

Bio: John Elliott

Dr. John Elliott is a research scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada at the Pacific Wildlife Research Centre, Delta, B.C. He is also an adjunct professor at both the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, and does much of his research with graduate students and postdoctoral fellow, including the work on dippers.

As a wildlife ecotoxicologist, he has studied the exposure and effects of a wide range of environmental toxicants on bird and other wildlife populations. His work is widely published in the scientific literature, and he has edited two books on the effects of contaminants on wildlife populations. His research has been used extensively in many risk assessment and regulatory decisions on pesticides and industrial chemicals.

He enjoys the outdoors, especially with his kids and grandkids, walking and hiking in summer, skiing in winter and casual birding year-round.

American Dipper Studies:

The American Dipper is the only North American songbird which dives underwater for its food and it uses its wings as flippers. It is usually found in fast-flowing rivers and streams, but sometimes inhabits ponds and lakes. It has a very long latitudinal range in western North America, from Alaska to Panama and only migrates attitudinally, within its home watershed.

Dr. John Elliott initiated the studies on American Dippers as a water quality bio-indicator in the Chilliwack River, after noting that in the UK, European Dipper eggs were being sampled to measure contaminants. This followed with his PhD student Christy Morrissey identifying that the Chilliwack River system has the highest density of American Dippers in the Pacific Northwest.

Dr. Elliott will present the natural history of this unique passerine and the science that has been done on the dippers of the Chilliwack River for the past 20+ years and more recently on run of the river dam systems in Whistler.