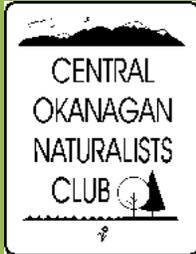
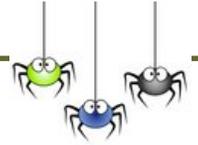


November 2020 **The Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club**

www.okanagannature.org



**Know Nature and
Keep it Worth
Knowing**



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Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club Monthly Meetings, second Tuesday of the month,

Unfortunately, this is not a normal year. In-person regular second-Tuesday meetings remain suspended.

CONC Members are now meeting via Zoom.

Join us on 10 November 2020: at 7:00 pm. via Zoom for the following presentation:

Ice age mammals from the Yukon permafrost: Speaker: Grant Zazula

Fossil mammals from the last ice age have been recovered from permafrost in the Yukon since the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. Scientists continue to study these fossils and employ cutting edge techniques such as radiocarbon dating, stable isotope analyses and ancient genetics to learn how these animals lived and evolved in Canada's north during the ice age. Fossils from the Yukon provide unprecedented details on the life and loss of many iconic species, such as woolly mammoths and giant beavers, and help us understand how current ecosystems may respond to climate change.



Photo (courtesy of Grant Zazula)

Grant Zazula completed his PhD in Biological Sciences at Simon Fraser University in 2006. Since then he has overseen the Yukon Government Palaeontology Program where he manages fossil collections, conducts research and communicates scientific results to the wider public through the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre. www.beringia.com

**Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club. www.okanagannature.org
P.O. Box 21128, RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 9N8**

| EXECUTIVE FOR 2020-21 | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| President | Rick Gee | 250-763-0124 | rdgee@shaw.ca |
| Vice-president | Douglas Graham | | douglasjgraham@me.com |
| Secretary | Robbie Bowers | | arbowers@telus.net |
| Treasurer | Margaret Ramsay | | Ramsay6466@live.ca |
| Past president | Craig Lewis | 250-765-2511 | coppercliff59@gmail.com |
| Directors for 2020-2021 | | | |
| BC Nature | Francisca Fisher | 778-478-7478 | franfisher@shaw.ca |
| Birding | Dave Palsat | 778-478-4224 | fpalsat@shaw.ca |
| Botany | Peter Green | 250-765-1737 | N/A |
| Conservation | vacant | | |
| Hiking | vacant | | |
| Membership | Karen Pedersen | 250-869-4932 | kepedersen@telus.net |
| Programs | Ian Walker | 250-807-9559 | ian.walker@ubc.ca |
| Special Projects | Peter Courtney | 250-860-9765 | pcourtney59@gmail.com |
| Committee Contact Persons | | | |
| Avocet program | Les Gyug | 250-769-5907 | les_gyug@shaw.ca |
| Ecological Reserves and Okanagan Highlands Trail | Don Guild | 250-768-3334 | guilds@telus.net |
| Hosts | Bev Thomas Liz Daley | 250-762-7610 250-764-2310 | cymru@telus.net adaley200@gmail.com |
| Library | Jen Matthews | | jematthews@yahoo.ca |
| Newsletter | Teresa Smith | 250-860-9133 | tmsmith.rio@shaw.ca |
| Ornithology | Gwynneth Wilson Howard Braun | 250-762-6876 205-768-4339 | gwynnethwilson67@gmail.com hbraun331@gmail.com |
| Publicity | Rick Dewar | 250-769-9494 | dewarr@ucalgary.ca |
| Website: www.okanagannature.org | Rick Gee | 250-763-0124 | rdgee@shaw.ca |
| NatureKids Kelowna | Kate Kutzner | 250-859-9877 | kelowna@naturekidsbc.ca |

MONTHLY MEETINGS: Held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, September to June at 7 p.m. in Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna. **Visitors are welcome.** **Hosts:** Bev Thomas 250-762-7610, Liz Daley 250-801-1286.

Please bring your own cup.

