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November 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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**Chukars**

Lyn MacDonald

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## Coming Events

### KNC Executive and Officers

**President**

Nancy Flood

**Past President**

Julie Schooling

**Vice-President**

Frank Ritcey

**Secretary**

Adele Stapleton

**BC Nature Director**

Gary Hunt

**Treasurer**

Jean Crowe

**Directors**

Justine Densmore-McCulloch

Ken Lipinski

Jesse Ritcey

**Communications**

Margaret Graham

marggraham@shaw.ca

250-554-1285

**Membership**

Winnifred Fischer

**Newsletter Committee**

Lynne Borle

**Programs**

Justine Densmore-McCulloch

Margaret Graham

**Bluebird Co-ordinator**

Susan Weilandt

### KNC Programs

**Thursday, Nov. 15, 7 pm Heritage House** – Environmentalist Jim Cooperman will be talking about his comprehensive, bioregional guidebook, “Everything Shuswap”. He will focus on Chapter 3, Ecology, which examines the region’s amazing diversity. Topics will include the protected ancient rainforests, endangered species and the fate of the salmon. As well, he will explain how the book is contributing to the local schools, both as a curriculum resource and as a source of funding for outdoor learning. Guests are welcome. FMI 250-554-1285. See Page 4 for more information.

**Thursday, Dec. 20, 7 pm Heritage House.** This meeting will be our annual Christmas event where everyone brings their Christmas baking and mingles with their friends. Look for an interesting slide show and a nature quiz by Frank Ritcey.

**Saturday, Jan. 19** The AGM will be held at 5:30 pm at 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 will be giving a slide show of some of his fantastic nature photos. The business portion of the meeting and election of officers will follow the slide show.

### Christmas Bird Count

The Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 15. Participants are asked to contact Rick Howie at 250-578-7542 or [r.howie@shaw.ca](mailto:r.howie@shaw.ca) for assignment to teams and areas. Each team will determine their own meeting location at the start of the day. The pot luck dinner and tally will be held at the home of June and Kats Kitamura, at 5:00 PM at 141 Bestwick Drive. Their phone number is 250-374-8734.

The Swan and Eagle Count will take place on Sunday, January 13. We will meet at Riverside Park in the lot near the arena at 0800 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](mailto:r.howie@shaw.ca) with any questions.



## 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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Kamloops, BC  
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**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

## Help Wanted

We are looking for a few volunteers to serve on the KNC Executive. As some of you may have heard, Vice-President Frank Ritcey and his wife, Raven, have down-sized and moved to Merritt. Our loss is Merritt's gain. Frank has been the club Vice-President for several years and he has always been full of ideas for the club, including the clean-up of the Dewdrop area, the Tranquille Viewing Platform, and the successful fund-raising gold-panning trips with the TRU international students.

We are looking for someone to take Frank's place. A **Vice President** is needed to help the President and stand in for the President during his/her absence. There is no rule that says the Vice-President has to step up to the President's position. If this has been holding you back, please think again.

Jean Crowe is still looking for someone to replace her as **Treasurer**. She will stay to help you learn the position. The duties of Treasurer include:

- 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.

We are also looking for people who would like to serve as **Directors-at-large**. These people help to direct the activities of the club. Serving on the Executive is a great learning experience and makes the business of the club more interesting.

There are also ways to contribute to the club without serving on the Executive.

We are always looking for people to supply articles to the newsletter, website, and Facebook page. If you like to take photos or have a flair for writing, please help to keep our information on the web current as the more often new material is posted, the more people we will attract to the club. We also need field trip leaders. If you have a favorite area to visit for birding, flowers, or mushrooms, consider leading a trip, even if you aren't an expert. There are always people on field trips who are willing to share their expertise.

If you have an interest in any of these positions, please contact Margaret at [marggraham@shaw.ca](mailto:marggraham@shaw.ca).



## Why Everything Shuswap?

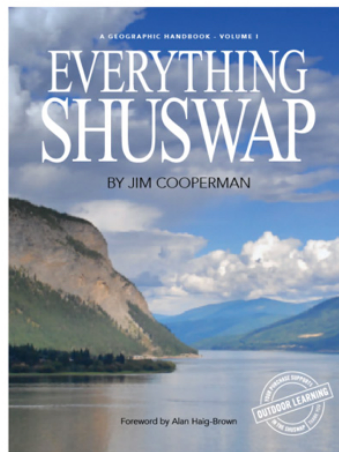
The Shuswap has all the attributes to attract someone who enjoys four seasons - nature, clean water, recreation, and culture and reasonably close access to larger cities. There is an amazing diversity of plant and animal life here and thankfully due to the small population, a minimum of pavement, crowds and pollution. Yet until now, there has been little written about the region.

