



# Sage Whispers

Newsletter of the Kamloops Naturalist Club

[www.kamloopsnaturalistclub.com](http://www.kamloopsnaturalistclub.com) [www.facebook.com/kamloopsnaturalistclub/](http://www.facebook.com/kamloopsnaturalistclub/)



Photo by Lyn McDonald

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**PROGRAMS & EVENTS**

**KNC Executive and Officers**

**President**

Nancy Flood

**Past President**

Julie Schooling

**Vice-President**

Ken Lipinski

**Secretary**

Adele Stapleton

**BC Nature Director**

Gary Hunt

**Treasurer**

Michael O'Neill

**Directors**

Justine Densmore-McCulloch

Jean Crowe

Jesse Ritcey

Vanessa Robinson

**Communications**

Margaret Graham

[margaretgraham@shaw.ca](mailto:margaretgraham@shaw.ca)

250.554.1285

**Membership**

Winnifred Fischer

**Newsletter Committee**

Lynne Borle

**Programs**

Justine Densmore-McCulloch

Margaret Graham

**Bluebird Co-ordinator**

Susan Wellandt

**Saturday, Jan. 18,** The AGM will be held at 5:30 pm in the hall at St. Paul's Cathedral, 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 and Rick Howie will show some of their favorite nature photos. The business portion of the meeting will include the year-end financial report and election of officers. **Please bring indoor shoes to wear in the hall in the event of snowy sidewalks.**

**All regular meetings start at 7 pm at Heritage House in Riverside Park.**

**February 20:** Your input is needed! KNC will be joined by **Robyn McLean of Tapestry Evaluation and Strategy** for a special evening of dialogue and brainstorming. Help chart the future direction of the club and shape its activities. Bring your suggestions on how we can better protect the natural world and share our appreciation of it with the public.

**March 19. Rick Howie** will be speaking about **Important Bird Areas (IBAs)**. Canada's Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Program is a science-based initiative to identify, conserve, and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for Canada's bird populations. We have 2 such areas near Kamloops that Rick originally proposed and has been monitoring to some degree. Rick will briefly describe the South Thompson River and Douglas Plateau IBAs and discuss monitoring procedures and how our club can add to the monitoring and promotion of these areas. Prior to Rick's talk, **Katelyn Bissat, of the Invasive Species Council of BC,** will be giving a brief presentation on their new youth program.

**Kamloops Film Society**

**Jan. 23** at 7 pm at the Paramount Theatre – **Fantastic Fungi** is a revelatory time-lapse journey about the magical, mysterious and medicinal world of fungi and their power to heal, sustain and contribute to the regeneration of life on Earth. Our own **Gary Hunt** will give a short introduction to the film which is part of the Kamloops Film Society. Tickets are available online or at the door. Check out their website at [www.thekfs.ca](http://www.thekfs.ca)



## HERITAGE HOUSE PARKING PERMITS

The new 2020 Heritage House Parking Permits are available. They are **pink and are valid until Dec. 31, 2020**. 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 **Face Up** on the dashboard 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.

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.

Luckily for the Kamloops Naturalist Club, there is seldom an event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month and the parking lot is relatively empty. If you have any questions, please phone Margaret at 250-554-1285.

## Kamloops Exploration Group 2020 Lecture Series

**All KEG lectures take place at the TRU Activity Centre in the Mountain Room and begin at 7 PM. Free to attend. Parking is free.**

**Jan. 16 – Peter Prochotsky** – Autonomous Operations at New Afton Mine

**Jan. 30 – Greg Dipple** – Mitigating Climate Change with Mine Waste: Carbon Capture and Storage in Mine Tailings

**Feb. 13 – Kyle Larson** - A top-Down Approach: The Evolution of the Himalaya as Recorded in the World’s Highest Peaks

**Feb. 24 – Jaquelin Pena** – Nature’s Most Potent Oxidants: Insights into Manganese Oxide Structure – Reactivity Relationships

**Mar. 12 – Christopher West** – Leafing Through History: Exploring the Fossil Plant Deposits of Western Canada

### 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](http://www.bcnature.ca) and Nature Canada [www.naturecanada.ca](http://www.naturecanada.ca)

**Sage Whispers** is published every two months, except for July and August.

Editor: Lynne Borle  
[kncnewsletter2@gmail.com](mailto:kncnewsletter2@gmail.com)

#### KNC Mailing Address

P.O. Box 625  
Kamloops, BC  
V2C 5L7

#### 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



January 2020

## Kamloops Christmas Bird Count 2019

The annual Christmas Bird Count was held on Dec. 22 this year. It takes place within a 7.5 mile (12 km) diameter circle centered on Mt. Dufferin. Weather was fair with clouds, light winds and temperatures around 0° C for most of the day. Twelve teams and 33 people plus two feeder watchers scoured the count circle for the 41st official count that we have been doing since 1979. The club had started a half day count in 1972 but we needed to increase it to one day in order to qualify as an official Audubon Society Christmas Count. So the club has been making a dedicated effort to survey our winter bird population for 47 years. What a terrific achievement.

