highway provides rare access to American Golden-Plovers performing their “butterfly flights” over the tundra, Smith’s Longspurs in dapper breeding plumage singing from tundra willows, elegant Long-tailed Jaegers coursing low over expanses of cotton-grass, the profane rant of territorial Willow Ptarmigan, and other sights and sounds not generally accessible by road.

For the most part, nesting birds are widely scattered, and in some cases sparsely distributed, in the Yukon. Obvious concentrations of breeding birds include the very high densities of Rough-legged Hawks on Herschel Island, one of the largest colonies of Black Guillemots in the western Arctic, also on Herschel Island, and the increasing densities of nesting Trumpeter Swans in southern and central Yukon. In addition, the large numbers of Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and Gyrfalcons, although dispersed over large areas, are healthy, important components of world populations.

Most of the spectacular concentrations of birds occur before or after nesting. In spring, thousands of swans, geese, ducks, shorebirds, and gulls gather at open water areas, primarily at M’Clintock Bay and Tagish Narrows in the Southern Lakes, to feed before continuing on to their nesting grounds.

In summer and fall, moulting and staging waterbirds concentrate. On the Coastal Plain, hundreds of thousands of Snow Geese gather to feed on the roots of tundra plants before heading south down the Mackenzie River valley. In the nearshore waters of the Beaufort Sea, moulting seaducks gather by the thousands, particularly in Workboat Passage between Herschel Island and the mainland.

Figure 1 (facing page)
The Yukon Territory.
Yukon Department of Environment Geomatics

Figure 1.1
Southern Lakes region of the Yukon Territory (detail of Figure 1).
Yukon Department of Environment Geomatics

Figure 1.2
Whitehorse.
Yukon Department of Environment Geomatics
and at other sites along the coast, thousands of Red-necked Phalaropes have been recorded staging as well. Inland, at Old Crow Flats in northern Yukon, thousands of male Barrow’s Goldeneyes gather to moult in the many small, nutrient-rich lakes. Across central and southern Yukon, tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes soar along the Tintina Trench between Alaska and their southern wintering areas. In southern Yukon, thousands of waterbirds gather to feed at the Nisutlin River delta.

One aspect of Yukon birdlife that is enjoyed by visitors is the unique ecology of Yukon populations of some North American birds. Several species that breed predominantly on Arctic or subarctic tundra can also be found far south of treeline in the Yukon, nesting in alpine tundra. For example, the Canadian breeding range of the Snow Bunting is centred on the High Arctic islands, but in the Yukon it can be found as far south as the Kluane area. The Baird’s Sandpiper, Long-tailed Jaeger, and Lapland Longspur exhibit similar distributions, and can be a surprising find in southern and central Yukon for birders who associate them with the Arctic barrens.

The Yukon’s expansive tundra habitats also provide nesting grounds for two species predominately associated with hot, dry grasslands, farmland, and sagebrush flats in southern Canada. These are the Upland Sandpiper, which nests in alpine tundra throughout the Yukon, and the Brewer’s Sparrow, which nests in the shrub zone above treeline, high in the mountains of southwestern Yukon. Hearing the familiar songs of these birds among lingering patches of snow on a cold morning in early June provides a memorable experience for many visitors from the south.

East Meets West: Geographic Affinities of Yukon Birds

Visitors from eastern North America are sometimes surprised to find Yukon birds so familiar, in contrast to the “western” birds of more southerly or coastal parts of western North America. W.H. Drury (1953) commented that “either a short visit or a three-months stay [in the Yukon] ... leaves you with a vivid impression that this forest and its birdlife are similar to those you find in northern Maine, New Hampshire, Quebec, and New Brunswick.” Visitors to any region of the Yukon will find, for example, “Myrtle” Yellow-rumped Warblers, “Slate-coloured” Dark-eyed Juncos, and “Yellow-shafted” Northern Flickers just like those in eastern North America, rather than the “Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler, “Oregon” Dark-eyed Junco, and “Red-shafted” Northern Flicker of southern British Columbia.

In addition, the ranges of a number of “eastern” species, which occupy much of Canada east of the Rocky Mountains, extend northwestward into southeastern Yukon. These include the Eastern Phoebe; the Blue-headed, Philadelphia, and Red-eyed vireos; the Magnolia, Cape May, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, Mourning, and Canada warblers; the Ovenbird; the Le Conte’s, Swamp, and White-throated sparrows; and the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Similarly, the range of the Palm Warbler extends into the Peel Plateau area in the northeastern corner of central Yukon.

These “eastern” birds share habitats with species of decidedly different geographic affinities. Visitors will know they are not in eastern North America when they encounter such “western” birds as the Yellow-billed Loon, Trumpeter Swan, Barrow’s Goldeneye, Swainson’s Hawk, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Blue Grouse, Wandering Tattler, Surfbird, Mew Gull, Rufous Hummingbird, Western Wood-Pewee, Hammond’s and Dusky flycatchers, Say’s Phoebe, Black-billed Magpie, Violet-green Swallow, Mountain Chickadee, American Dipper, Mountain Bluebird,
Townsend’s Solitaire, Varied Thrush, Townsend’s and MacGillivray’s warblers, Western Tanager, Brewer’s and Golden-crowned sparrows, and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch.