Author Jim Cooperman, a dedicated environmentalist and back-to-the-lander, spent 12 years researching and writing this comprehensive, bioregional guidebook that includes 36 maps and over 350 stunning photos. Tour through the watershed and explore the lakes region and each of the 12 sub-drainages. Learn about the region's ancient geology and its mostly unsuccessful mining ventures. Discover why the Shuswap is so ecologically diverse and why mountain caribou are endangered and how the sockeye salmon may be next.

Learn about the Secwepemc people, who have lived on this land since time immemorial and understand why, after nearly two centuries of exploitation and mistreatment, they are regaining their heritage. Understand the factors behind the pattern of European settlement and discover details about the sternwheeler era.

Everything Shuswap is more than a book; it is also an educational project. Proceeds from book sales will be used to support outdoor learning; the book will be used in the grade 10 social studies curriculum; and, there is a plan to involve students in the research for the next two volumes. Given that Dr. David Suzuki wrote after receiving a copy, "Every part of the country should have something like Everything Shuswap," the book can also serve as a template for other communities.

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[www.shuswappassion.ca](http://www.shuswappassion.ca)  
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## Mushroom Walk

Margaret Graham

Mushroom field trips are always popular, and Sunday, October 14 was no exception as nearly 30 people, including 4 children, arrived for Gary Hunt's excursion to the Scuitto Lake Forest Reserve wetlands in Barnhartvale. It was a crisp, sunny day as we gathered around Gary to learn about what we might expect to find. He showed us a large field guide called "Mushrooms Demystified" by David Arora which he pronounced as the "Bible" for mushrooms in western Canada and the United States. He also produced a smaller pocket-sized field guide by the same author which is more convenient for packing in the field; the color photos and key features help to identify specimens.

Gary explained that because of the abundance of rain in September, there was a profusion of mushrooms to be found this year, as well as a great variety. Some varieties of mushrooms appear in the spring but most of them appear in the fall, and just like flowers, there are early, mid and late season varieties, which help in narrowing the identification. Other limiting factors are geographical range and altitude. Some mushrooms are found on rotting wood while many species are connected to certain trees such as Douglas-firs and other conifers with which they form a symbiotic relationship, exchanging nutrients between the underground mycelium of the fungus and the tiny rootlets of the trees. The mushrooms are actually the fruiting bodies of the fungus and being composed mostly of water, they exert a great hydraulic pressure on the ground or other material, including concrete and asphalt, as they break their way through to the surface.

The first group of mushrooms we found was within a few feet of the cars and more and more mushrooms were brought to Gary's attention as we proceeded into the forest and along the trail. As each new mushroom appeared, Gary spent some time explaining how mushrooms could be identified, including size, shape, colour of the cap, gills or spores, smell, texture, location, and season. We learned the parts of the mushroom and what to look for – cap, gills or no gills, veil or no veil, ring, stalk, volva. Using a key in a field guide to narrow our search, we could divide them into groups such as Milk Caps and Russulas, Polypores, Amanita, Agaricus, and Boletes. He told us how the best way to make a positive identification was to make a spore print on white paper in order to capture the color of the spores, which include white, pink, brown, black, and green.





# Mushroom Walk (cont'd)

Gary identified each mushroom by its scientific name which he rattled off very easily but I prefer the much more colorful and easier to remember common names such as Woman on Motorcycle (*Lepiota naucina*) and Slippery Jack (*Suillus brevipes*).

Although Gary had stressed beforehand that this was not a trip to collect edibles, people still asked questions about chanterelles, morels, shaggy manes, truffles, and puffballs. He gave tips on how to harvest them at their prime and how to cook them. Although there are many edible mushrooms to be found if you know what to look for, I will continue to buy my mushrooms at the store.



Cambi Cook



Adele Stapleton



Adele Stapleton



Adele Stapleton



Cambi Cook



Adele Stapleton

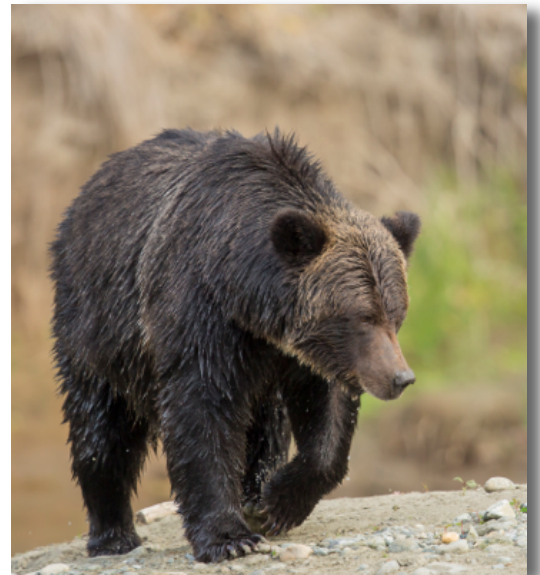




## Grizzly Bears

Glenn Dreger

These Grizzly photos were taken on the Atnarko River on Sept 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. I have made several drifts on the Atnarko River with Kynoch Adventures over the past two years, and have seen bears on every one. This was extraordinary in that we were on a narrow stretch of the river when we saw the bears. Our guide pulled the boat into the opposite side of the river and anchored. The guides are extremely professional, and try to be as unobtrusive as possible with the bears. Despite his best efforts, this bear came by in the river, so close that I made the choice to watch in real life, after having taken a few photos. Afterwards, our guide said “That is as close as you will ever want to be to a Grizzly”. He was putting his bear spray away as he said that.



## What's the history behind those Ord Road birds?

Kamloops Daily News

June 14, 2011

### YOU ASKED:

I'm curious to know more about these pretty, partridge-like birds that roam around Ord Road. People call them chukars and say they are not indigenous to the area. Where did they come from? - Ollie Weisbeck

### OUR ANSWER:

When it comes to birds, there is only one person we ever need to call upon - Kamloops bird expert Rick Howie - who tells us that chukars are, indeed, not native to North America. They are indigenous to Asia in countries such as Israel, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Nepal.

"The name is likely an anglicized version of the Hindi word for them, which sounds like chukar," says Howie. "Taxonomists named it *Alectoris chukar*. Birds were first shipped to North America in 1893 and introduced in Illinois as a game bird."

As you can imagine, widespread introductions occurred after that in the U.S., and it was only a matter of time before the birds made their way to Canada. The Fish and Wildlife Branch of the B.C. government introduced chukars to the province in 1950 when 17 birds (obtained from Washington and Oregon) were released in Kamloops. For the next five years, a whopping 2,600 chukars were introduced at eight different locations in the Southern Interior, including more near Kamloops. The purpose was to provide hunting opportunities. Since then, the populations have expanded and the birds nest and reproduce successfully in the dry, steppe country of the Thompson Valley and parts of the Okanagan.

They remain a popular game bird and often visit bird feeders of people who live near the grassland margins of the city.





## Our Members

**Nancy Flood, President, KNC**



I grew up in Ottawa, Ontario, where most of my family still resides. Although I wasn't involved in any formal activities related to nature as a child, I spent most of my time outdoors, finding salamanders, collecting leaves, building tree forts—when I wasn't reading. I guess it makes sense then, that when I left home to attend Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario I became entranced with biology, especially ecology. I later moved on to the University of Toronto for a M.Sc. and a Ph.D., all of which was just an excuse to do fieldwork—in all sorts of wonderful places from the Arctic to the subtropics, in 5 provinces and territories, as well as several US states and Mexico. My area of study has been the evolutionary ecology of birds, and various species of orioles have been my focus. I know lots about the genus *Icterus*, though not so much about other birds, I confess!

In Toronto, I was lucky enough to meet—and eventually marry--Tom Dickinson, who I later followed to BC, and into teaching at TRU—and have followed into many other things! We have 2 wonderful children, both of whom were born in Kamloops. Becca went to SKSS, did a Rotary Exchange year in India, finished her first degree at Quest University in Squamish, and then completed the Midwifery program at UBC. She is now a practicing midwife in East Vancouver.



## Our Members (cont'd)

Rory also went to SKSS, and is now in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year of an English degree at U. Vic. He has recently started working at a garden centre, and has come to better appreciate the home garden we started when he was a baby. That garden has grown into quite an endeavor, and between that and my job, I'm kept pretty busy. As both my children were competitive swimmers and cross country ski racers, I became an official in both sports—in which I am still actively involved. Also an active member of Transitions Kamloops, Kamloops 350, and various other groups, I tend to be too busy, especially at work, where students and committees seem to abound. Fortunately, I love my job and am honoured to have taught many wonderful students, in everything from Introductory Biology to Biostatistics and Field Ornithology.

I am delighted to be the current president of the Kamloops Naturalist Club. Tom and I have been members for many years, but for a long time I was too busy with young kids and work to participate in many club events. I am trying now to step up to the job and am very, very lucky to have the help and support of so many active and knowledgeable club members.

