PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are sincerely thankful for the generous support of our donors, and the loyalty and service of our volunteers, staff, and members. Your continued efforts ensure our programs run efficiently, and allow us to look to the future with confidence.

We could not have achieved all our successes in 2021 without your help. Our membership is strong and growing - a reflection in part of the success of our Education and Outreach programs. Our critical work continued as a CMMN member, providing migratory data from the Pacific coast. We started a new project using Motus technology, and launched the highly successful Victoria Bird Week to educate the public about conservation needs. We were fortunate to have a very skilled team of banders that not only oversaw our monitoring efforts, but also worked on educating the public and training our volunteers. Our financial position is strong and our fundraising initiatives were extremely successful, allowing us the flexibility to carry out our current projects, while maintaining a healthy outlook for the future.

It is my privilege to be a volunteer with Rocky Point Bird Observatory and, as President, I am most grateful for the hard work of a knowledgeable Board of Directors and the commitment of our staff. Promoting bird conservation is our focus. I have every confidence that this next year will see us reach more goals and bring even greater achievements. I invite you to join us on the journey.

Jennifer Armstrong
President

Red-breasted Sapsucker - Photo by Jennifer Armstrong.

Front cover: Tennessee Warbler - Photo by David Bell.
Back cover: Downy Woodpecker - Photo by Jennifer Armstrong.
MONITORING
Rocky Point Bird Observatory operates six avian monitoring projects every year.
The focus is on birds breeding in our area, those that migrate through in the fall, owls, hummingbirds, and seabirds passing through and/or stopping here.

RESEARCH
The Science Advisory Committee advises on, and guides RPBO’s scientific approach.
We contribute the data we collect to larger continent-wide datasets that help inform conservation decisions and additionally, work to turn this data into peer-reviewed results.

OUTREACH
The Outreach program consists of school programs that are developed for grades K-7, and a community-based public outreach program.
Through speaking engagements and our presence at local events, we spread the message of conservation.

Conservation through monitoring, research, and public education

Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) seeks to influence and inform ecological management practices and conservation of migratory birds in western North America through monitoring, scientific research, and public education. We have conducted bird banding and related monitoring on southern Vancouver Island since 1994.

In an effort to monitor and better understand landbird populations in North America, as well as contribute to conservation efforts through public education, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) partnered with Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and multiple independent bird banding stations to form the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) in 1998. RPBO has been a member of this organization since 2001.

As the only Pacific coastal station in the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, RPBO is a unique and very important contributor of regional data to national and international databases.

Birds serve as good indicators of the health and sustainability of the natural environment. Because of their popular appeal, birds can serve as environmental ambassadors, a key entry point to get the public interested in broader environmental issues and as an inspiration for a love of nature.

Olympic Mountains - Photo by Kim Beardmore.
Thank you to our donors and supporters for your generous assistance in 2021. This amazing support, coupled with strong fundraising efforts, has enabled us to end the year with a considerable increase in total equity over the previous year.

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<td>230,037</td>
<td>61,762</td>
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<td>230,037</td>
<td>61,762</td>
<td>13,096</td>
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*Term deposits includes short-term investments (bank term deposits) and market value of RPBO Endowment Fund managed by the Victoria Foundation

**Projects Fund includes internally and externally restricted funds.
## 2021 INCOME AND EXPENSES

### CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

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<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
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*Revenues in 2021 above 2020 are due in part to receipt of grants for use in 2022*

*Includes contribution of mileage reimbursement, cost of goods and services (e.g., website hosting).*

**Volunteer labour @ $20/hour**
A PHOTO YEAR IN REVIEW
PROJECT UPDATES

MOTUS PILOT PROJECT

The Northern Saw-whet Owl is a small nocturnal owl found in parts of southern Canada and northern USA. The species is partly migratory throughout its range. Large numbers of owls are captured and banded at monitoring stations each fall, including hundreds captured at Rocky Point Bird Observatory. Significant numbers of owls migrate through southern Vancouver Island each fall. Yet the migratory routes and destinations for these birds remain poorly understood.

Motus is the world's largest collaborative automated radio telemetry array, using receivers that automatically record signals from radio transmitters. The Motus Wildlife Tracking System provides an excellent opportunity to study migration and habitat use by Northern Saw-whet Owls.

