

March 2019



Sage Whispers

Newsletter of the Kamloops Naturalist Club

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River Otter

by Rick Howie

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PROGRAMS

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Lynne Borle

Programs

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Thursday, March 21 – 7 pm at Heritage House - **Elaine Sedgman** - Two Years of Citizen Science Pollinator Surveys in Kamloops, BC. Elaine is an environmental activist, artist and Master Gardener and is bee-sotted by native bees. Partnering with Dr. Lyn Baldwin, TRU botanist, Elaine is the project coordinator for the citizen science pollinator surveys in Kamloops. For the past 2 years, citizen scientists have surveyed their gardens for pollinators, as well as undertaking group surveys within our city parks. Participants were trained to identify pollinating insects to functional groups. Under the direction of Dr. Baldwin, students surveyed uncultivated areas close to each garden. Elaine will discuss the data collected and compare the two years. She will also show some fascinating pictures of some of our most common bees found in the southern Interior of BC.

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

Dr. Ann Cheeptham's interest in microbiology developed while studying at Chiang Mai University (Thailand) and Hokkaido University (Japan). Since her doctoral work, her research interest and focus has included cave microbiomes/new drug discovery, white-nose syndrome in bats, and alternative treatment tools against multidrug resistant infections. She is a Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences, Thompson Rivers University.

Dr. Cori Lausen lives in Kaslo, BC, and is a conservation research biologist. After completing her PhD in bat ecology at the University of Calgary, she worked as an independent bat biologist. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations she has built a foundation for Wildlife Conservation Society Canada's Western Canada Bat Conservation Program which she now administers as a full time associate research scientist. She played a key role in developing and implementing the North American Bat Monitoring Program.

A Team of researchers from TRU and other partners has been sourcing, from healthy BC bats, naturally-occurring skin microbes that inhibit the fungus causing white-nose syndrome (WNS), a disease that is devastating bat populations in North America. From their collection of beneficial microbes, they have developed a prophylaxis to prevent, or at minimum reduce the severity, of WNS. Their presentation will detail this prophylaxis project and put it into context of Wildlife Conservation Society Canada's Bat Conservation program.



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
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Council Puts the Brakes on McArthur Island Nature Park

by Jesse Ritcey

The proposal for an interpretive nature park on the west end of McArthur Island was rejected by the Kamloops City Council on January 29th. Councillors Singh, Dudy, and Walsh spoke in favour of the concept but Mayor Christian and Councillors Hunter, Sinclair, Sarai, and O'Reilly teamed up to pass the City favoured plan for an 18 hole championship disc golf course.

Developing a park similar to 'Scout Island' in Williams Lake has been a longstanding goal of the Kamloops Naturalist Club. This particular location was chosen by our club founder Jack Gregson in the 1970's. Unfortunately the development of a golf course a decade later brought an end to those plans.

In both instances nature just wasn't a top priority for decision makers. More must be done to convince them of the importance of retaining natural areas as the city develops. Despite being unsuccessful the club can take great pride in knowing we spoke up for nature education. We also carried public opinion, with over 700 favourable responses in the City's own planning survey. This compared to 196 for disc golf. Two polls conducted by Kamloops This Week also showed similar levels of support.

With disc golf, cyclocross, and cross country running planned for this site there's unfortunately a good chance that several invasive weed species such as mullein, Canada thistle, and knapweed will come to dominate the landscape. We will continue to keep an eye on things and press the City and the site users to take proper care of this important space.



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The Next Generation of Naturalists Step Forward

by Jesse Ritcey

The Kamloops Naturalist Club is incredibly proud to be launching a new, three year youth environmental leadership program. To deliver the program we've partnered with the Faculty of Science at Thompson Rivers University and have been generously funded by The Lawson Foundation to the tune of \$227,500 over three years.

35 young people between the ages of 15 to 23 will take part in the program. The same group will carry forward for all three years so we've looked carefully for students with both a keen interest in the environment and the ability to make such a big commitment. Their meetings will kick off on March 16th in the TRU science building. They'll meet two Saturdays every month. Some months they'll get on a bus and go on some pretty interesting field trips to places like Tranquille, Lac Du Bois, Mt. Lolo, and Wells Grey Park.

One of the first orders of business is a wilderness safety and bear awareness course taught by Frank Ritcey. This 7.5 hour course is the same one he's taught to City of Abbotsford and BC Hydro workers. It'll be a nice addition to student's resumes but more importantly help ensure the health and wellbeing of group participants during field work.

Over the remainder of the year students will be putting together a 40 hour Master Naturalist program. It will involve 8 lectures from TRU faculty on a range of subjects. The lectures will be accompanied by hands on learning activities in the field. Lectures will be filmed and activities printed into a manual so that other clubs across BC can use them as a resource when launching similar programs. Two of the eight topics include citizen science and traditional Secwépemc knowledge. Six more will be voted on by students from a menu of options. Geology, native plants, and birdwatching appear to be some early front runners! Fish, herpetology, and forestry have also been mentioned.



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In years two and three, students will receive leadership training from various guest speakers. They'll take the knowledge they've learned and apply it to solving local environmental issues. They'll also spend 20 hours both years, working on site at an ecological restoration project, for which they'll be financially compensated.

The Lawson Foundation is funding 10 projects nation wide, all of which are unique. Reps from each project will periodically video chat with each other and meet up in person once a year to discuss what they've been learning. Our project was the first chosen to be highlighted by the foundation and they're very pleased with our progress so far. Tom Dickinson, TRU's Dean of Science and past KNC president, as well as current president Nancy Flood and our entire board have all been working very hard on this project, so its nice to see our success being recognized early on, and at a national level.

For the next three years the Next Generation Naturalists will also be KNC members. They'll be invited to attend our regular monthly meetings and come along on field trips that interest them. Interaction and exchange of knowledge between club members, new and old, is very much encouraged. So get ready to see some new faces!



Students on Trophy Mountain, Wells Gray Provincial Park



Bird Names

This helped to avoid confusion in communication and to establish a methodology for bringing new names into force. They also comment on taxonomic changes proposed by scientists undertaking research and ultimately decide whether such changes will be accepted for the official list published as the Checklist of North American Birds, 7th ed. plus numerous supplements. It is available on line at checklist.aou.org. This source tends to be used by bird watchers, field guide authors, scientists and anyone else who wish to refer to birds in a widely-accepted standard way.

But changes do occur as research continues, especially genetic studies that tell us more about birds and their relationships. Some birds formerly thought of as 2 species may become combined as one, or one may be split into two. Common names may be altered and even the order in which birds are listed is always under review. So at one time, we used to see both the Audubon's and Myrtle warblers listed for example. They were determined to be the same species, so are now referred to as the Yellow-rumped Warbler. The common and Latin names were changed accordingly. As research continues and these relationships become better understood, we will see constant although conservative changes to the official list. Rather than listing birds alphabetically, the AOU list orders them in a taxonomic sequence that reflects their biological relationships to one another. Here is where publications like field guides become dated and confusing for people. The official list is somewhat dynamic but once a field guide is published using the most recent version of names, it remains in print for a long time while the official list undergoes alterations. Many guide authors put the birds in the taxonomic sequence but others may organize them in other groupings, hoping to assist field identification while avoiding at least one source of change that leaves their guides dated.

AOU list on line periodically. It makes for interesting reading. Every now and again, we may need to invest in the latest field guide to stay a little more up to date on better identification tips and a closer match to the latest. For printed material, there is no way around this issue, so it is helpful to stay up to date by checking the AOU list, but there is no substitute for the on-line check. Most publications refer to the version of the AOU checklist that was used when the book or article went to print. You can buy a hard copy of the checklist but of course that edition is out of date and you must check the supplements each year to be current. As of this date, there are 59 supplements to the 7th edition.

Hopefully, this brief commentary on naming conventions will help you be consistent when referring to birds and to understand why you will notice differences when reading about birds in books or on - line. We are fortunate that there is the level of consistency that there is for birds. If you are interested in insects, plants and other organisms, the world of names is somewhat more problematic, with Latin names being the only consistent but also dynamic references for the most part. But remember, science will always keep us on our toes and the only constant is change itself.



Bird Names

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Using the correct names when talking about birds is important in order to avoid confusing communications. But which ones are "the correct ones?" If we look into the language of our Euro-Canadian culture for example, we will find lots of folk names for birds that may be unfamiliar to the common names we often use today. So if I said that I had just seen a "cock of the north." would you know that I had just seen a pileated woodpecker? Or if I had seen a "swamp robin" at my bird feeder, you would not likely know that it was a spotted towhee. Exploring the languages of native Indians or Inuit people would yield an entirely different set of names for our many species and of course French-Canadian names are different again.

But bird watchers generally use a more rigorously-defined set of common English names found in field guides and official checklists for various regions across North America. Scientists on the other hand, may refer to another set of names derived generally from Latin that are in two parts - namely genus and species. So how have these common English and Latin names become official for North America such that they are used in field guides, scientific papers and among bird watchers in general?

Initially we must consider taxonomy, which is the description, classification and naming of organisms. Scientists undertake seek understanding through research and publishing of peer-reviewed papers in order to decide upon the relationships. Latin names are given to each biologically distinct bird which include the genus and species. The genus name includes a number of closely-related species and the species name refers to one biologically unique bird that is generally reproductively isolated from other species and usually looks different physically from others. This biological species concept is not the only one used to classify organisms but is the one adhered to by the official naming organization which I will discuss below. Thus to scientists, our familiar American robin is known in Latin as *Turdus migratorius* which distinguishes it from the rufous-backed robin *Turdus rufopalliatu*s which is a different species found in Mexico. The official Latin names are used and known globally so that all scientists understand what is being referred to when they see or hear the name. It also gives them some clues as to the biological relationship that the bird has to other birds in the same genus for example. There is no confusion as is inherent in the use of non-standard folk names.

But using Latin to refer to wildlife is generally somewhat uncomfortable for English-speaking non-scientists. So a list of "common names" has been derived and widely available in publications such as field guides and checklists. These common names for North America have become standardized and made official and are generally adhered to by a great many people who take up the study of birds. So much so that they are just as reliable as Latin names, at least for North and Central America. Standardized common names for birds elsewhere in the world is another issue altogether.

So who has taken responsibility to make names official for North America? It was originally the American Ornithologists Union (AOU) now known as the American Ornithological Society (AOS). This is a group of ornithologists whose early members created the original standardized set of common and Latin names.



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Our Members

Susan Rolston and Jim Bogardis

by Joan Best

Beginning with Susan: she was born in Devon, England, in a small village. She was raised in a 500-year old farmhouse ("which was always cold and leaked like a sieve") and grew up well acquainted with farm life. She taught elementary school 'til she was 26. Then she was bitten by the travel bug and set out to see the world. She travelled extensively through Europe, then headed for Vancouver, Canada, where the world travel came to a temporary halt. She continued with teaching there but, preferring a rural lifestyle, soon taught in Clearwater, Vavenby and Birch Island. After meeting her husband through the BCTF, she settled in Ashcroft for 23 years, where her husband's family had, for 3 generations, provided stage coach drivers! This in the days when travel on the Cariboo road was by many means; stage coach, horseback, walking, even pushing a wheelbarrow. Road houses were situated at intervals where teams were changed and guests housed overnight.

Susan's husband died when their son was 13 years old. Like his father, he developed a love of history and eventually earned a degree in the subject. However, of late he has taken up nursing, a profession where he will never lack for a job. The two moved to Kamloops in 2005 and Susan met Jim "online" in 2006. Travel is an interest shared by Jim and the couple has already visited England, Ireland, France, enjoyed a river cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam, Tuscany, the Greek Islands and a safari in Tanzania. They are busy planning for their next adventure in Australia.

As to other interests, Susan sings second soprano in the Kamloops Choristers. She enjoys gardening, reading, walking, birding and riding horseback. At the moment she is without a mount but is sure of finding another soon. She is hoping to earn a spot as a member of the Kamloops Mounted Patrol whose activities you will all be aware of: meeting the Rocky Mountaineer train, attending events such as Remembrance Day in Riverside Park, summer Music in The Park and many similar functions. The interest in walking and birding as well as all aspects of the natural world led her to join our Club and Jim is also a member whose profile we explore next.



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Jim was born and raised in Barrie, Ontario. After graduating from High School he left Barrie to join the RCAF as a radar technician and was based in Nova Scotia, then in Ontario and his last posting was at Puntzi Mountain B.C., which is half way between Williams Lake and Bella Coola. He loved B.C. and moved to Vancouver where, in time, he married and went to work for IBM in 1966. Working for IBM also meant having to move frequently. He spent 10 years in Vancouver and a year in Toronto which he terms a charm school (!), 3 years in Calgary, then Winnipeg and back to Calgary in 1988. He retired from IBM in 1993 as a branch manager and moved to the Okanagan where he stayed put for a while. He still considers IBM a "great company to work for". He has 3 sons, all grown up and 9 grandchildren, most living in the Okanagan.

As for hobbies and interests, just about anything outdoors; camping, fishing, golfing, hunting, though he now hunts only with a camera. Indoor interests are a saltwater aquarium which, he says, he moved with him when he joined Susan. It was she who introduced him to our Club whose activities and interests they share and enjoy. In fact, both Jim and Susan now consider doing what they can to improve our environment a priority. Jim also works, still, on Rotarian local and international service projects, currently a water project in Tanzania. To round off a busy but satisfying life style he is a member of the Kamloops Fish and Wildlife Club and the Grasslands Probus Club.



This is Joan's last article on club members as she is taking a well-deserved retirement. If anyone would like to interview people for this column, please contact Joan at 250-376-4814 or jbest@xplornet.ca.



Obituary



Long-time club member, Wayne Jennings, died on Saturday, March 2 at his home at the Hamlets in Westsyde. He was born in Saskatchewan on November 19, 1935. Wayne went to UBC, staying with an uncle who lived in Vancouver. His first teaching positions were in Nelson and Golden before coming to Kamloops to teach English Literature at Norkam and Westsyde Secondary Schools. He didn't have any children, but leaves cousins in Kelowna, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, and their respective families.

Wayne held many important roles with the Naturalist Club and was always an enthusiastic volunteer and participant in club activities until ill health over the last few years limited his involvement with the club. He served as a member of the Executive for many years and at one point he was the club's representative for the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists and attended meetings around the province.

Wayne was the club's Treasurer for a few years. He also organized field trips, the first Adopt-A Road cleanups at Tranquille, and work bees to build nest boxes for the bluebird routes. He was a regular participant in the Christmas Bird Count and the Swan and Eagle Counts. He had great observational skills.

Wayne's last activity with the club was his South Thompson bluebird route which he monitored for 26 years until he retired due to health reasons. He was accompanied during the last years by John Weller and Margaret Stewart, making his final observations in the summer of 2017. Wayne was always accompanied by his little dog, Tiny. As John remembers, "Tiny barked ceaselessly at cows, horses, or whatever other creatures caught his attention. One occasion stands out when we were stopped checking a box and Tiny managed to open the car window and charged a nearby horse only to beat a hasty retreat when the horse took exception to his advances. Wayne loved that little dog, who was a great companion to him." Susan Weilandt also adds that "Wayne was either very lucky or had a keen eye as his route was the only one that repeatedly had a Western Bluebird nest along it.

For Wayne's dedication to the bluebird monitoring program, after 20 years, he received a framed bluebird photograph (taken by Rick Howie) as part of the volunteer appreciation program. Susan Weilandt remembers him "...as a very keen and loyal participant in the program. He was never hesitant in speaking his mind and had many constructive ideas to add to the running of the Bluebird Trails Program."

Wayne will be missed by his many friends in the Naturalist Club. Details of a service will be announced at a later date.