MEMBERSHIP: Karen Pedersen, kepedersen@telus.net. 250-869-4932. **Annual dues:** single \$35, family \$47, students \$14, includes Newsletter (except January, July & August). There is a \$10 for charge for newsletters to be sent by mail. Membership form and waiver form can be found on CONC website www.okanagannature.org. Send your name, address, telephone number, email address, waiver form and dues to: CONC Membership, Box 21128, Orchard Park P.O., Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 9N8.

Honorary Life Members: Hugh Westheuser, Pat Westheuser, Eileen Dillabough, Cec Dillabough, Arthur Hughes-Games (deceased), Brenda Thomson (deceased), Muriel Westwood (deceased), and Harry Almond (deceased).

NEWSLETTER: Editor: Teresa Smith. Deadline date for submissions is the fourth Tuesday of each month. Send submissions to Teresa Smith, tmsmith.rio@shaw.ca, 250-860-9133. Mailing address is, 292 Rio Drive South, Kelowna, B.C. V1V 2B1.

Email distribution: Karen Pedersen kepedersen@telus.net

REGULAR ACTIVITIES: All activities are seasonal. If in doubt, check with the contact person. Or phone any of the executive.

BIRDING: Howard Braun 250-768-4339 and Gwynneth Wilson 250-762-6876. **TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Monday Birding meet at 8:00 a.m. April-June, September and October at the Apple Bowl*

Thursday birding meet 8 am (April-Sept.) or 9 am (Oct-March) at St. Charles Garnier Church, 3645 Benvoulin Rd.

Saturday Birding: 2nd Saturday of the month 7:30 am (April-Sept). 8:30 am (Oct – March). Meet at the Apple Bowl*

BOTANY: Peter Green 250-765-1737. Friday Botany trips: Meet 9:15 am (departure 9:30 am) at the Apple Bowl* Spring to Fall.

HIKES. (Bring a lunch). General information Sherrell Davidson 778-478-1956 or sherrellconc@shaw.ca.

All Hikers meet at the Apple Bowl*

- "Sole Survivors" **Wednesday and Saturday Hikes:** Times as per schedule, see www.okanagannature.org

- **Wednesday Ramblers:** Contact Merle Auty, 250-861-4500 or auty1781@gmail.com.

*1555 Burtch Road, the Apple Bowl parking lot, corner of Burtch and Bernard

After months of no birding outings there is good news; the Monday Walks are back with COVID-19 rules. You must reserve your spot because the limit is 15 which is broken into two groups. You must drive to the meeting place in your own car alone or with a member of your own household. Social distancing is observed and masks are encouraged.

On October 5, we had our first walk at Munson Pond starting at the end of Burtch Road. It was nice to see each other. We found over 30 species including **Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Belted Kingfisher** diving for fish, **Ruddy Duck, Pintail** and **Wood Duck**. We enjoyed bright sunny weather for this walk. The second walk was on October 13 - Tuesday because of Thanksgiving weekend. The weather did not co-operate giving us heavy rain. We counted 34 species including 346 **Canada Geese** that are always plentiful this time of year with both resident and non-resident birds present. This week we again had **Pintail** and a late **Osprey** was sighted. Smaller birds included **Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-crowned Sparrow** and **American Goldfinch**.

Feeding Birds in the Winter: As the weather cools people think about feeding birds. Some people feed the birds all year round but many only feed birds in the winter. Here are a few ideas: Suet is a good way to attract nuthatches, woodpeckers and jays. It can be offered in commercially made wire boxes sized to fit commercially made suet blocks. Suet from the butcher shop can be put out in a mesh onion bag.

In this area hanging feeders are popular. These can be purchased in stores or home made by cutting holes in a bleach bottle or milk carton. These feeders are filled with commercial seed mixtures or better still black oil sunflower seeds. An alternative hanging feeder is a niger (nyger or thistle seed) feeder which is a narrow cylinder with small ports with baffles to slowly dispense the costly seeds so beloved by Goldfinches. A table feeder is suitable for our much-loved California Quail. A feed store can supply cracked corn or the mixture of cracked grains known as chick scratch.

Remember to keep the ground near the feeders clean to discourage rats. Also check that the feeders are not near cover that could aid haunting cats.