This collaborative pilot project by RPBO, Vancouver Island University (VIU), and Tatlayoko Bird Observatory (TLBO) aims to use Motus to assess the movement behaviour of Northern Saw-whet Owls tagged in coastal areas of BC. In 2021, 38 Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured and tagged at three locations: Nanaimo 8 (VIU), Metchosin 21 (RPBO), and Tatlayoko Lake 9 (TLBO). Individual owls selected for tagging received a Lotek Avian NanoTag held on the bird's back using a leg-loop harness. The tag will emit a radio signal every 29 seconds for up to two years. Owl movements are recorded by the Motus receiver network to help determine the species' migratory behaviour.

The link to our Motus project #434 on the Motus website can be found at https://motus.org/data/projectTags?id=434
The fall migration season was conducted by banders and volunteers who monitored birds migrating through the southerly point of Vancouver Island. The program operated under COVID-19 protocols, which, this year, allowed for limited training of new volunteers. This was the 27th banding season for the Rocky Point site, and the 10th season for Pedder Bay. Between the two sites, 6563 birds were banded and 1388 recaptured.

As a member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, our banding focuses on landbirds, but all birds observed at the two study sites were tallied during the 7-hour shifts. Considering all birds recorded in the daily totals at both sites, 263,111 individual birds of 198 species were recorded this season.

In 2021, David Bell was again the primary bander-in-charge, with Rebecca Golat and Samuelle Simard-Provençal as banders. To our delight, and with funding support from ECO Canada, we were able to hire two long-term volunteers, Rebecca Reader-Lee and Liam Singh, as interns for half the season. We are most grateful to the 114 volunteers who donated 5537 hours of their time and expertise this season at the two stations.

Highlights included RPBO's first Orchard Oriole banded and first Common Grackle and Snow Bunting sighted at Rocky Point. The Pedder Bay crew banded its first Tennessee Warbler and marked the first sightings of Black-bellied Plover and Snow Bunting for that site.

We were also pleased to have visitors return in small groups to our Pedder Bay site. Over the course of the season, 273 visitors were able to see our team in action and learn about bird migration and monitoring.

The full report for this and previous migration monitoring seasons can be viewed on the RPBO website rpbo.org.
MAPS

31 May - 7 August 2021

The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) project is a collaborative effort, managed by the Institute for Bird Populations, collecting demographic data on North American landbirds in their breeding range since 1989. Analysis of the MAPS data provides critical information relating to songbird ecology that can be applied to conservation and management. Rocky Point Bird Observatory has contributed data to the MAPS project since 2003. In 2021, RPBO continued operation of the successful MAPS station at Witty’s Lagoon Regional Park in Metchosin, banding 277 new birds with an additional 84 recaptures. We started a new station this year at Power To Be site on Prospect Lake, where 141 birds were banded.

Brown Creeper was the most frequently banded species at the Power To Be site (17), adding to the plumage data that our bander, Jannaca Chick, is collecting on this species. A record number (96) of Chestnut-backed Chickadees were banded at the Witty’s Lagoon site in 2021. Recapture highlights from the Witty’s Lagoon site included an American Robin, banded in 2017 which is now at least five years old and a Swainson’s Thrush banded in its hatch year, 2017.

PROJECT UPDATES

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RPBO was able to operate the Nocturnal Owl Monitoring project in 2021 with COVID-19 protocols in place. We were able to carry out some volunteer training and also welcome visitors on a restricted basis with bookings through EventBrite.

Between the two stations, RPBO banded 1225 Northern Saw-whet Owls, 14 Barred Owls, 1 Long-eared Owl and, an RPBO first, a Barn Owl. An additional two Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded in the daytime during passerine migration banding (both at Pedder Bay). This was our second highest number of owls caught in a single season. Interestingly, 20% of the owls banded were caught on the final three nights of the season. We had 9 foreign recaptures, the most ever in one year, plus 21 recaptures of owls banded by RPBO in previous years. RPBO has now banded a total of 12,679 owls since 2002.

Jannaca Chick was our owl bander for a third year, and we were delighted to have Megan Buers join us as our second bander. It didn't take Megan long to enter the RPBO record books, banding our first ever Barn Owl (at Rocky Point) and finishing out the year by banding a Long-eared Owl on the final night of the season.

This year approximately 67% of all the owls captured were hatch year birds. While this is a higher percentage than last year’s 55% it still is not as high as one would expect in a peak breeding year. This is part of their normal cycle and does not necessarily signify a conservation concern.
PROJECT UPDATES

HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT
April - October

In 2021, the interior teams were our indomitable stars of the hummingbird monitoring project. They ran 14 sites and overall, the Hummingbird Project contributed 853 volunteer hours – well done team!

A total of 838 new birds were banded with an additional 215 recaptures. The numbers by species were: 140 Anna’s Hummingbird, 26 Black-chinned Hummingbird, 503 Calliope Hummingbird, and 385 Rufous Hummingbird.

