



Sage Whispers

Newsletter of the Kamloops Naturalist Club

www.kamloopsnaturalistclub.com www.facebook.com/kamloopsnaturalistclub/



Short Eared Owl
photo courtesy of Glenn Dreger

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PROGRAMS

KNC Executive and Officers

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Nancy Flood

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Adele Stapleton

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Membership

Winnifred Fischer

Newsletter Committee

Lynne Borle

Programs

Justine Densmore-McCulloch

Margaret Graham

Bluebird Co-ordinator

Susan Wellandt

Saturday, Jan. 19 – The AGM & Potluck Dinner 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. Norm Dougan will show some of his fantastic nature photos of birds in the Kamloops Area. The business portion of the meeting will include the year-end financial report and election of officers.

Thursday, Feb. 21 - 7 pm Heritage House. Tom Beeke spent 12 years in China teaching high school students the BC school curriculum. Currently he is with the Maple Leaf School at TRU. Tom has written a book on Chinese birds and birding. He will give a quick introduction to China, including geography, government, conservation, education and the future. There will also be slides of birds, mammals and other creatures.

Thursday, March 21 – 7 pm at Heritage House - Elaine Sedgman - Citizen Science: two years of pollinator surveys in the city of Kamloops.

Thursday, April 18 – 7 pm at Heritage House - Ann Cheeptham and Dr. Cori Lausen – White Nose Bat Syndrome – research on microbiology and bat biology

For your information – KEG Lectures – all lectures are at 7 pm in the TRU Mountain Room in the Campus Activity Centre.

Jan. 24 - Jane McCaw – The many layers of land.

Feb. 7 – Jim Monger – Did craton movement cause Cordilleran mountain building? The case for a continental bulldozer.



Kamloops Naturalist Club

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 and Nature Canada www.naturecanada.ca

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

Annual Membership
(January 1 to December 31)
Family \$40
Individual \$28
Student \$23

Contact: Winnifred Fischer
250.376.3944

Events

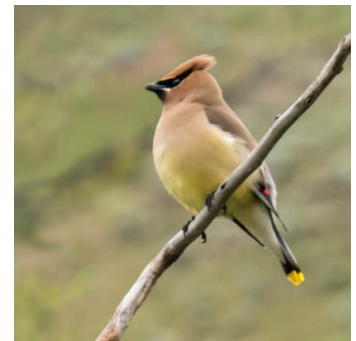
Swan & Eagle count: Sunday, Jan. 13, 2019. We will meet at Riverside Park in the lot near the arena at 0900 hrs. Bring a lunch and we will cavalcade along East Shuswap Road to Chase for those who wish to go all the way. Bring warm clothes, mittens and hot drinks. Washroom facilities are non-existent and the bushes are low and sparse so we will make suitable allowances for privacy diversions. Participants should contact Rick by email or phone for any final details. Phone at 250-578-7542 or cell 250-371-2551 or email him at r.howie@shaw.ca.

Winter Waxwings

Bohemian Waxwings arrive in Kamloops after the first week of October and leave by mid-April. They often occur in very large flocks of hundreds of individuals as they descend on fruit bearing trees to feed. Bohemian Waxwings are often confused with Cedar Waxwings, which occur in the Kamloops area from mid-May to the end of September. Bohemian Waxwings have white under the tail while Bohemian Waxwings have cinnamon colored undertail coverts. For more information see Rick Howie's post on the KNC website. <http://kamloopsnaturalistclub.com/winter-waxwings/>



Bohemian Waxwing



Cedar Waxwing



January 2019

President's Report

Nancy Flood

It's been a busy year for the KNC! Our nature excursions typically start with the swan and eagle count in January and end with the Christmas bird count in December—and this year was no exception. Lots of other birding events occurred in between, including the Big Bird Day in May, various field trips, and lots of work with bluebirds: over 40 club members are involved in monitoring >400 boxes along 17 trails over the breeding season—as well as constructing new boxes (50 this year) to replace old or damaged ones. An admirable undertaking all around!