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Ruby-crowned Kinglet



White-crowned Sparrow

photos Wikipedia

JOIN CONC MEMBERS ON ZOOM.



While we cannot meet in-person, CONC is now holding meetings online using Zoom. Zoom is free to download and use on any device (computer, tablet, smart phone).

Create a Zoom account by clicking on this link: <https://zoom.us/freesignup/>

You can also view a variety of short 'how to' videos:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>.

THE JUVENILE LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER. by Pam Laing.

When Gwynneth and I went yesterday morning to Robert Lake to try (unsuccessfully) for the White-winged Scoter previously reported there, this juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher was there. It was very obligingly feeding just on the other side of the barrier at the end of the flooded access road, directly in front of our car.



I checked with Michael Force and Chris Charlesworth that it was indeed a Long-billed and not a Short-billed and they confirmed.

Chris indicated that Short-billed typically pass through in southbound migration earlier and any dowitcher seen here in October is almost definitely a Long-billed.

Michael also sent a lot of useful detail regarding the moulting plumage, particularly of the tertials, which I knew might indicate which species it was.

To quote: "You can see the tertials are crisply edged in faint orange-rust with no bright internal swirls nor "tiger stripes". The upper row of scapulars (the two plain grey rows) are almost completely moulted into first basic (first winter) plumage; some are still juvenile feathers (black centered with orange-rust fringe). Most of the wing coverts have also moulted out of juvenile plumage and into first basic plumage (grey with a broad blackish shaft streak). Soon, once moult is complete, it'll be mostly just plain grey on the upperparts, thus making separation from Short-billed much more tricky."

Fortunately, there's still enough juvenile plumage on this critter to confirm it's identity as a Long-billed Dowitcher. Plus, the bill looks somewhat long. I heard it calling yesterday and assume it's the same bird. I certainly wasn't this close though!"



A not-so-common "Leucistic" Mallard duck -- resident at Mattera Glen Park in North Glenmore, Kelowna."

Photo by Roland Gebaur

Leucism is a term used to describe a wide variety of conditions which result in the partial loss of pigmentation in an animal causing white, pale, or patchy coloration of the skin, hair, feathers, scales or cuticles, but not the eyes. It is occasionally spelled *leukism*. Some genetic conditions that result in a "leucistic" appearance include piebaldism, Waardembirg syndrome, vitiligo, Chédiak-Higashi syndrome, and Melanophilin mutations.

Pale patches of skin, feathers, or fur (often referred to as "depigmentation") can also result from injury. As the term "leucism" is used to refer to conditions with a very wide range of unrelated causes, it cannot be considered to be a single, specific condition. (*Wikipedia*)

LOOKING AHEAD – FUTURE MEETINGS:

CONC DECEMBER MEETING: 8 DECEMBER 2020:

Bumble Bees of British Columbia: Big, Bumbly and Beleaguered (7:00 PM via Zoom)

Speaker: Syd Cannings

The Presentation: A short introduction to bumble bees, the bumble bees of British Columbia, and specifically some common bumble bees of the Okanagan. Some species are at risk and are listed under the federal Species-at-Risk Act. Syd will discuss the declines of these species and the probable causes of the declines, and what we can do to change things. Many of you may participate in bird monitoring programs, and naturalists can help monitor the status of bees as well.

The Speaker: Syd Cannings grew up in the Okanagan but has migrated north to the Yukon (the Far North Okanagan), where he is a species-at-risk biologist for the Canadian Wildlife Service. In an earlier life, he was curator of the insect collection at the University of British Columbia, and then Program Zoologist for the BC Conservation Data Centre in Victoria.



Photo: courtesy of Syd Cannings

This bee is a Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee, a species listed as Endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act. It remains common in the north, but one of the last places that it has been found in southern Canada is Kelowna!

CONC JANUARY MEETING: 12 JANUARY 2021:

Green Wildlifing (or The Lockdown Naturalist), (7:00 PM via Zoom)

Speaker: Richard Gregson

The Presentation: Richard Gregson has been an early advocate of Green Birding which means travelling to see birds by human power modes of transport such as walking, cycling and canoeing. The presentation will discuss the value of this approach to local birding, consider ways to maximise your species lists, and will look at some of the interesting species to be found on the edges of a major eastern city simply by walking up to them. Since Covid-19 has constrained our abilities to travel anyway I have been discovering many plants, insects and other non-avian groups close to home that previously I never spared a moment to stop and look at - perhaps you are finding the same?