The project’s public education efforts were online again in 2021. We participated in RPBO’s Spring Zoom series and presented a number of hummingbird talks to other BC Nature clubs.

This year, we published work examining the exposure of hummingbirds to neonicotinoid agricultural pesticides around British Columbia and in Saskatchewan. We demonstrated that the highest levels of neonicotinoid contamination in hummingbirds, honey bee nectar, water and sediment, were at sites closest to sprayed blueberry fields. High contamination levels were found in the Fraser Valley, but these pesticides were also detected in the Similkameen and Okanagan. We also showed the first detection of the pesticide flupyradifurone in wildlife.


January - December (year-long)

Our 6th Seawatch season saw a record number of 129 standardized counts at our primary Seawatch site, Beechey Head (East Sooke). There was additional Seawatch effort at Amphitrite Point (Ucluelet), Otter Point (northwest of Sooke), Spirit Bear Art Farm (East Sooke) and Race Rocks. This year 16 volunteers participated in the program. Seawatch is conducted about once a week, weather permitting, and starts 30 minutes after sunrise. An attempt is made to count every bird that passes the site during a one hour period. This resulted in 58 hours of observation in 2021. A second hour’s observation immediately following the first hour, introduced in 2020, provided very interesting results. For example, during spring migration, movements of loons built during the morning and consistently peaked after the first hour. Similarly, during an exceptional influx of Northern Fulmars into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, numbers peaked during the second hour. In 2021 during the first hour of Seawatch a total of 39,359 seabirds of 59 species were counted at Beechey Head. The most numerous birds were Common Murre with 11,536 individuals counted. Other alcids included Rhinoceros Auklet (1296), Ancient Murrelet (1477), Marbled Murrelet (189), Pigeon Guillemot (86) and Cassin’s Auklet (2). A Tufted Puffin was seen on 12 June in the second hour of Seawatch.

The most numerous duck was Surf Scoter (1142). The most numerous goose was Brant (395). The California Gull (6111) slightly outnumbered the Glaucous-winged Gull (5364). These gull numbers are low as only a few large feeding frenzies were witnessed off Beechey Head last fall. Also recorded were Bonaparte's Gull (1593), Short-billed Gull (1847), Heermann's Gull (345), Iceland Gull (214), Herring Gull (2), and Glaucous Gull (1). Two Sabine's Gulls were seen, both during the second hour.

This project aims to contribute to our knowledge of seabirds (many of which are under-monitored), and ultimately to their conservation. To learn more about Seawatch, or to volunteer with us, check out the RPBO website at rpbo.org.
2021 was another successful year for Education and Outreach as we continued to adapt to changing COVID regulations while still maintaining great quality content!

RPBO was proud to launch the first ever Victoria Bird Week in 2021, bringing awareness of bird conservation to the community at large. Educational events were offered online and through social media. The celebrations began on World Migratory Bird Day, when the RPBO team participated in the Great Canadian Birdathon, and raised over $5000 in support of Rocky Point Bird Observatory and Birds Canada.

Since in-person events were limited due to COVID-19, Zoom talks were the focus. Highlights included a six-part series on Hummingbirds and an eight-part series on Birding-By-Ear - each of which reached over 100 participants almost every night! We are incredibly grateful for all the amazing speakers that stepped forward. Although we managed fewer in-person presentations to community groups than before the pandemic, we still did some talks for garden clubs, seniors’ groups and assisted living residents, while abiding by all pandemic protocols.

Site visits to our banding station at Pedder Bay continued with regulated, small groups. We saw 273 visitors for Migration and 276 visitors for Owl banding. At Rocky Point, we had the honor of hosting four events for DND personnel and their families, attended by 29 individuals including the Base Commander. In addition, the Honourable Janet Austin, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and Honourary Patron of RPBO, visited the Pedder Bay site during Migration and Owl banding.

RPBO was excited to release a second set of Art Bird Cards in a collaborative project with the Metchosin Art Pod and the Metchosin Foundation. These cards showcase local artists, and are not only beautiful but also educational. Sets may be ordered at rpbo.org/art_bird_cards.php

Our presence on social media continued to grow. We now have 3272 followers on Facebook (reaching 427,849 people with an interesting post about Hummingbird torpor), 872 Twitter followers, and 2324 Instagram followers. Our very own Bird Babble Podcast (birdbabblerpbo.podbean.com) hosted by Mark and Robyn Byrne keep listeners informed about RPBO projects and is a huge success, with 25 entertaining episodes and 2700 listeners from 24 countries.