Of course, we don't just enjoy birds, and had field trips to learn about everything from wildflowers to mushrooms, bats to butterflies, and salmon to snakes, travelling up Greenstone Mountain, around the Dufferin Wetland, and as far away as Neskonlith Lake and the Adams River, as well as parts in between. Our monthly programs took us on vicarious journeys to look at lichens on Vancouver Island, review Darwin's journeys around the Horn of South America, hear about forestry in Nepal, the natural history of Madeira and the Azores—and Everything Shuswap, among other topics.

We were also active in our community. In addition to writing letters to provincial ministers urging protection of the Dewdrop/Rosseau Creek Wildlife Management area, on April 8 we put boots on the ground to help; many KNC members were among the 150 volunteers who helped remove 2780 kg of trash and 800 kg of recyclables from the area. We did our usual trash bashes on Tranquille Road, pulled weeds on McArthur Island and are working with various city staffers to provide informative signage for the new Peterson Creek pathway/Xget'tem' Trail, and the McArthur Island pedestrian bridge. We continued to support the Nature for Kids program and took numerous TRU International Students from as far away as Panama, China and Indonesia on gold panning/hiking adventures along Tranquille Creek. A good deal of our time and energy was spent on making plans, writing letters, attending meetings, talking to people, etc. about our proposal for interpretative Nature Park on MacArthur Island. We have met various roadblocks along the way, but have our fingers crossed for good news in January.

The TRU student trips are fundraisers for the club, and help us give back to other good causes, including supporting the Citizen Science Pollinators project in the city. We were successful in obtaining a number of small grants this year, as well as a whopping \$270,000 (over 3 years) grant from the Lawson Foundation, which will help us train the next generation of naturalists. I hope you are ready to help!

Several club members were recognized with well deserved awards in 2018. In January, Joan Best was awarded a lifetime KNC membership. In June, Rick Howie won the prestigious Steve Cannings Award for contributions to ornithology in the province, given by the BC Field Ornithologists. And in September, Vanessa Robinson received the Rene Savenye Scholarship, awarded by BC Nature. We are lucky to have these, and many other dedicated and hard-working people, as club members. I'm sure we will all step up to meet the challenges and join in the adventures that await us in 2019.



Loons, Anyone

by Joan Best

The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey is carried out country-wide by 500 or more monitors. I chose Saul Lake because one can stand at the boat launch and see the entire body of water. Saul had a dam built at what must have been a wet slough, thereby creating a lake which is very shallow. The outflow from this lake is one of the sources for Tranquille Creek.

I usually visited the lake at least twice a month during the season, May to late August. I bought a kayak so as to better view loon nests from a distance, of course, and to consider where to put the floating nest platform for loons, the plans for which I have. I did not carry out the building of the platform, though, because it must be hauled out of the water for winter and that required more than one person. The kayak weighs 36 lbs. and is flat-bottomed. As I do not know how to do the Eskimo roll which is a method of righting a kayak if it capsizes, I chose the safer flat bottom. It is mylar so is virtually indestructible.

Given my advanced age, 91 at the time of reading, I consider it is time I gave up the loon monitoring. Monitoring carried out over many years is especially valuable to Bird Studies Canada as it gives a clear trend that may not be obvious with a shorter duration of monitoring. As noted, the loons arrive some time in May, seeming to know when the ice is gone or largely so. They nest at alternate ends of the lake and do not tolerate any other birds be they fellow loons or some other bird. In fact, the first sign that something is amiss with the loons is the sight of another bird. It would seem the loon pair has figured out that there are just enough fish in Saul Lake to provide for themselves and at least one young one. One young loon is always all there is though more than one hatches; such is Nature. Monitors receive forms which can be filled out electronically, that note how many adult loons are present and how many young and at what stage. CLLS requires a monitor to make a minimum of one trip per month.



January 2019

So, if anyone wishes to take on this fascinating "job" please let me know and I will meet you at the lake and go over everything. By the way, "everything" often includes picking up garbage so I always take a shovel, gloves and garbage bags as well as a big plastic pail. Just to sweeten the pot, I propose to pass on my kayak, paddle and p.f.d. The kayak does not have a spray skirt so unless you bring a dry pair of pants to change into your lap may get rather damp unless you paddle so rapidly the water doesn't have time to run down the paddle! Also, given the floating nest platform, for which I have the plans, and the fact it must come out of the water over winter, it would be advisable, as well as less work and more fun, if there were two of you! Although loons are wonderful



Photo Courtesy of Norm Dougan

parents, their chicks cannot dive when they are at the fluffy stage so they are easy picking for eagles. For some years an eagles' nest was atop a very tall dead tree at one end of the lake but the tree fell and I have not seen an eagle since. Ospreys frequent the lake as well as many other birds.

Saul Lake is at the 5,000' level and, from town, one would take the Sawmill Lake road which continues from where the road through Lac du Bois to McQueen lake ends. I would guess the drive would take at least an hour, perhaps more. If you need further directions just let me know or try your GPS! Caution; never trust your GPS completely.

Joan Best has been a volunteer for the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey at Saul Lake for the past 12 to 15 years and she is now ready to give up the position to someone else. If you are interested, contact Joan at 250-376-4814 or jbest@xplornet.ca.



January 2019

Christmas Bird Count

Rick Howie

The Kamloops CBC was held on Dec. 15, 2018. We tallied 74 species and 15,184 individuals. Highlights included Snow Goose, Sandhill Crane, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a bumper crop of Robins. A Belted Kingfisher was seen during the count period. The order below follows the 7th edition of the AOU checklist plus recent supplements to 2017.

Snow Goose – 1	Canada Goose - 2817
Trumpeter Swan – 63	Northern Shoveler - 43
Gadwall – 10	American Wigeon - 3
Mallard – 1684	Green-winged Teal - 26
Ring-necked Duck – 4	Greater Scaup - 44
Lesser Scaup – 3	Bufflehead - 46
Common Goldeneye – 27	Barrow's Goldeneye - 27
Hooded Merganser – 1	Common Merganser - 1
Ruddy Duck – 4	Chukar - 1
Ruffed Grouse – 1	Rock Pigeon - 611
Eurasian Collared Dove – 176	American Coot - 1
Sandhill Crane - 1 (present since early December)	Wilson's Snipe - 1
Ring-billed Gull – 320	California Gull - 2
Herring Gull – 129	Glaucous-winged Gull - 4
Common Loon – 1	Great Blue Heron - 2
Bald Eagle - adult - 30	
- immature – 8	Northern Harrier - 3
Sharp-shinned Hawk – 4	Cooper's Hawk - 1
Red-tailed Hawk – 21	Rough-legged Hawk - 5
Golden Eagle – 1	Great Horned Owl - 2
Short-eared Owl – 6	Downy Woodpecker - 11
Hairy Woodpecker – 11	Northern Flicker - 116
Pileated Woodpecker – 6	Merlin - 3
Northern Shrike – 7	Steller's Jay - 8
Clark's Nutcracker – 7	Black-billed Magpie - 201
American Crow – 289	Common Raven - 152
Black-capped Chickadee – 67	Mountain Chickadee - 53
Red-breasted Nuthatch – 28	Pygmy Nuthatch - 23
Marsh Wren – 4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet - 1
Townsend's Solitaire – 11	American Robin - 394
Varied Thrush – 1	European Starling - 4146
Bohemian Waxwing - 523	House Sparrow - 422
Evening Grosbeak – 1	House Finch - 284
Red Crossbill – 42	Pine Siskin - 1212
American Goldfinch – 53	Snow Bunting - 160
Spotted Towhee – 7	American Tree Sparrow - 5
Song Sparrow – 33	Dark-eyed Junco - 622
Red-winged Blackbird – 128	Brewer's Blackbird - 28



Bluebird Summary 2018

First Nesting					
Species	# Nests	# Eggs	# Hatched	# Died	# Survived
Mountain Bluebird	96	501	405	168	237
Western Bluebird	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	193	1038	798	172	626
House Wren	21	118	97	1	96
Black-capped Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Mountain Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Second Nesting					
Species	# Nests	# Eggs	# Hatched	# Died	# Survived
Mountain Bluebird	24	109	67	15	52
Western Bluebird	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	34	160	91	41	50
House Wren	8	49	41	1	40
Black-capped Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Mountain Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Third Nesting					
Species	# Nests	# Eggs	# Hatched	# Died	# Survived
Mountain Bluebird	1	5	4	4	0
Western Bluebird	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	1	2	2	0	2
House Wren	0	0	0	0	0
Black-capped Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Mountain Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Total of First, Second & Third Nestings					
Species	# Nests	# Eggs	# Hatched	# Died	# Survived
Mountain Bluebird	121	615	476	187	289
Western Bluebird	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	228	1200	891	213	678
House Wren	29	167	138	2	136
Black-capped Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0
Mountain Chickadee	0	0	0	0	0



January 2019

Christmas Bird Count for Kids

by Gary Hunt

On December 9, the NatureKids group of 15 people conducted the annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids. We walked along the Rivers Trail starting near the airport.

Our leader was Mandy Ross who set up her spotting scope so we could see the eagles near the river edge. The river is low this time of year and is about 200 m from the trail.

There were still lots of old choke cherries for the birds.

The youngest naturalist on the walk was 18-month-old Theo. He was interested in everything he saw, especially the rocks.



Here is what we saw.
Lots of crows, seagulls, and eagles.

DATE	BIRD SPECIES	TALLY	TOTAL
Dec. 9 2018			
LOCATION			
Area: Kamloops	Seagulls	11	11
Province: BC	Crows	20	20
	Total crows	20	20
	Crows	20	20
	Finch	1	1
	Canada sparrow	9	9



Our Members

Lindley Roff

I was born and raised in Vancouver and graduated from Point Grey Senior Secondary School. I tried University in a general Arts program when I was about 17 but left the following April, finally returning to University in 1981 in Victoria.

After leaving university the first time, I worked for three years as a clerk in the Stock Transfer Department of National Trust, then took a year off and went to Europe: spending 6 months in England and 6 months on the continent. During my time in England, I researched various lines of my family trees which I have been researching since I was about 13.

On returning home, I worked for an investment company, the Medical Services Association, and a Member of Parliament as an Executive Assistant. For about six years I worked as a Law Librarian or Library Assistant in Nanaimo. When I realized I would not advance in that job, I applied to the University of Victoria in the Faculty of Law. I was accepted into the Faculty as a mature Student.

On graduation, I articulated in Vernon, after which, as we were in an economic downturn, I was out of work for about a year. I eventually found a post in Grand Forks which lasted six months (again due to the economic outlook). From there, I found work in Nelson with one, then a second law firm where I stayed for about four years.

A friend in Vernon put me in touch with the Worker's Compensation Board (as it was then). I worked as a Claims Adjudicator (Case Manager) in Prince George for four years before applying for a position in Kamloops. After 28 years with WorkSafeBC, I retired in 2016.

My main hobbies are: history and family history, travel, "things natural" and photography. As a result the places I have traveled to generally have a family connection. Other than parts of Canada and the USA, I have been to England, South Africa and Australia. My mother loved seeing and identifying birds. I inherited her books. I became interested in birds; however, in addition to that, I wanted to know why certain birds were where they were, which led me to get to know a bit about plants and trees/bushes. This took me to questioning why certain things grew in certain areas, which led to my interest in geography, geology and climate. Photography is a natural extension of my interest in family, travel and the natural world.

Recreational pursuits include: (generally) going to the gym three times a week, volunteering with the Kamloops Museum and Archives one day a week, being president of the Kamloops Family History Society. When I can, I also attend meetings of the Kamloops Naturalist Club and the Kamloops Photo Arts Club. Who said retirement is dull?

My initial involvement in the Kamloops Naturalists Club was because I was interested in birds and my natural curiosity led to interests in other aspects of the club.