Our 2019 count was 58 species plus an additional 9 species seen during the count period on either side of count day but not seen on Dec. 22. A total of 10,669 individual birds were tallied which was a respectable number. The count day results were somewhat below average in terms of species, due in part to fewer waterfowl species than expected and fewer winter finch species such as crossbills, redpolls and evening grosbeaks.

Highlight species that we don't often see were snow goose, American coot, golden eagle great gray owl and brown creeper. A cackling goose observed during the count period was a rare occurrence as was a northern hawk owl, but unfortunately, it was just outside of the count circle so we can't count it.

The species and numbers of each that were tallied are as follows, in taxonomic order.

Species seen during the count period but not on count day were Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Ruffed Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Barred Owl, American Dipper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pine Grosbeak and American Tree Sparrow.

Our keen observers were Ian Barnett, Judy Barnett, Emma Bourassa, Bryce Coombs, Teresa Corboy, Tana Coetzer, Connie Decaire, Oliver Decaire, Travis Desy, Maxine Grass, Mike Hanry, Barry Harman, Phil Holman, Rick Howie, June Kitamura, Kats Kitamura, Sandy MacDonald, Bob Needham, Denise Needham, Isaac Nelson, Bruce Ritcey, Clara Ritcey, Ralph Ritcey, Vanessa Robinson, Tristan Semeniuk, Christine Sparling, Ann Skurikhina, Heather Stalberg, Alan Vyse, Frances Vyse, Chris Wenger, Eathan Wenger, Shawn Wenger, Dave Whiting and Karen Willies.

Thanks again to all.

Rick Howie - compiler



# January 2020

Snow Goose - 1	Sharp-shinned Hawk - 3	Black-capped Chickadee - 56
Canada Goose - 2232	Red-tailed Hawk - 35	Mountain Chickadee - 15
Trumpeter Swan - 25	Rough-legged Hawk - 6	Red-breasted Nuthatch - 15
Mallard - 1232	Golden Eagle - 1	Brown Creeper - 1
Green-winged Teal - 4	Northern Pygmy Owl - 1	Townsend's Solitaire - 17
Greater Scaup - 11	Great Gray Owl - 1	American Robin - 22
Bufflehead - 16	Short-eared Owl - 6	European Starling - 3007
Common Goldeneye - 36	Downy Woodpecker - 14	Bohemian Waxwing - 546
Barrow's Goldeneye - 16	Hairy Woodpecker - 7	House Sparrow - 301
Common Merganser - 2	Northern Flicker - 155	House Finch - 501
Chukar - 67	Pileated Woodpecker - 5	Pine Siskin - 2
Rock Pigeon - 466	American Kestrel - 2	American Goldfinch - 84
Eurasian Collared-dove - 145	Merlin - 4	Spotted Towhee - 9
American Coot - 2	Large Falcon species - 1	Song Sparrow - 48
Ring-billed Gull - 142	Northern Shrike - 10	White-crowned Sparrow - 4
Herring Gull - 10	Steller's Jay - 10	Dark-eyed Junco - Oregon Race - 106 Slate-colored race - 3
Glaucous-winged Gull - 2	Clark's Nutcracker - 1	Red-winged Blackbird - 41
Great Blue Heron - 5	Black-billed Magpie - 215	Brewer's Blackbird - 34
Bald Eagle - adult - 109 -sub- adult 43	American Crow - 216	
Northern Harrier - 3	Common Raven - 595	





January 2020

## Next Generation Naturalists: Looking Back on 2019 and Ahead to 2020

It was an eventful year for the next generation naturalists program. Participants started with wilderness safety training, learned the basics of botany and birdwatching, and then set out on some amazing adventures. The highlight may have been the trip to Wells Gray Park to see waterfalls and visit 'Edgewood Blue', the home of naturalists Trevor Goward and Curtis Bjork. Riding up the Sun Peaks chairlift to hike around the wildflower meadows was also a lot of fun!

Activities closer to home included a study of geomorphology at Battle Bluffs, investigating the water quality and aquatic insects in TRU's daybreak pond, a study of the plants (including lots of invasive species) in Peterson Creek, and a tour of Tranquille-on-the-Lake where the group learned about the history of the site and protected cottonwood trees from hungry beavers. The group also sponsored a very well attended talk on how climate change will affect Kamloops weather.

For 2020 things start up again in January, with a snow shoeing outing to learn about animal tracks. Next generation naturalists will also spend much of 2020 learning more about environmental issues facing Kamloops and some of the ways they can take the lead on solving them. Work on their major project will start in the spring. The group has chosen to get involved in the Tranquille viewing platform project. There's lots to do there! Stay tuned for more details in future newsletters.



