



# The 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BC-Yukon Nocturnal Owl Survey 2009



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## Another slow spring

This year 92 participants did 89 owl surveys along 81 routes across British Columbia and Yukon, stopping and listening in the dark 1218 times. They detected 189 owls, slightly more than last year; the mean number of owls per 10 stops was 1.55, slightly below the 9-year average. Deep snow packs and unplowed logging roads continued to plague participants; several

routes simply could not be done because of road conditions and others were done later in the season.

Northern Saw-whet Owls, the bread-and-butter of the survey over the southern two-thirds of BC, continued to be found in low numbers, with only 66 reported. This is similar to last year's results, but is only half the average number found on the survey. Even so, the saw-whet was, as usual, the most numerous species reported, though barely ahead of the Great Horned Owl. The Great Horned was down slightly from last year with 53 heard. Boreal Owls remained fairly low, with only 26 reported, 19 of those from the Yukon. Barred Owl detections were up, with about one heard every 40 stops, the best rate ever recorded on this survey.

Two Western Screech-Owls were heard on surveys in the southern Interior—the same as last year— where the species is listed as Endangered, this time joined by two from the southern coast after two years of negative results from the latter region. Five Barn Owls were reported from the coast, all on Saltspring Island.



Great Horned Owl, Oliver, BC. *Photo Russell Cannings*

Linnea Cross had an exciting survey at Mackenzie, with single Great Gray, Short-eared and Long-eared Owls. Michaela Waterhouse reported 3 Great Grays from her Rosita-Meldrum route in the Chilcotin region. Doug Brown had 2 Great Grays at Bridesville, but unfortunately both were seen perched between stops! The two surveys with the most owls came from central BC, where Nancy Krueger had 14 owls on 20 stops along the Pelican Forest Service Road (a Great Horned, a Barred and 12 Saw-whets) and Vi Lambie had 12 owls on the Williston Lake route (2 Barred, 4 Boreal and 6 Saw-whets).

----*Dick Cannings, survey coordinator*



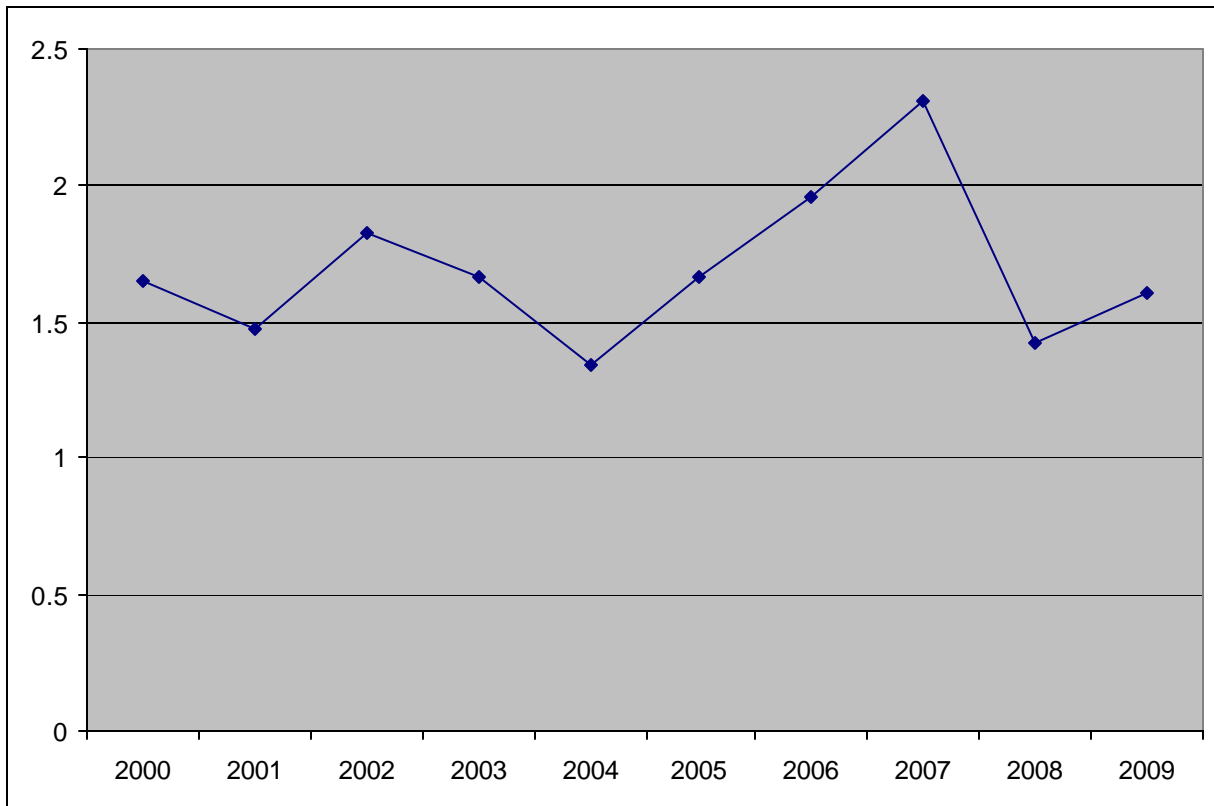
## Thanks to the owlers:

Cathy Antoniazzi, Libby Avis, Rick Avis, Ron Barre, Adrian Batho, Jack Bowling, Doug Brown, Alan Burger, Greg Byron, Dick Cannings, Lynne Cannon, Bruce Carmichael, Paul Colton, Mark Connor, Christopher Coxson, Deborah Coxson, Linnea Cross, Loyd Csizmadia, Chris Dale, Julia

Daly, Rick Dawson, Lydia DeGroot, Boris Dobrowolsky, Dan Dunlop, Helen Dunlop, K. John Field, Trevor Forder, David Fraser, Mark Gardiner, Mike Gill, Aileen Grant, Helmut Grunberg, Lesley Gyug, Larry Halverson, Todd Heakes, Phil Henderson, Knut Herzog, Lindsay Hillocks, Bonnie Hooge, Candace Jack, Paul Jones, Joan Kerr, Sandra Kinsey, Nancy Krueger, Laird Law, Chelsea Lindley, Tanya Luszc, Wendy Marshall, Sue McDonald, Kathleen McEachern, Brien McGaughey, Bob McKay, Bruce McLean, Heather Meier, Bob Murkett, Ted Murphy-Kelly, Heather Neville, John Neville, Ann Nightingale, Mark O'Donoghue, Molly O'Donoghue, Clive Osborne, Erin Preston, Leah Ramsay, Reiner Rembe, David Reid, Trish Reid, Gillian Richardson, Trevor Richardson, Reto Riesen, Laurie Rockwell, Greg Ross, Susan Ross, Ken Routley, Kirk Safford, Jean Sawatzky, Gail Spitler, Elsie Stanley, John Theberge, Mary Theberge, Margaret Waring, Michaela Waterhouse, Doug Wilson, Chris Withers, Stu Withers, Chandra Wong, Ken Wright, Ellen Zimmerman.

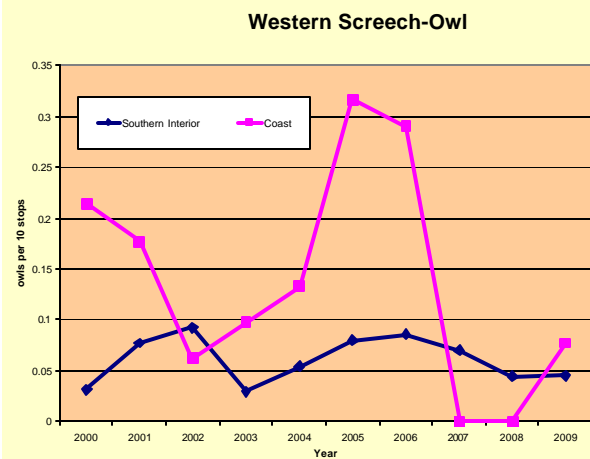
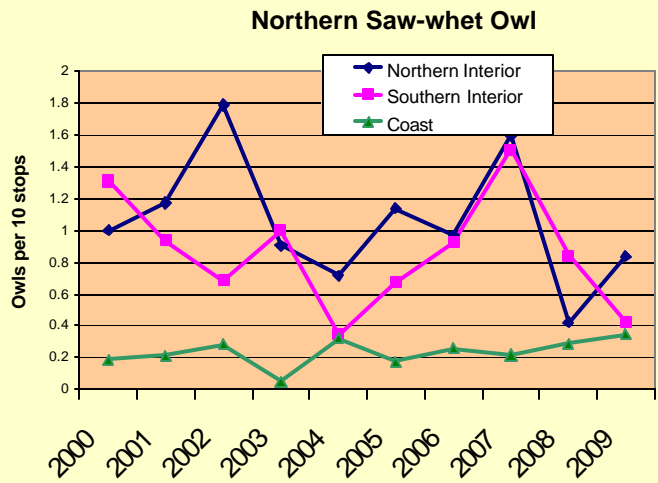
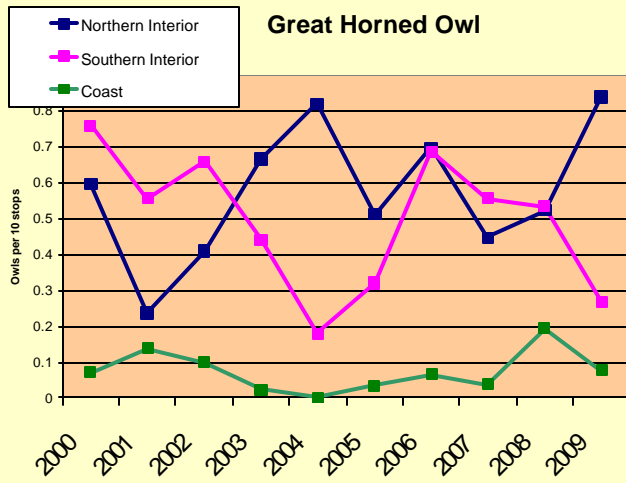
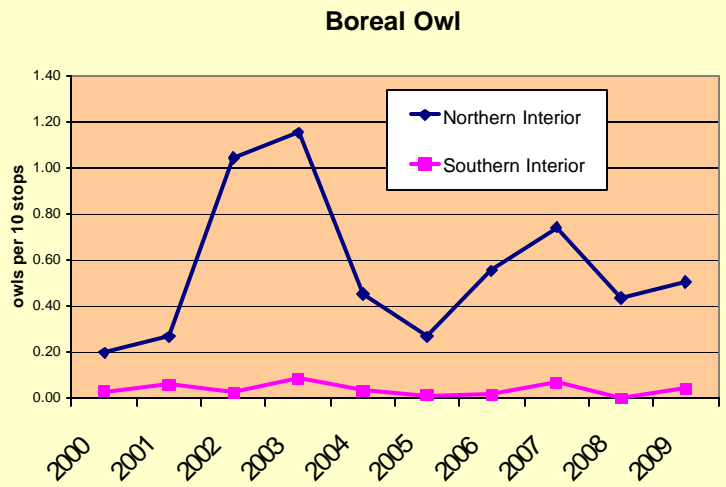
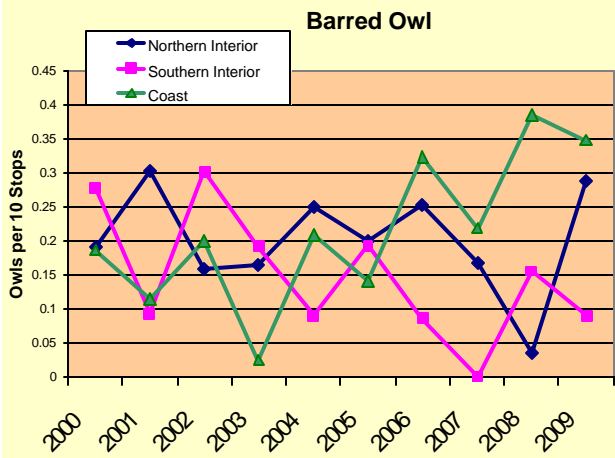
## AN IMPROVEMENT OVER 2008

The chart below shows the trend in number of owls per 10 stops over the past 10 years. You can see that 2009 shows a slight improvement over 2008 in terms of owl detections. I know last year I predicted that 2009 would be a banner year based on fall banding data from Rocky Point migration monitoring station west of Victoria, but increases in Great Horned, Barred and Northern Saw-whet Owl numbers in northern BC and the Yukon were offset by dropping detection rates in southern BC.



		<b>BNOW</b>	<b>WESO</b>	<b>GHOW</b>	<b>NHOW</b>	<b>NPOW</b>	<b>BARR</b>	<b>GGOW</b>	<b>LEOW</b>	<b>BOOW</b>	<b>NSWO</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>COAST</b>												
<b>24 surveys</b>	<b>Total Birds</b>	5	2	2	0	1	9	0	0	0	9	28
<b>21 routes</b>	<b>Birds per 10 stops</b>	0.19	0.08	0.08	0.00	0.04	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.35	1.08
	<b># routes with species</b>	3	2	1	0.00	1	5	0	0	0	7	13
<b>SOUTHERN INTERIOR</b>												
<b>30 surveys</b>	<b>Total Birds</b>	0	2	12	0	1	4	0	0	2	19	40
<b>26 routes</b>	<b>Birds per 10 stops</b>	0.00	0.04	0.27	0.00	0.02	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.43	0.90
	<b># routes with species</b>	0	1	9	0	1	3	0	0	2	11	21
<b>NORTHERN INTERIOR</b>												
<b>34 surveys</b>	<b>Total Birds</b>	0	0	39	0	0	13	5	1	24	38	118
<b>33 routes</b>	<b>Birds per 10 stops</b>	0.00	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.10	0.02	0.47	0.84	2.60
	<b># routes with species</b>	0	0	17	0	0	7	2	1	11	9	27
<b>TOTAL</b>												
<b>89 surveys</b>	<b>Total Birds</b>	5	4	53	0	2	26	5	1	26	66	186
<b>81 routes</b>	<b>Birds per 10 stops</b>	0.04	0.03	0.44	0.00	0.02	0.22	0.04	0.01	0.21	0.57	1.55
	<b># routes with species</b>	3	3	27	0	2	15	3	1	13	27	62

**Table 1. Owls reported on the survey in 2009.** Species totals are given as birds per 10 stops so that direct comparison can be made among regions and years. Coastal routes are those west of the Coast-Cascade crest; Southern Interior counts are those from the Thompson, Nicola, Okanagan, Columbia and Kootenay valleys and adjacent plateaus; Northern Interior routes include those from the Cariboo-Chilcotin, Prince George, Mackenzie and Fort Nelson areas, the Bulkley Valley, and the Yukon. The number of surveys includes some routes that were done more than once.



## Trends in owl numbers

Here are the trends for the numbers of five common owl species reported since the survey began, presented in owls per 10 stops. Please note that the effect of playback has not been factored out of the results from the coast for the past five years.

Snowy Owls aren't tallied on this survey—but are always a treat to see. This one was near Princeton in January 2010.

*Photo: Russell Cannings*

## ONLINE DATA ENTRY!

After years of promises, it's really here. Participants will be sent the usual data forms this year, but hopefully most of you will be able and willing to enter the data into the database online. This will be done through the NatureCounts website hosted by Bird Studies Canada. Please follow the following steps and hopefully it will be a painless experience. It will certainly help the survey maintain an up-to-date database of results that is as error-free as possible.

1. Go to <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/bcytowls/main.jsp> and register by clicking on "Create new login". Do this now because it takes a day or two for the registration to be confirmed.
2. Once you've registered and have a login name and password, you can login and begin data entry.
3. After logging in, you'll see a list of links on the left side of the page. Click Submit Data.
4. Next to "44. British Columbia Nocturnal Owl Survey" click "Submit".
5. The first page of the data entry form has all the time and weather data. For "Route unique ID or name" enter the code associated with your route, as listed on the following page. These are "BCXXXX", where the XXXX is your route number with a zero in front (e.g. BC0803). My apologies to Yukon surveyors—your codes begin with BC as well—we might fix this anomaly in the future! If you can't find your route name and number in the list, please contact me.
6. Fill in the remainder of the time and weather data as per your sheet. Leave the Participant # box blank. Put in any general comments about the survey—weather conditions, road conditions, etc., then click Next Page.
7. You are now on the first page of the stop by stop data entry. Each stop is done on a separate page, but the routine is quite quick and easy. Fill in the appropriate data for moon, distance, traffic count and noise as per your sheet. Most of us will then click "Check this box if you completed this station but did not find any species" and move on to the next page. If you **did** detect an owl, fill in the owl data below before moving on. You can enter comments on each stop as well, such as mammals seen, the sources of bothersome noise (river noise, dogs, jets, drunken revelers, etc.), wind levels or whatever you think is pertinent. Continue by clicking Next Page and so on until you've completed the survey, then click Finish Form. You're done!
8. Please mail (or email) me the field data sheet as well—it's important we have a paper backup of your data.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Years 1 and 2 of the BC Breeding Bird Atlas are history, and the enthusiasm for this project is obviously growing. If you haven't got involved yet there are still 3 years left, and we need all the help we can get—there are a lot of squares out there to explore! So far hundreds of atlassers have searched 1251 squares for birds, putting in over 19,000 hours of work and finding 307 species. The data summaries and species maps have been posted online at [www.birdatlas.bc.ca](http://www.birdatlas.bc.ca). We need to fill in those white spaces! While out in the woods looking for owls this spring, you can enter your owl findings into the atlas.

## British Columbia – Yukon Nocturnal Owl Survey: Route Names and Codes

		Eagan Lake	304	Langley South	230
Abbotsford	224	Eakin Creek	301	Lasqueti	142
Aldergrove	223	East Sooke	143	Lawn Hill	608
Aleza Lake	715	Eddy	711	Lewes Marsh	912
Annie Lake Road	913	Edgewood	416	Little River	117
Argenta	401	Egmont Road	601	Little Slocan	413
Atlin Road	919	Enger Lakes	922	Logan Lake	317
Auriol	906	Errington	159	Lone Butte	511
Bainbridge Lake	105	Fairview	809	Lukwa	123
Baldy Hughes	731	Fanny Bay	156	Mackenzie	703
Bear Mountain	707	Fenwick Road	423	Marshall Creek	905
Beaver FSR	716	Fintry	836	Masset Sound	606
Beaver Lake	812	Fish Lake	904	Mayo	916
Beaver Pass	504	Foot Lake	723	McBride Hinkleman Road	713
Beaver Point	106	Forbidden Plateau	112	McCulloch	820
Beaverdell Rd-Idleback L.	814	Forest Grove	512	McDonald Lake Road	602
Big Bar Lake	319	Fort Langley East	207	McIntyre Lake	424
Biliter	603	Fort Langley West	206	McKinney	831
Birkenhead	218	Fountain Valley	327	McLean Creek	807
Black Pines	315	Galiano	101	M'Clintock	915
Blewett	409	Garnet Valley	804	Meldrum Creek	501
Bluenose-Dee Lake	811	Golden Ears	203	Merville	138
Bobtail	727	Granby River	827	Michel Creek	412
Bowron River	718	Grasmere	410	Middlepoint North	215
Brew Bay	222	Great Central Lake	104	Middlepoint South	214
Bridesville	832	Green Lake	515	Millstream-Munns	150
Buckley Bay	158	Ha Ha Creek	422	Misinchinka River	705
Bullmoose	732	Harrison Lake East	227	Mission Steelhead	205
Buntzen Lake	231	Harrison Mills	226	Mossvale Road	717
Cabin Main	132	Hat Creek	306	Mount Cain	119
Canim Lake	513	Heather Lake	702	Mount Currie	219
Cape Lazo	116	Heriot Bay	137	Mount Maxwell	149
Chimney Lake Road	516	Herrick	719	Mount Newton	141
Christian Valley	826	Hidden Valley - Lumberton	407	Mount Seymour	209
Chu Chua	321	Horne Lake	152	Mush Lake	908
Chubb Lake	701	Huson	126	Nakusp	415
Coalmine Road	706	Hyman Creek	726	Nanaimo River	144
Commonage Road	810	Inkameep	833	Nanoose	154
Comox Lake	118	Iron Mine	128	Naramata	808
Cook Creek	147	Iron River	109	Narcosli Creek	507
Copper Bay	607	Isabella Point	107	Noomas	127
Copper Mountain	818	Jade Mine-Francis Lake	911	Nordenskiold	917
Coquitlam Watershed	232	Jake's Corner	920	North Bridge Lake	302
Cortes Island	110	Joffre Lakes	202	North Saanich	139
Cottonwood River	505	John Hart	130	North Saltspring	135
Cowichan Lake South	102	Judson Road	303	Notch Hill	307
Cranbrook - Wycliffe	405	Kane Valley	316	Okanagan Centre	835
Cranbrook Hill	721	Kathleen Lakes	907	Old Cowichan Lake Road	113
Creighton Valley #2	823	Kennedy Lake Road	146	Osprey Lake	819
Creighton Valley	822	Kikomun Creek	411	Otkwanch	121
Crotch Creek	729	Kilpala Main	131	Otway	710
Cypress Bowl	210	Kiskatinaw	733	Pack River	704
Darke Lake	803	Klaklakama	124	Pass Creek	417
Deadman River	313	Knife Creek	509	Pass Lake	720
Delkatla	609	Knouff Lake Road	311	Paul Creek- Pinantan Lake	308
Dore River	712	Kootenay Crossing	419	Paxton Valley	324
Dove Creek	111	Kusawa Lake Road	902	Peachland Creek	828
Duck Lake	404	Lambly Creek	829	Pelican FSR	724

Pelly Crossing	918	Shawnigan Lake	151	Trout Creek	813
Pemberton	201	Sheep Creek South	503	Tumbler Ridge	730
Peter Hope Lake	312	Shingle Creek W	805	Tunkwa Lake	314
Pillar Lake	325	Shuttleworth Creek	802	Turtle Valley	320
Pinantan Lake	309	Silver Skagit	211	Tyee Lake	506
Pitt Polder	204	Simpson Lake	909	Upper Sylvester	216
Pleasant Camp	604	Skmana Lake	322	Vedder Mountain Loop	228
Porcupine Creek	318	Skulow Lake	510	Venner Meadows	825
Port Mellon - Gibsons	225	Snowden Forest	108	Vermilion River	418
Port Mellon	217	Sooke - West Coast Rd.	136	Vernon Lake	125
Postill	834	South Pender	114	Watson Lake	910
Prince George Buckhorn	709	Sproat Lake	103	Wells Gray	305
Prince George Nechako	722	Squamish River	220	West Kettle River	830
Princeton	821	Squanga	914	Westham Island	208
Prospect Lake	148	St. Mary Lake	414	White Lake	801
Quadra - Walcan	115	Stake Lake	310	White's Landing	714
Qualicum Bay	153	Steamboat Mountain	420	Whitewater	402
Quatlena River	518	Sterling Creek	816	Williston Lake	708
Quennel Lake	145	Strathcona	129	Woss Lake	120
Quesnel River	508	Sulphurous Lake	514	Wynndel	403
Rabbit Lake	824	Summers Creek	817	Yakoun	605
Raspberry Creek	725	Syringa Creek	421		
Rosewall Creek	157	Tagish Road	921		
Rosita-Meldrum	517	Takhini River Road	903		
Ryder Lake	229	Tarfu Creek	901		
Sahtlam	140	Telkwa-Lawson Road	611		
Salmon River	323	Texada Island	221		
Sarita	134	Texas Creek	326		
Saturna Island	133	Tezzeron L. - Murray Ridge	610		
Sebalhall	122	Torpy River	728		
Shatford Creek	806	Trent River	155		

It's already 2010...

Participants will be getting their 2010 BC Nocturnal Owl Survey packets by email. Many thanks for your work on this survey over the years!

*Please note my new address and phone number if you're getting in touch...*

--Dick Cannings

## BC-Yukon Nocturnal Owl Survey

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