Purple Martin Art Card - Illustrated by Heather Simonds.
Despite another season amid the pandemic, over 133 amazing volunteers contributed 8359 hours to RPBO’s conservation efforts in 2021. Even more hours were provided behind the scenes with volunteers washing and sewing bird bags, conducting research, assisting with community education, managing inventory, mending nets and organizing all those Zoom presentations!

Safety protocols initiated in 2020 were improved upon last year, allowing us to increase volunteer training. To the delight of our banders and volunteers, once again we were able to welcome visitors to the banding stations! The owl program had such a high visitor demand that we created a new Visitor Liaison position which was welcomed by volunteers who loved to see the owls but didn’t want to stay out after midnight.

A call-out for new volunteers brought an overwhelming response from both those new to birds and bird experts. We welcomed many new scribes and helpers to both the migration and owl projects and introduced them to RPBO’s passion for birds and conservation.

We are so grateful for the contributions that each volunteer has made.

Thank you all for giving your gift of time.

**2021 Summary**

Volunteers: 133+

Total Volunteer Hours: 8359+

Contribution to RPBO: Priceless!
WHY is the work of RPBO important?

RPBO is part of an international effort to monitor landbird migrations and has been a member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) since 1994.

Members of the CMMN track the migration of Canada's birds in the spring and fall each year, adding to our knowledge of population trends, demographics, phenology, and other essential information about the species that pass through each location.

As a large-scale collaborative network, CMMN is in a unique position to contribute to understanding many additional aspects of bird migration at a trans-continental scale. These include effects of weather and climate change on bird migration behaviour, stop-over ecology, timing of migration (e.g., chronology/phenology), as well as energetics, physiology, diseases, productivity and the survivorship of birds.

The information RPBO collects is submitted to the CMMN and is used by governments, environmental organizations, scientists and others to direct our collective actions and improve our ability to conserve Canada's birds.

Thank you for your interest, and for being a part of this important work.

*Bird survey by RPBO volunteers (Spirit Bay Farm) - Photo by Robyn Byrne.*
In 2021, we began to see an increase in research and publications using RPBO data. The value of long-term monitoring was well demonstrated in *Geographic and Temporal Variation in Annual Survival of a Declining Neotropical Migrant Hummingbird (Selasphorus rufus) Under Varying Fire, Snowpack, and Climatic Conditions* co-authored by Anna Drake, Christine A. Bishop, Alison J. Moran and Scott Wilson. For this analysis, they used 21 years of data collected by the Hummingbird Project initiated by Cam Finlay in 1996 and operated by RPBO since 2009. Their work showed that much of the decline in the Rufous Hummingbird populations was due to failure of young birds to survive the threats during their first year.

David Bell’s paper *Determination of Sex Using Wing Chord in Southern Vancouver Island Populations of Bewick’s Wren and “Puget Sound” White-crowned Sparrow* analyzed data obtained during the banding process and concluded that wing-length could be used to determine the sex of many individuals when other characteristics would not differentiate them. Population dynamics play a large role in evaluating the health of a species.

Birds Canada published a summary of work done by members of the CMMN in the last two decades: *Researching Canada’s Landbirds for Twenty Years*, including a very impressive list of reports and articles by member stations. Focus was given to the Trend Monitoring Project which includes RPBO’s data.

Other projects are underway including analyses of Bonaparte's Gull observations, Turkey Vulture trends, and a summary of Northern Saw-whet Owl recaptures. A collaboration with Capilano University will have students analyze RPBO data as part of their credit course work. We are looking forward to seeing a number of reports from this group.
MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP IS AVAILABLE TO ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS

REWARDS OF MEMBERSHIP

- You will meet others who share your passion for birds, and build lasting friendships based on common interests and values.
- Volunteering for our projects provides an opportunity to meet the birds you are helping to protect.
- Your active membership ensures that you will be invited to participate in many special birding activities throughout the year, such as Christmas Bird Count and Victoria Bird Week.
- Membership opens the doors to training on bird identification, monitoring techniques and conservation strategies.
- Special courses are offered to members at a discount throughout the year.
- Members receive the BC Nature magazine quarterly, featuring articles about birds and conservation issues throughout BC.

Support the work of RPBO and you become a partner in the conservation of birds and the places they need to survive. Your membership allows us to plan ahead for maximum conservation impact.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Membership numbers play a major role in our ability to qualify for grant funding. All field volunteers must become RPBO members. Most of the membership fee goes towards the purchase of membership in BC Nature and the insurance required for operations.

