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January 2018



**Kamloops  
Naturalist  
Club**

*We Enjoy, Protect and Promote Nature*

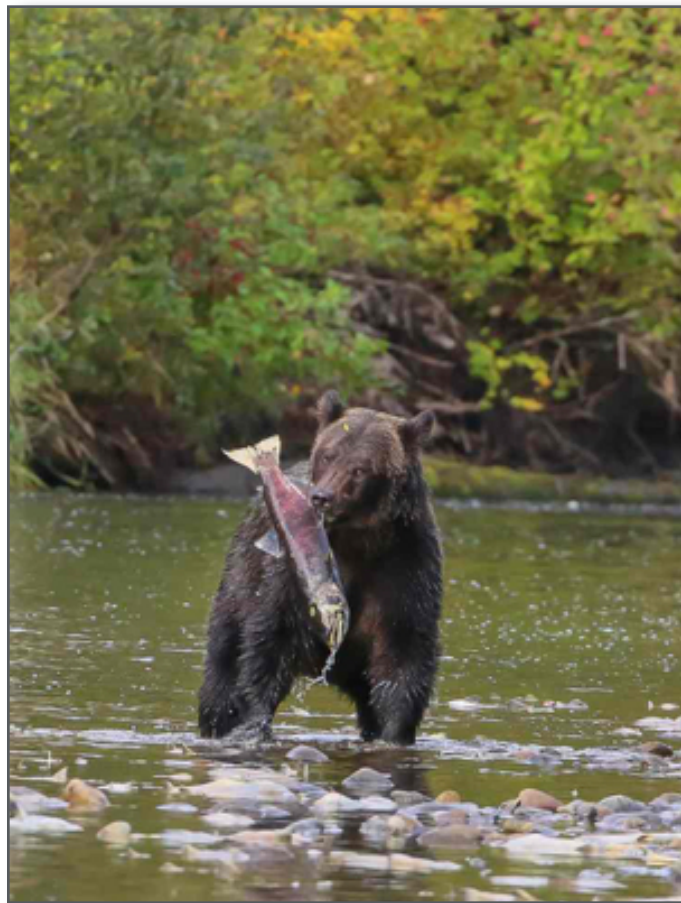


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# ***SAGE WHISPERS***

Newsletter of the Kamloops Naturalist Club

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Grizzly with salmon, taken Sept 2017 on the Atnarko River  
Glenn Dreger

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## Coming Events

### KNC Executive and Officers

**President**

Julie Schooling

**Past President**

Jean Crowe

**Vice-President**

Frank Ritcey

**Secretary**

Adele Stapleton

**BC Nature Director**

Ken Lipinski

**Treasurer**

Jean Crowe

**Directors**

Justine Densmore-McCulloch  
Andy Raniseth

**Communications**

Margaret Graham  
marggraham@shaw.ca  
250-55401285

**Membership**

Winnifred Fischer

**Newsletter Committee**

Lynne Borle

**Programs**

Justine Densmore-McCulloch  
Margaret Graham

**Bluebird Co-ordinator**

Susan Weilandt

### KNC Programs

**Saturday, Jan. 20.** The AGM will be held at 5:30 pm at St. Paul's Cathedral hall, 360 Nicola Street. Bring a potluck dish for the supper as well as your own dishes, cutlery and cup. If you wish to donate a nature-related raffle prize, please bring it along to the meeting. (There will be no meeting at Heritage House in January as it is replaced by the AGM on Saturday, Jan. 20.)

Alan and Frances Vyse will be showing slides of their recent trip to New Zealand. The business portion of the meeting will include the year-end financial report and election of officers.

**Thursday, Feb. 15.** 7 pm. Heritage House. Dr. Robert Higgins, of the Biological Sciences Dept. at TRU will be speaking about "Insect Invaders of BC".

The Asian multicoloured ladybug, the pavement ant and the European lawn chafer are just three invasive insects that have appeared in Kamloops in the past few years. In BC overall, new invasive insects are appearing annually as the rate of commercial imports increases with very limited inspections. Some new arrivals are of minor consequence (e.g., pavement ant) at least as far as we know, but others can be much more concerning (e.g., spotted wing Drosophila, Japanese beetle, European fire ant, etc.). Tonight we will look at some of the new arrivals and examine the relatively new field of invasion biology.

**Thursday, Mar. 15.** 7 pm. Heritage House. Rick Howie will be speaking about his recent trip to Madeira and the Azores, those mysterious Portugese islands in the Atlantic Ocean.



## KNC President's Report

“Community: a feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.” We’re a pretty diverse bunch, but I think this definition rings true. In the past year, we collectively tackled issues like the TransMountain Pipeline, the Ajax Mine, and logging near Wells Grey Provincial Park. We contributed to the Lac du Bois Provincial Park Management Plan, KAMPLAN, and the Peterson Creek Multi-use Path consultation. Towards the end of the year, we turned out en masse to declare our support for a Nature Park at McArthur Island. We got our hands dirty (in the best way) at the Grasslands Cleanup in March, spring and fall Adopt-A-Road cleanups, and the Got Bats program. And this spring, we will pitch in on the construction of the Tranquille Wildlife Viewing Platform and the development of interpretive signs to adorn it.

Field trips focused on mushrooms, reptiles, herps, early birds, big birds, and all things winged. We explored wetlands, grasslands, flower meadows, and mysterious fir forests. And thanks to TRU World, students from around the globe were introduced to our ecosystems, too, while contributing to our healthy bank balance! Recall these great programs:

- Differentiating sparrows’ song with Paul Handford
- Counting misaligned ducks with Bruce Harrison
- Getting the better of cats’ natures with Diane McKelvey
- The spectacular Antarctic with Alan Burger
- The wonders of Africa with Justine Densmore-McCulloch
- Bountiful butterflies with Brady Mathes
- Highlights from TRU MSc students
- Conserving Burrowing Owls (in our backyard!) with Murray Jeffrey
- And the unforgettable Nature Quiz with Frank “trick question” Ritcey

These activities are attracting new members, and we’re celebrating a new high of at least 123 memberships (and far more members). On Facebook, we reached over 2,700 people in the last month, with individual posts reaching up to 1,000 people. Under Jean Crowe’s steady hand, our club’s total assets have grown to over \$22,000. For this and many other contributions as Director, Vice-President, and President of the KNC, and as a member of the Burke Mountain Naturalists, Jean was awarded the BC Nature Club Service Award in 2017.

These highlights suggest the extent of our members’ efforts and talents, but to describe them in detail would take all night. If you’re a new member, why don’t you chat to long-time members at our upcoming meetings, or on field trips? You’ll be amazed at what they know about our region, and how generous they’ll be with their time and knowledge. Thank you all for being part of this amazing community!

Julie Schooling



## Volunteers Wanted

The KNC executive is always looking for people to help with making the club a well-run, welcoming organization. Taking on one of these tasks helps you to develop your skills and gets you more interested in the club activities as well as becoming more familiar with other members of the executive. **Both of these positions would look good on the resume of a young person.** For more information, contact Margaret (250-554-1285) or [marggraham@shaw.ca](mailto:marggraham@shaw.ca).

### Treasurer/Treasurer-in-Training

- To keep an accurate bank account and balance the account each month
- To keep an accurate record of deposits and breakdown of expenses
- Not to issue any cheques or cash payments without verifying invoices
- To ensure that an annual report is filed with the Societies Act
- To prepare an annual tax return as a registered charity
- To produce and present an annual financial statement at the AGM
- Prepare an annual budget to present to members early in the new year.

### Webmaster/Webmaster-in -Training

We want to re-establish the KNC website. Not everyone is on Facebook or the KNC infoline. We have found someone from outside the club who is willing to create a website for us but we need someone to maintain it. He will teach you how to set it up, how to update it, and how to maintain it. A website will be a valuable resource for those trying to find us. It will contain contact information, membership forms, information on upcoming programs & field trips, archived newsletters, Gary's mushroom Facebook columns, etc. The webmaster would update the website with the information we supplied. This job would appeal to someone who is comfortable with technology.

### Heritage House Parking Permits

The new 2018 Heritage House Parking Permits are available. They are **orange**. I will have them available to pick up at each meeting. Please note that free parking is available 5pm – 11pm Mon.–Sat. except during events, in which case, you will have to display your Heritage House Permit and park **ONLY** in the **designated** stalls along the fence where there is signage stating, '**Heritage House Parking By Permit Only**'. The Heritage House User permit is **ONLY** valid if it is clearly displayed and if the permit holder is using the Heritage House facility with their user Group. If the permit is not displayed, the person may be subject to a ticket and or tow. Luckily for the KNC, there is seldom an event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month and the parking lot is relatively empty.

Please note: If **ALL** of the designated stalls along the fence line are occupied, you must pay to park in the other portion of the Heritage House lot. Furthermore, when there is an event taking place at the Sandman Centre Arena, events always take precedence for parking in the Heritage House Lot. Lastly, this permit is **NOT** valid for any EVENTS or event parking.



## Kamloops Naturalist

The Kamloops Naturalist Club was formed in 1971 and became a registered Society in 1981. It is a member of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists [www.bcnature.ca](http://www.bcnature.ca) and Nature Canada [www.naturecanada.ca](http://www.naturecanada.ca)

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**KNC Mailing Address**  
P.O. Box 625  
Kamloops, BC  
V2C 5L7

**Meetings**  
7:00 PM, the third Thursday of the month from Sept. to June. Meet at Heritage House, 100 Lorne St., Kamloops, BC.

**Annual Membership**  
(Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)  
Family \$40  
Individual \$28  
Student \$23  
Contact:  
Winnifred Fischer  
Tel: 250-376-3944

## Kamloops Christmas Bird Count

Rick Howie and Margaret Graham

It was a reasonable day on Dec. 17, 2017 for our annual Christmas Bird Count. Temperatures in the valley bottom reached 2° under cloudy conditions with winds picking up in the afternoon. We were ably represented by 44 participants in 10 zones: Frank, Bruce, Ralph and Clara Ritcey, Maxine Grass; Teresa Corboy, Cori Dixon, June Kitamura, Stephanie Winton, Michelle (sorry, we didn't get your last name); Ian & Judy Barnett, Dave Whiting, Isaac Nelson, Sandy MacDonald, Ruth and Cathy Lidster, Lori Davies; Ralph Heinrich, Doug Burles; Karen Willies, Jo Chipperfield, Ellie Hill, Cheryl Dzida, Phil Holman, Barry Harmon, Richard Wright; Rick Howie, Kats Kitamura, Heather Stalberg; Tom Dickinson, Nancy Flood, Norm Dougan; Glenn Dreger, Rich Doucette and 2 daughters; Tom Beeke, Susan & Peter Weilandt; Ken & Marina Lipinski, Cindy McCallum, Bryce Coombs.

There was a total of 77 species and 7646 individuals in the count. We were slightly above average for the number of species and well below the 2016 count of 11,563 individuals due mainly to the large numbers of Bohemian Waxwings present then.

There were 2 species seen within 2 days either side of but not actually observed on count day – Mourning Dove and American Tree Sparrow.

Noteworthy observations included a Northern Goshawk observed along the Goose Lake Road by Glenn & Richard. We see this species only rarely at lower elevations in winter with about 4 previous records. Golden Eagles are seldom reported but teams in Westsyde, Rose Hill and Aberdeen each saw single birds. Juvenile Bald Eagles are often mistaken for this species by inexperienced observers, but fortunately, we have very capable people in all of those zones. Sharp-tailed Grouse are always a treat to get on the count and Tom Beeke's single bird was not likely alone, but he was being conservative in reporting only the lone bird that he heard. Northern Pygmy Owls put on a good showing and a few Short-eared Owls indicate their enhanced presence this winter. It was good to see increased numbers of Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches given the loss of Ponderosa Pine trees over the past years. Snow Buntings are often elusive so a flock of 200 was very nice and Pine Grosbeaks are putting in a good show at lower elevations this winter.

On the other hand, some species of water fowl such as Scaup and Barrow's Goldeneye were down in numbers and it was a lack-luster count for Robins and Bohemian Waxwings.



# Kamloops Christmas Bird Count

Rick Howie and Margaret Graham

The list of species and number of individuals are listed below:

- |                               |                              |                                     |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Common Loon - 4               | Ruffed Grouse - 1            | Golden-crowned Kinglet - 18         |
| Pied-billed Grebe - 1         | Sharp-tailed Grouse - 1      | Townsend's Solitaire - 10           |
| Great Blue Heron - 3          | American Coot - 1            | American Robin - 11                 |
| Canada Goose - 2692           | Ring-billed Gull - 199       | European Starling - 2200            |
| Trumpeter Swan - 68           | Herring Gull - 7             | Bohemian Waxwing - 52               |
| American Wigeon - 1           | Glaucous-winged Gull - 2     | Spotted Towhee - 1                  |
| Mallard - 897                 | Rock Pigeon - 547            | Song Sparrow - 29                   |
| Green-winged Teal - 12        | Eurasian Collared Dove - 159 | White-crowned Sparrow - 7           |
| Ring-necked Duck - 14         | Great Horned Owl - 1         | Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon race) - 218 |
| Greater Scaup - 3             | Northern Pygmy Owl - 5       | Snow Bunting - 200                  |
| Lesser Scaup - 2              | Short-eared Owl - 3          | Redwinged Blackbird - 24            |
| Bufflehead - 3                | Belted Kingfisher - 1        | Brewer's Blackbird - 57             |
| Common Goldeneye - 57         | Downy Woodpecker - 13        | House Finch - 463                   |
| Barrow's Goldeneye - 12       | Hairy Woodpecker - 6         | Pine Grosbeak - 61                  |
| Hooded Merganser - 2          | Black-backed Woodpecker - 1  | Red Crossbill - 2                   |
| Common Merganser - 18         | Northern Flicker - 134       | Common Redpoll - 94                 |
| Bald Eagle                    | Pileated Woodpecker - 4      | Pine Siskin - 10                    |
| adult - 52                    | Northern Shrike - 14         | American Goldfinch - 16             |
| sub-adult - 14                | Gray Jay - 2                 | House Sparrow - 300                 |
| unaged - 11                   | Steller's Jay - 9            |                                     |
| Northern Harrier - 3          | Clark's Nutcracker - 34      |                                     |
| Cooper's Hawk - 2             | Black-billed Magpie - 215    |                                     |
| Northern Goshawk - 1          | American Crow 483            |                                     |
| Red-tailed Hawk - 19          | Common Raven - 449           |                                     |
| Rough-legged Hawk - 14        | Black-capped Chickadee - 54  |                                     |
| Golden Eagle - 3              | Mountain Chickadee - 46      |                                     |
| American Kestrel - 4          | Red-breasted Nuthatch - 16   |                                     |
| Merlin - 7                    | White-breasted Nuthatch 7    |                                     |
| Unidentified large falcon - 1 | Pygmy Nuthatch - 28          |                                     |
| Chukar - 27                   | Brown Creeper - 1            |                                     |



Redpoll  
Glenn Dreger



Northern Flicker  
Lynne Borle



Pine Grosbeak  
Glenn Dreger



# News and Updates

## Former McArthur Island Golf Course Open House



The City of Kamloops recently held an open house to determine the future of the closed golf course on McArthur Island. The club had a great turnout of around 20 members to greet the public and speak to City staff. We advocated that the course be used for a new nature park and interpretive center that could provide all ages education on the Cottonwood Riparian ecosystem.

Jesse Ritcey prepared a display (shown above) that explained the benefits of the concept and highlighted the biodiversity of McArthur Island. Local photographers, including club members Lynne Borle, Lyn MacDonald, Gary Hunt and Glenn Dreger provided images of species they have spotted on the island. We also provided informational handouts to the public that had a professional look, thanks to past-president Julie Schooling.

While the outcome isn't clear, our presence undoubtedly made an impact on the public and city staff while providing a powerful voice for nature.



Jesse Ritcey has been spearheading the club campaign and Adele Stapleton continues in her strong support of club activities



Ralph and Clara are Jesse's grandparents. Ralph is a retired wildlife biologist who worked in the Kamloops area for many decades and studied moose and other wildlife in Wells Gray Park for many years. Ralph is 92 years young. Clara grew up on the border of Wells Gray and her family has a long history of trapping and hunting in the area.



# Kamloops Nature Kids activity on December 17, 2017

By Gary Hunt

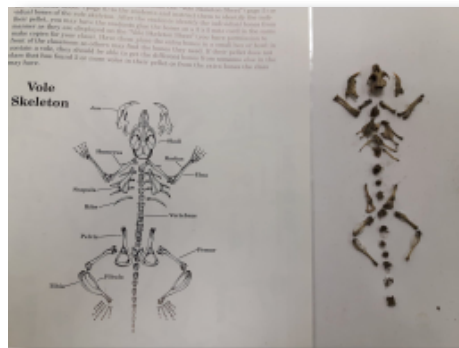
## What Do Barn Owls Eat?

Nine families in the Kamloops Nature Kids group had an exciting day exploring the contents of barn owl pellets at the Big Little Science Centre. The group leaders are Mandy Ross, Rob Wharf, and Krystal Jeffrey.

According to Wikipedia, the barn owl is the most widely distributed owl species and one of the most widespread of all birds. Their diet is easy to study because they regurgitate pellets of indigestible matter (hair and bones) from animals they eat. In North America, voles and shrews are preferred diet items but they also eat a wide variety other things such as rats, mice, pocket gophers, and even other birds.

The leaders ordered a barn owl pellet kit from a commercial company in Washington. The kit contains sterilized pellets and helpful information about barn owls and what bones the kids can expect to find. By using the illustrations, the kids can identify what animal the bones are from, the name of the bones, and where they are located in the skeleton.

Both parents and kids were quickly engaged in learning about the bones they found and gluing them to paper in the proper skeletal formation. Voles were the most common animal found. This was an interesting and educational activity. It is one that works in the winter months when outdoor opportunities may be limited.





## Our Members

### Diane McKelvey

I was born in Ponoka, Alberta, and raised mainly in Edmonton and Vancouver. I've lived in many other places including Saskatoon, Santa Cruz (California), London (Ontario), and Adelaide (South Australia). Have lived in Kamloops for 23 years.

I'm married to Samuel Longiaru and we have 2 grown sons, Alec and Ian.

By occupation I am a veterinarian and currently work at Aberdeen Veterinary Hospital. As far as education goes, I have a BSc in biochemistry from UBC and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Saskatchewan. In 2003 I qualified as a diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners with a specialty in Feline Medicine, which makes me one of only 6 Canadians who are recognized as "cat specialists"

One of my special interests is gardening with native plants, and my backyard (in Juniper Ridge) is almost entirely native grasses, wild flowers, and trees.

Another strong interest is hiking or running on trails: I try to do 2 trail ultra-marathons and one long backpacking trip per year although this is getting more challenging with increasing age ! Last year I completed the South Boundary trail in Jasper and this year hope to do some serious hiking in Alberta's Wilmore Wilderness Park.

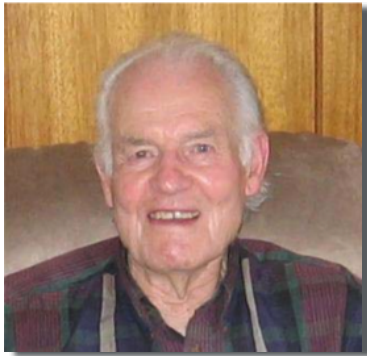
I love looking at the stars, and as my husband gave me a telescope for Christmas I hope to do much more of this in the future. One of the joys of backpacking is that it is a terrific way to see not only the stars, but also the wildflowers, animals, birds, trees, rivers, and geology in the wilderness.

I joined the club because I love to learn more about the amazing environment around Kamloops. I attend as many meetings and field trips as I can, and am always impressed - stunned, even - by the knowledge of my fellow club members and their generosity in sharing it.



Taken at Berg Lake Trail, Mount Robson





Jack Robinson

## Obituaries



Eric McAlary

Within this past year, the Club has lost two of its most distinguished long-time members, distinguished because not only did they serve in one or more Club executive positions but because they each contributed so much energy, enthusiasm and dedication in their interaction with everyone. Also, they shared their wide interests and gave much of their time to engendering and furthering Club interests and projects over the years.

Jack and Iris Robinson left Kamloops a few years ago and moved to Delta to be nearer family. During Jack's professional career in forestry-related work, he exhibited the dedication and professionalism, even to expressing his views to his superiors unreservedly but respectfully, that he, in retirement, devoted to his Club activities. He and Iris were regulars at meetings up until Jack could no longer manage attendance. On field trips he lent his knowledge to the edification of those present, always with respect, and also fostered further interest in Nature. He was of invaluable assistance during the Club's Land for Nature initiative in the '90s.

Eric McAlary was another of the same breed as Jack! He, too, contributed his knowledge and enthusiasm to Club field trips especially, but also to general interest in the Club's well-being. He was a keen birder and shared his knowledge in that field, helping to nurture a deep interest in the identification, life systems and habits of the birds of our area and farther afield. When the Ecological Reserve on the Dew Drop Flats was created, Eric was its first volunteer warden and one of the longest-serving in the system, devoting 20 years to the monitoring and other duties of a warden. Here, too, Eric passed on his knowledge to Parks and, thanks to the respect in which he was held there, managed to persuade the government that depredations within the Reserve would only cease when it was fenced which, in due time, took place. By now a tradition, the July field trips to Greenstone Mountain were organized and often led by Eric. In Eric's obituary, his family asked that donations be made to the Kamloops Naturalist Club. We have collected nearly \$500 and in collaboration with his widow, Lois, it was decided to dedicate a memorial bench to Eric along the Rivers Trail. Lois is willing to make up the difference in the cost of the bench but if anyone else would like to contribute, we will still accept donations.

Both of these Club members will long be remembered, as each gave unstintingly to the Club in various ways, always with kindness, consideration, respect and humility. We will miss them both.

Joan Best and Margaret Graham