Many bird species that breed in the Yukon have ranges that are predominantly Arctic or subarctic, and in many cases circumpolar. Some reach the southern limit of their breeding range in the Yukon. These include the Red-throated and Pacific loons, Snow Goose, Brant, Tundra Swan, Common Eider, Rough-legged Hawk, Gyrfalcon, Willow and Rock ptarmigan, American Golden-Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated, Baird’s, Pectoral, Stilt, and Buff-breasted sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red and Red-necked phalaropes, Parasitic and Long-tailed jaegers, Arctic Tern, Black Guillemot, American Pipit, Lapland and Smith’s longspurs, and Common and Hoary redpolls.

Species that have a more southerly distribution and reach the northern and western edge of their breeding range in the Yukon include the Blue Grouse, Sora, American Coot, Wilson’s Phalarope, Black Tern, Common Nighthawk, Dusky and Least flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Mountain Chickadee, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, and Evening Grosbeak.

Finally, several species are found primarily in Eurasia but the eastern edge of their range extends across Alaska into northern Yukon. These include the Grey-headed Chickadee, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, and Yellow Wagtail, as well as two regular non-breeding visitors (Eurasian Wigeon and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper).

This diverse assemblage of birds presents some unusual experiences for birdwatchers. It is only in or near southeastern Yukon that the constant singing of Red-eyed Vireos, which may conjure up images of beech woods in New Brunswick, is punctuated by songs of the equally abundant Hammond’s Flycatcher, which brings contrasting images of temperate rainforests of the Pacific coast.

Moving uphill into the nearby Kotaneelee Range, observers find themselves in one of very few locations where White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and White-throated sparrows can all be heard singing on their nesting territories at once. Meanwhile, in the Kluane area of southwestern Yukon, “Arctic” Snow Buntings share mountains with the Brewer’s Sparrow, which in the American Southwest is associated with hot, dry sagebrush flats. In central and northern Yukon, Upland Sandpipers, which are a familiar sight on fence posts in prairie farmland, nest within sight of Lapland Longspurs, predominantly a High Arctic breeder. The juxtapositions of these birds with very different geographic affinities contribute to the unique character of Yukon bird communities.

**Movement Patterns of Birds through the Yukon**

Many migrant birds passing through southern and central Yukon are moving between wintering areas in southern and southeastern North America and nesting grounds in Alaska. A primary route is along the Tintina Trench, which is a continuation of the Rocky Mountain Trench and runs from southeastern Yukon northwest to the Dawson area, forming a direct path to and from central Alaska (Figure 1). This path is taken by numerous species, one of the most conspicuous being the Sandhill Crane. In southwestern Yukon, large numbers of Tundra Swans move through the Shakwak Trench in southwestern Yukon. Ruby Range, late April 1981; W. Harms
Yukon, the Shakwak Trench forms another route, which runs southeast to northwest along the edge of the St. Elias Mountains. Most birds that nest on the North Coast migrate along the Mackenzie River valley in the Northwest Territories, or along the northern coast of Alaska. Another general route overland through the Yukon is taken by birds wintering on the Pacific coast in southeastern Alaska or coastal British Columbia and breeding to the northeast in the Yukon or Northwest Territories. These include coastal wintering birds such as the Surf Scoter and Thayer's Gull. In addition, less concentrated migration movements occur throughout the Yukon.

Significance of Yukon Birds to Canada and North America

In the Yukon, large areas of some ecosystems remain in a relatively undisturbed state, and there are no large populations of non-native birds. This natural condition may allow the Yukon to act as a refuge for many species whose habitats are being rapidly altered and fragmented elsewhere in Canada and North America. For species that have a large portion of their breeding range within the borders of the Yukon, these natural conditions are of particular importance.

The Yukon is home to Canada's only nesting Surfbirds and Bluethroats. It also hosts almost the entire Canadian nesting populations of Wandering Tattler, Northern Wheatear (western subspecies), and Yellow Wagtail. In addition, the Yukon represents large portions of the Canadian nesting range of Pacific Loon, Trumpeter Swan, Greater Scaup, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Gyrfalcon, Blue Grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Whimbrel, Upland Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Mew Gull, Violet-green Swallow, Grey-headed Chickadee, American Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, Varied Thrush, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

Birds in a Mountainous Northern Landscape

The Yukon is a spectacular landscape of mountain ranges in the remote northwestern corner of the Canadian mainland, nestled between Alaska and the Mackenzie Mountains. Within the Yukon's borders, there are only a few extensive lowland areas in otherwise mountainous terrain. These include a short Arctic coastline that separates the extensive Alaskan coast from the riches of the Mackenzie River delta; a large basin of countless small productive lakes at Old Crow Flats; a small wedge of the rich wetlands of the Peel River basin; the southeastern corner, which features the lush lowland forests of the Liard River basin; and the Tintina Trench.

Spectacular mountainous scenery is not always accompanied by the richest of birdlife. Louis Bishop (1900a, 49) was among the first visitors to comment that "the Yukon Valley seems wanting in bird life – not the center of abundance of its avifauna, but rather a deposit for the overflow from more favoured regions." A.L. Rand (1946, 5) had a similar impression from the Canol Road area: "For the most part along the Canol Road bird life was scarce in regard to both species and individuals."

Others have disagreed, however. William H. Drury (1953, 105-6) suggested that Bishop's impression of scarcity was due to the timing of his visit, in July and early August: "If you travel the rivers in the middle [of] June when the birds are singing you get the impression of many birds around, but after the first of July, they suddenly become quite silent and you can drift for miles with few signs of bird life where two weeks before there were birds every fifty or hundred yards." J. Dewey Soper (1954, 3-4) concurred with Drury:

To the casual observer most of the Yukon Territory appears to be an unusually poor habitat for waterfowl. This is especially true during the nesting season when the birds are likely to be secretive and widely scattered ... During migration periods the number of species of waterfowl increases greatly. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of geese and swans feed and rest in favoured localities on their way to and from the Arctic and sub-Arctic breeding grounds ... Although local populations are characteristically small, the total of scattered pairs and small groups in such a large region as the Yukon must be quite large. Unquestionably the Territory makes a very substantial contribution to the waterfowl resources of North America.
Martha Black’s description (1945, 21-22) of the morning flights of spring migrant waterbirds at Dawson also indicates that different impressions are to be had at different times:

The flight is a wonderful sight, but to see it one must be up betimes. Daylight comes about two o’clock in the morning. Before it is light enough to distinguish individual birds, one hears the swish of onrushing wings and sees the shadowy forms against the sky ... Each morning the flight lasts but a few hours. It is fast and furious while it lasts, but is all over by five o’clock. For the rest of the day scarcely a bird is seen in the sky, and the uninitiated would never guess what wonderful sights are to be seen at the break of day.

In 1995 bird biologists first explored the forests of the Beaver and La Biche rivers in extreme southeastern Yukon. The rich forest bird communities they encountered there were impressive by any standard. Upon arriving at the La Biche River, Cameron D. Eckert (1996e) wrote: “The forests are unlike any found elsewhere in the Yukon ... On June 5th the birds began singing long before the first light of dawn and by sunrise the forests were a virtual wall of song. The absolute density of birds was extraordinary.”

Although some areas of the Yukon are not as rich in birdlife as others, the diversity of species can be attributed to the complex landscape and the geographic location of the territory. In the mountains and valleys of the Yukon, there is a convergence of species from east and west, north and south, creating a truly unique assemblage of birdlife.

Documenting Yukon Rarities and Breeding Birds
The Yukon is an amazing place for unexpected birds. Starting with a Red-legged Kittiwake found at Forty Mile in 1899, the list of vagrants has grown to include the Great Egret, Black and Turkey vultures, Bean Goose, Snowy Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Slaty-backed Gull, Siberian Blue Robin, Dusky Thrush, Red-throated Pipit, Brambling, and numerous others. Such rarities provide thrilling moments for the birdwatchers who are lucky enough to see them. As well, there is a growing understanding of the scientific value of tracking vagrant species. While any individual rarity can be explained away as a bird that simply got

A field sketch is an effective way to document a rare bird.
Judie Creek, 27-28 May 1998; C.D. Eckert

A fallout of American Tree Sparrows that has them feeding out of your hand would be memorable.
Ross River, ca. 1931; Yukon Archives, Claude B. Todd Collection, #7144

Time and place affect one’s impression of the richness of Yukon birds. Certainly, a fallout of American Tree Sparrows that has them feeding out of your hand would be memorable.
lost, over time patterns can emerge that raise or help answer important questions. For example, what are the implications of climate change for migration routes and species’ ranges? Birdwatchers can make a significant contribution by using local bird checklists to assess which species are rare, and by documenting any observations of species that are rare or unknown to a region. Unusual sightings can be documented with a photograph, video, sound recording, sketch, or detailed written description. Birds that are found dead, perhaps a window-strike or road-kill, should be put in a freezer with a note of the date and location and given to the Canadian Wildlife Service or local conservation officer. Promptly alerting other local birdwatchers to a rare find is a good way to share the excitement, and can help ensure that a rarity is fully documented.

In the Yukon, breeding has yet to be confirmed for numerous species and any new breeding record adds to our knowledge. Birdwatchers are encouraged to record and contribute their observations of breeding activity or nests. Important details to note are species, date, location, a description of the nest or young, and habitat. Documentation of rare birds and breeding observations should be sent to the Yukon Bird Club or the Canadian Wildlife Service (see addresses in the Preface of this book).

A quick note – including species (Mew Gull), nest contents (3 olive-coloured eggs with brown spots), nest materials (dead bulrush), behaviour (2 adults mobbing), and habitat (open marshy wetland) – is all that is required to document a breeding record.

Von Wilczek Lakes, 6 June 2001; C.D. Eckert

Photography is perhaps the best way to record a rare bird. In this case, a Turkey Vulture scavenging at the Dawson dump on 25 April 1996 established the Yukon’s first record.

D. Cooley