The Speaker: Having been born in England, Richard immigrated to Canada in 1998 and is based in the west of Montreal. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology. He originally expected entomology to pay the rent but got sidelined into a career in mammalian pathology and physiology. He is a former President of Bird Protection Quebec - Canada's oldest bird conservation charity. He has now retired and has returned to unpaid field biology projects. He leads educational activities in a nearby arboretum owned by McGill university and has published field guides for local birders.



Photo: courtesy of Richard Gregson

UPDATES TO PAM LAING'S BLOG

Lake Country Museum has posted my latest contribution to their blog site in the "Which Bird..." series. The subject this time is Nuthatches and Brown Creeper. If you are interested I invite you to visit:- www.lakecountrymuseum.com and click on Blog, and Latest Posts

I have also recently updated my personal website with a page about fall migration, some new (and some old) photographs. This can be found at:- www.pamlaingkelowna.ca

CONC has received the following email. Perhaps it describes a project in which you would like to get involved.

I have completed a 2020-2021 seed funded project on using eDNA on rattlesnake dens in the North and South Okanagan with the help of NONC¹ and SONC². This year I will be expanding on the project to all areas of the Okanagan and with the success of last year's eDNA project I am applying for a multi-year project through HCTF³.

I have included the draft multiyear proposal for your review. I am looking for an in-kind commitment from CONC for donating volunteer time. I am expecting to visit 120 sites over 2 years which should equate to approximately 6 days of volunteer time per season for 2 volunteers. This would include going with me to snake den locations and doing soil sampling for snake e-DNA. Please respond asap as I need to get this in to HCTF next week.

The project will occur during the spring (April 01-May 15) and fall (September 1-October 15) and volunteers will be trained onsite for snake safety procedures by Mike Dunn RPBio (17 years of reptile research and handling experience). Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns.

Thanks,
Michael Dunn RPBio. CESCL
Wildlife Biologist
Big Picture Biology
www.bigpicturebiology.ca<<http://www.bigpicturebiology.ca>>
Mike.Dunn@BigPictureBiology.ca<<mailto:Mike.Dunn@BigPictureBiology.ca>>
250-488-7105



Northern Pacific Rattlesnake



Yellow-bellied Racer



Great Basin Gopher Snake

Photos: The Official Website of BC Reptiles www.bcreptiles.ca/snakes/

¹ North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

² South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

³ Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation

2020-2021 PHOTO CONTEST

Entry is open to CONC members only. Entrants may submit up to four (4) total photos maximum - with no more than one per category.

There are four categories:

- 1) Flora (Plants, lichens, mosses, algae, fungi)
- 2) Fauna (Animals of any sort, big or small, from weevils to whales. Protozoa,
- 3) Landscapes
- 4) People in Nature



This year the photos will be temporarily posted for judging on a website. Each photo, as displayed on the website, will have a maximum dimension (height/width) of 1000 pixels. **Note:** Given the dimensions of most computer screens, this may favour photos presented in landscape format. Entries will not be posted on the website until after the submission deadline passes. A mock-up of the judging website is posted at: <http://paleolab.ca/PhotoContest/index.html> for members to review.

Judging will be conducted by CONC members, with voting via email to ian.walker@ubc.ca. Each member has one vote in each category. The voting members' name must be included in the email.

The winners and two runners-up in each category will be announced and displayed at the CONC meeting on 9 March 2021. Photos will be removed from the website once voting is complete.

Entries must:

- 1) have been taken in 2020 or 2021
- 2) be emailed to ian.walker@ubc.ca, together with the entrant's name, the category for each photo, and the title/location for each photo.
- 3) not include any watermarks or other indicator that would identify the entrant.
- 4) be received by ian.walker@ubc.ca no later than 10:00 am, 5 February 2021.