We love hearing from you!
If you have any questions, please send your email to: membership@rpbo.org
BOARD of DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE
President: Jennifer Armstrong
Vice President: Jannaca Chick
Treasurer: Gail Harcombe
Secretary: Andrew Harcombe
Past President: Kim Beardmore

DIRECTORS
Mark Byrne  Robyn Byrne  Mark Byrne  Jannaca Chick  Ian Cruickshank  Ivy Doak  Sue Elwell
Eric Demers  Daniel Donnecke  Gail Harcombe  Gordon Hart  Cheryl Houston  Hitomi Kimura  Christina Lam
Todd Golumbia  Julie Howe  Mike McGrenere  Wallis Moore Reid  Alison Moran  Jonathan Moran  Mike Motek
Alison Moran  Michael Newman  Ann Nightingale  Cathy Reader  Marlene Russo  Ann Scarfe  Rick Schortinghuis
Ann Nightingale  Cathy Reader

2021 STAFF

MAPS BANDER
Jannaca Chick

OWL BANDERS
Jannaca Chick  Megan Buers

MIGRATION BANDERS
David Bell  Rebecca Golat  Samuelle Simard-Provençal  Rebecca Reader-Lee  Liam Singh

ADMINISTRATION
Administrator: Leesa Watson
Development Director: Gaylia Lassner

LIFETIME MEMBERS
INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN 1000 VOLUNTEER HOURS or MORE THAN $1000!

Kim Beardmore  Robyn Byrne  Mark Byrne  Jannaca Chick  Ian Cruickshank  Ivy Doak  Sue Elwell
Jesse Fanucchi  Sharon Godkin  Gail Harcombe  Gordon Hart  Cheryl Houston  Hitomi Kimura  Christina Lam
Marilyn Lambert  Shirley Mackie  Mike McGrenere  Wallis Moore Reid  Alison Moran  Jonathan Moran  Mike Motek
Jo Motek  Rae Ann Newman  Ann Nightingale  Cathy Reader  Marlene Russo  Ann Scarfe  Rick Schortinghuis
Maggie Shepherd  Michael Simmons  Heather Simonds  Liam Singh  Jody Wells

Our Successes Are Possible Because Of YOU!
THANK YOU!

We would like to thank ALL 2021 SUPPORTERS, including the following:

**Sponsor ($2500+)**
- Sharon Godkin
- Ann Nightingale

**Benefactor ($1500 to $2499)**
- Kim Beardmore
- Mark Byrne
- Daniel Donnecke

**Patron ($1000 to $1499)**
- Gail Harcombe
- Ann Scarfe

**Sustainer ($500 to $999)**
- Martha Burd
- Jane Cameron
- Evie Chauncey
- Jannaca Chick
- Catherine Doyle
- Hitomi Kimura
- Michael McGrenere
- Susanne Maidment
- Storm Morgan
- Michael Motek
- Rheanna Neidinger
- Rae Ann Newman
- Cathy Reader
- Stephen Ross
- Heather Simonds
- Lauren Wiegel

**BCLC Community Gaming Grants**
**Birds Canada (formerly Bird Studies Canada)**
**Blennerhassett Family Foundation**
**Department of National Defence**
**ECO Canada**
**Environment and Climate Change Canada**
**Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society**
**Friends of Shoal Harbour**
**Greater Victoria Naturehood**
**Islandnet.com**

**Nature Canada**
**Oak Bay Marine Group, Pedder Bay Marina and RV Resort**
**Paypal Giving Fund Canada**
**Provincial Employees Community Services Fund**
**Public Conservation Assistance Fund (PCAF)**
**Sobeys Group Inc. (Thifty Foods)**
**Tatlayoko Field Station Society**
**United Way**
**Vancouver Island University**
**Victoria Foundation**
**Victoria Natural History Society**

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You've made a brighter future possible for birds. With your help, we continue to shape the future of bird conservation through monitoring, research and public education.

You've made a brighter future possible for birds. With your help, we continue to shape the future of bird conservation through monitoring, research and public education.

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**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR PROVIDING GRANTS, DONATIONS OR IN-KIND SUPPORT IN 2021**

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Your gift of support is being used wisely.
RPBO migration monitoring provides long-term information on bird populations and is used by researchers to answer questions about bird health, abundance, and behaviour, helping efforts to protect birds and their habitat.

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Monitoring birds is an essential part of protecting them. That's where you come in! Thank you for being an important partner in the success of our mission.
YOUR SUPPORT HELPS SHAPE THE FUTURE
OF BIRD CONSERVATION, THROUGH MONITORING, RESEARCH, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION