

Nature Notes

Counting Birds...



Bird Studies Canada has initiated a national seven year project of mapping birds. Within BC, this Breeding Bird Atlas hopes that participants will have fun as well as help in gathering information that will assist scientists and policy makers in conserving birds and their ecosystems.



Ruby Crowned Kinglet
(Photo courtesy of Rick Leche)

The simplest way of gathering information on where birds breed is to listen for their spring songs. In the Kimberley Nature Park, we begin hearing our first songsters at the beginning of April when the Winter Wren's exuberant vocals are heard. By mid July the woods are quiet once again. Song serves a useful purpose other than just delighting us as we hike and bike in the park! It is the male of the species who sings as he

tries to attract a female and announce his territory. Throughout the breeding season, the song continues to deter other males from the area.

We have had Breeding Bird Surveys in the Nature Park two previous years. On June 16, 2001, ten participants counted 707 individual birds representing fifty six species. The most common birds were the Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red Crossbills, and Pine Siskins. On June 8, 2002, eleven participants counted 308 individuals representing forty five species. Red-breasted Nuthatches, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Townsend's Warbler were the most common species. Three routes have been established: one covers Eimer's Lake and the Duck Pond area, another the backside of Myrtle Mountain and the third one the Dipper Lake area.

If you would like to join in the 2008 count, check the Nature Park web site for dates in early June or phone 427-5404. It takes some practice to learn to identify birds by their song. If this is a skill you would be interested in developing, you would be very welcome to join us. Only enthusiasm is required! The songs of the Swainson's Thrush, Song Sparrow, and Ruby-Crowned Kinglet are wonderful to hear! We will also be listening for the drumming of sapsuckers, hoots of owls, and wing beating of grouse as these sounds indicate their presence for breeding as well.



Yellow-rumped Warbler
(Photo courtesy of Rick Leche)

Visit www.rockies.net/kimberley/naturepark for a hard copy of this article or to learn more about Nature Park events.