January 2020

## CHRISTMAS SOCIAL 2019



Lots of good baking, a nature quiz by Frank Ritcey, and festive people in silly sweaters! Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season with their friends and family.



## President's Report

2019

Well, we won some and lost some in 2019—true of any organization, I guess. Our wins included new members, great field trips and presentations, improvements to our website, and considerable work in our community. We got our first cheque for \$95,000.00 from the Lawson Foundation, and with it, launched the Next Generation Naturalists Program—which will be a going concern for the next three years. Our Nature for Kids leader, Mandy Ross, was named one of BC Nature's Distinguished Naturalist Mentors, and our club contributed what became Resolution 2019-01: on Wells Gray Mountain Caribou, which was passed by BC Nature at its spring meeting.

On the down side, the fact that City Council voted against our proposal for a Nature Park on McArthur Island was a blow. We invested a lot of time in meetings, letter writing, and planning, etc., and we had high hopes. However, disc golf won the day—and the location. On a more personal level, we lost two of our most dedicated members this year: Wayne Jennings and Adele Stapleton. Gold-panner extraordinaire, and volunteer for many groups, Adele was board secretary at the time of her death. Both she and Wayne—who monitored the South Thompson Bluebird Route for 26 years—will be sorely missed.

As was true last year, our nature outings started with the swan and eagle count in January and ended with the Christmas bird count in December. In between, KNC members and friends hiked to Neskonlith Wildflower Meadows and checked out spring birds at Gamble Pond and Separation Lake in April. In May, we drove and walked and “binoc-ed” the Kamloops environs as part of Bird Fest. (North won by a hair, as I recall.) In June, we braved an unusually cold day for a picnic and tour of the TRU Horticulture Gardens, and a much more typical hoard of mosquitoes during a trip with the Next Generation Naturalists to Wells Gray Park. The annual trip up Greenstone Mountain in July featured deer, birds and wildflowers galore. In September, we took a night hike to count bats, and another tour with the Next Gen gang to Skeetchestn. This trip was focussed on seeing the new permaculture installation there, but made other stops along the way. In November, there was another excursion with the Next Gen students to see bighorn sheep in rut, and learn about geomorphology.





## President's Report

### 2019 (cont'd)

Our monthly programs were varied and fascinating. We learned about birds in China, Canada Jays all over our own country, and weird plants in the BC interior. We heard about bats and white nose syndrome, pollinators and citizen science, climate change and BC ecosystems. M.Sc. students from TRU told us about their research on bats, rattlesnakes, bluebirds, squirrels and the use of wildlife cameras.

We also worked hard in our community. On Mother's day, 38 volunteers spent a collective 152 hours collecting hundreds of kilograms of trash in the Dewdrop-Rosseau Wildlife Management Area. Bluebird routes were monitored as usual, and throughout August and September, we led 8 hikes for Indonesian and Japanese students from TRU. Various members led nature-related courses as part of the City's Parks and Recreation fall program and in October, we did our Adopt-a-Road clean up along Tranquille. Throughout the year, KNC members worked with the Burrowing Owl recovery team, pulled weeds, monitored loons, judged at local science fairs, wrote articles for the website and/or newsletter and/or led outings for school classes and community groups on bats, birds and items of botanical interest! We continue to work with the city on a variety of ventures including signage to protect wildlife and/or inform the public about the value of nature. I am extremely grateful for the all of the many people who step up to do the myriad of jobs that keep the KNC running. Here's to even more enjoying, protecting and promoting nature in 2020!



Field Trip to Gamble Pond, April 2019



**OBITUARY**

Adele Stapleton, who was featured on the KNC Member’s Page in the November newsletter, succumbed to leukemia and passed away peacefully on November 26, 2019. Born on April 5, 1940, Adele spent most of her life on the coast before moving to Kamloops in 2006 where she became a dedicated volunteer with many different organizations. At her Celebration of Life in the common room of Orchard Court where she owned a condo, it was standing room only as many of her friends gathered to honour her. As a tribute to her volunteer service, the Big Little Science Centre and the Kamloops Y will be establishing awards in her name. Adele served as the Naturalist Club Secretary for 4 years until her death. She was always willing to volunteer to help with the Adopt-A-Road clean-up and Dewdrop clean-ups. She liked to attend all the field trips, but best of all, she enjoyed interacting with the International Students who came to experience the gold panning adventures along Tranquille Creek. She pointed out interesting natural features such as the beaver pond and poison ivy. Her favorite part was demonstrating the gold panning techniques she had learned from Yukon Dan, her bare feet planted in the creek as she sat on a rock, with an eager student peering into the black sand in the bottom of the pan while she tried to collect the tiny speck of gold with a plastic pipette to inject into their souvenir glass phial.

I think that this comment posted on our Naturalist Club chat line speaks for us all: “Adele was an inspiration, always ready with a good story, an incredible volunteer. She sure lived a life, and enlivened others.” Adele will be missed by all who knew her.

