• Sportsman, Spare that Raven, June 21, 1944
• I Know a Robin When I See One! June 26, 1944
• Duckies, Mind Your Queues, July 6, 1944
• A 50 Per Cent Providence, July 10, 1944
• Thay [sic] Weave Mazes in the Air, July 19, 1944
• The Pipers are Coming, August 23, 1944
• Gulls on Passage, August 30, 1944
• King of the Castle, September 26, 1944
• Limpy and His Friends, August 30, 1945
• Tern and Tern About, September 4, 1945
• Bohemian Waxwings on Insect Diet on a Winter After Noon, March 1, 1947
• Whistling Swans Make Nelson a Port of Call, April 24, 1947
• Grass Babies, May 16, 1947
• Bittern by the Lagoon, May 26, 1947
• Bird Ghost Town, June 9, 1947
• Water Fowl Take off for North, March 24, 1948
• How to Increase Your Bird-Power, April 1, 1948
• Gyro Park Bird House, April 13, 1948
• A Nice Day for Ducks, May 12, 1948

Introduction

Walter Johnstone’s (Figure 1) contribution to our knowledge of the West Kootenay bird fauna is an interesting one. In 1911, he literally came down from the hills to spend a couple of years as a fur trapper and cougar bounty hunter on Lower Arrow Lake. Born in England, the eldest son of a long line of Vicars, he rebelled against a vocation in Holy Orders. In consequence, after an apprenticeship as a surveyor, he immigrated to Canada in 1903 briefly settling near Haileybury, Ontario, working for a school chum of his father.

Not satisfied with the circumstances of this placement he set off on his own, where from 1904 to 1910, he worked his way across the northern United States as a labourer, a cowhand, and a miner. He finally ended up riding the rails as a hobo, in Spokane, via Tucson and Los Angeles. Still with itchy feet he crossed back into Canada at Rossland, worked briefly as a cook, before moving north through the mountains west of the Columbia River learning as he went, the skills for trapping marten, lynx and cougar. He eventually arrived at Shields, on the shores of Lower Arrow Lake not far from Castlegar. From this base he trapped fur for a few years, including the Valhalla Range to the east. He then took a surveying job in the Cariboo. On a whim he returned to Lower Arrow Lake where he met his future wife in Edgewood. Johnstone’s unpublished autobiography “Without Roots” (Johnstone undated), a most interesting read, ends promptly with his marriage in 1915: his “fiddle-footed” wandering days were over! The contention that Johnstone arrived in Edgewood direct from England (Davidson 2011) is in error.

The Johnstones settled in Edgewood, building their home called Arcadia. Here they met Dr. John Kelso, Medical Health Officer, recently arrived from England. Johnstone’s interest in bird collecting and observation is believed to have devel-
oped from his association with Kelso. In 1925, the Johnstone family moved from Edgewood, first to Queen’s Bay, then Slocan City and Silverton, finally settling in Cranbrook in 1937, where Walter became District Highways Engineer (Pers. comm., Eileen (Johnstone) Millican, Christina Lake, B.C., 2000).

Johnstone will best be remembered for his East Kootenay bird observations which “were commenced in February, 1937, and . . . carried on intermittently to June, 1949” (Johnstone 1949); his observation of Ancient Murrelets in the Rocky Mountain Trench (Johnstone 1964); and his publication on the taxonomy of pocket gophers (Johnstone 1954). He also published a number of articles about birds for the *Canadian Field Naturalist, Condor* and *The Migrant* (see Campbell et al. 1979) and a series of popular articles under the title “A Naturalist Meditates”. He died in Cranbrook in 1971, at the age of 86. His obituary noted that he was a “widely known authority of birds and plants for Western Canada”.

**Methods**

During a search for West Kootenay bird records in *A Review of the Bird Fauna of British Columbia* (Munro and Cowan 1947), an earlier period of Johnstone’s birding activity was uncovered for the years 1915 to 1919. Apparently, a pre-publication version of his East Kootenay manuscript was given to Jim Munro or Ian McTaggart-Cowan that included some of his West Kootenay observations and specimen records. Though these were omitted from the eventual publication, Munro and McTaggart-Cowan frequently include West Kootenay references, citing these as “Johnstone, MS”. The primary purpose of this article is to draw attention to Johnstone’s West Kootenay data. Whether a copy of his early draft manuscript is still in existence is unknown.

**Results**

From his West Kootenay bird activity, the only new species Johnstone documented, in company with Allan Brooks, is the Chestnut-backed Chickadee.

A significant event for Johnstone was a visit to Edgewood by Allan Brooks in June of 1919 (Laing 1979). During this visit Johnstone guided Brooks into the high country of the Gold Range “where for nearly a week they camped and had such a good time with high elevation birds they did not come down until June 25th” (Laing 1979, p.122). Brooks’ field notes for this trip (Brooks 1919) noted the Chestnut-backed Chickadee as common; Horned Grebe and Spotted Sandpiper breeding at 6,000 ft.; Columbian Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak, Varied Thrush, White-crowned (Gambel’s) Sparrow, Hermit Thrush and Cassin’s Finch all breeding; but no ptarmigan, pipits, Fox Sparrow or Horned Lark. Apparently Brooks did the only collecting.

Though Kelso and Johnstone both lived in Edgewood, were both members of the British Columbia Ornithologists’ Union, and each published articles in the “The Migrant” (1923–1927), it is surprising Kelso (1926) makes no reference to Johnstone and in his unpublished manuscript (Kelso 1932) mentions Johnstone very infrequently.

Johnstone’s contribution to our early understanding of West Kootenay ornithology may be quite small but is worthy of documentation.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the Johnstone family, in particular Walter’s daughters Joyce Woods of Cranbrook and Eileen Millican of Christina Lake, for their interest and assistance over the years and for the use of their father’s photo. Betty Brooks kindly located and provided the field notes from Allan Brooks’ 1915 field trip into the Gold Range. I would also like to thank Andy Buhler and Art Martell for their editorial comments and suggestions.

**Literature Cited**

Book reviews


* Copies of these references are being deposited in the Selkirk College Library Archives.


As suggested by the title, this is a book of photographs of British Columbia birds. The majority of images are by the author, with eight contributed by others.

Following the table of contents, the Introduction provides a one-page overview of the book with some biographical information, a description of the aims of the book and the author’s reasons and motivation to pursue birds as photographic subjects.

The book is divided into six sections. The first five sections feature birds characteristic of five different regions of the province with distinct habitat types, titled: Shoreline and Ocean, Coastal Forests, The Interior, Northern Forests and The Mountains. Each of these sections is preceded by two pages of text which provide information on the types of ecosystems present in the region as well as impressions or anecdotes about particular experiences encountered. Following the text on each region, 19 or 20 beautiful full-page photographs of birds are presented. The images in this book are technically superb, providing close-up, usually eye-level portraits of many of British Columbia’s birds, in pleasing poses. The introductory text is nicely integrated with the photographs, so that one finds images of the birds which are mentioned. Additional large photographs, spanning two facing pages, are presented with the title of each section, and smaller photographs accompany some of the text.

Although the aim of the book is to present photographs of birds, the brief text preceding each section is informative and adds considerable interest as well. The preamble to Shoreline and Ocean gives a nice summary of the main habitats there such as the intertidal region, mud flats, offshore islands and the open ocean. The author mentions the Pacific Flyway and the importance of the Fraser River estuary for migrating birds, and provides interesting comments on the feeding habits of shorebirds, the sense of smell in tubenoses, and the importance of Triangle Island for nesting seabirds such as Cassin’s Auklet.

The notes on the Coastal Forest region include an interesting comment about the special acoustic characteristics of coastal forests, due to the presence of very large trees with moss-covered limbs—an ambiance that one feels intuitively, without being consciously aware of the reasons for it. Here there is also a discussion of the reasons why coastal forests have such large trees, and of the interconnectivity between Pacific salmon, their predators and the fertility of the forests.

The Interior section, introduced by a lovely photograph of a hovering Calliope Hummingbird, describes the phenomenon of “rain shadows” which give rise to dry intermontane valleys and briefly outlines key habitats such as dry grasslands, open pine forests and cliffsides, with mention of characteristic bird species in each. Here Glenn Bartley also recounts his experiences in attempting to photograph Peregrine Falcons, presumably leading to the superb photograph of an adult bird in flight which adorns the cover of the book.

The Northern Forests section of photographs is preceded by a general description of the boreal forest and outlines the reasons for the higher diversity of warblers in the northeastern corner of the province. Also included are a discussion of the role of forest fires, some characteristics of bird species which can survive the harsh winters in this region and some concluding personal reminiscences about experiences in the region.

The Mountains section includes the author’s impressions of the Rocky Mountains on his first trip to the west and briefly discusses some birds which breed in the mountain lakes, forests and meadows, such as Barrow’s Goldeneye and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

The sixth section, “Notes from the Field”, provides tips on