

Winter, 2021-22

# The Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club

www.okanagannature.org



*Know Nature and Keep it  
Worth Knowing*

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**Monthly Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Members continue to meet via Zoom.**

The next general meetings are scheduled for:

- Tuesday March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:00 pm.
- Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:00 pm.
- Tuesday May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

## CONC GENERAL MEETING: MARCH 8

### THE GALAPAGOS: IN DARWIN'S WAKE

As we move ahead with planning programs and presentations for our general meetings in 2022, we would like to continue to bring in interesting outside speakers as well as giving our members the opportunity to share their fascinating experiences and knowledge (please send your ideas to any member of the Executive Committee). For our upcoming meeting on March 8, Douglas Graham will make a presentation on a voyage he and his wife France made in 2017 to the Galapagos. Our President will share some stories and photos of this amazing part of Ecuador and will not resist the temptation to throw in some evolutionary biology!

The meeting will take place at 7:00 pm through Zoom; the link will be circulated by email and is also on our website.



Galapagos Tortoise - credit Douglas Graham

## WELCOME NEW CONC MEMBERS!

Our club has been growing and thriving, even with the complications of paused activities and member meetings taking place by Zoom, rather than in-person, due to COVID 19.

We want to welcome our new members who made the choice to join us in late 2021 & early 2022. Now that activities are back on and in-person meetings are anticipated to take place in the near future, we look forward to meeting you in the natural world.

- |                            |                    |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| • Deborah Bray             | • Judith Kyte      | • Anne Laurie      |
| • Carol Drury & Bill Power | • Paul Stephenson  | • Mitchell Milgram |
| • Cathy Backmeyer          | • Lorraine Kennedy | • Emily Moore      |
| • Emily Browne             |                    | • Eva Sanders      |

**Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club** [www.okanagannature.org](http://www.okanagannature.org)  
**P.O. Box 21128, RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 9N8**  
 Email [info@okanagannature.org](mailto:info@okanagannature.org) for any general enquiry

**EXECUTIVE - 2022-23**

President	Douglas Graham	<a href="mailto:president@okanagannature.org">president@okanagannature.org</a>
Vice-president	Vacant	
Secretary	Linda Walker	<a href="mailto:secretary@okanagannature.org">secretary@okanagannature.org</a>
Treasurer	Margaret Ramsay	<a href="mailto:treasurer@okanagannature.org">treasurer@okanagannature.org</a>
Past President	Rick Gee	<a href="mailto:pastpresident@okanagannature.org">pastpresident@okanagannature.org</a>

**Directors - 2022-2023**

BC Nature	Fran Fisher	<a href="mailto:bcnature@okanagannature.org">bcnature@okanagannature.org</a>
Birding	Mike Howard	<a href="mailto:birding@okanagannature.org">birding@okanagannature.org</a>
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Programs	Vacant	

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Hosts	Bev Thomas & Liz Daley	<a href="mailto:cymru@telus.net">cymru@telus.net</a> & <a href="mailto:adaley200@gmail.com">adaley200@gmail.com</a>
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Website: <a href="http://www.okanagannature.org">www.okanagannature.org</a>	Rick Gee	<a href="mailto:admin@okanagannature.org">admin@okanagannature.org</a>
NatureKids Kelowna	Kate Kutzner	<a href="mailto:kelowna@naturekidsbc.ca">kelowna@naturekidsbc.ca</a>

**MONTHLY MEETINGS:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, September to June, 7:00 p.m. at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna.
- NOTE: **MEETINGS ARE CURRENTLY BY ZOOM ONLY!**
- Visitors are welcome.
- Hosts (when meeting in person): Bev Thomas & Liz Daley. Please bring your own cup.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Karen Pedersen [membership@okanagannature.org](mailto:membership@okanagannature.org)

- **ANNUAL DUES:** Single \$35, Family \$47, Students \$14. Includes the quarterly newsletter. (Additional \$10 annual charge for newsletters sent by mail).
- **MEMBERSHIP FORM AND WAIVER:** Available on the CONC website: [www.okanagannature.org](http://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.
- **DUES:** Dues may also be paid by e-transfer to [membership@okanagannature.org](mailto:membership@okanagannature.org). Please note your full name(s) in the field for providing additional information.
- **HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERS:** Hugh Westheuser, Pat Westheuser, Eileen Dillabough, Cec Dillabough, Arthur Hughes-Games (deceased), Brenda Thomson (deceased), Muriel Westwood (deceased), Harry Almond (deceased)

**NEWSLETTER:** Editors - Lisa Rae & Vivian Manning

- Next deadline date for submissions is May 15, 2022
- Send submissions to [editor@okanagannature.org](mailto:editor@okanagannature.org)
- Email distribution: Karen Pedersen [membership@okanagannature.org](mailto:membership@okanagannature.org)

**ACTIVITIES: All activities are seasonal.** If in doubt, check with the activity contact, or contact any of the Executive.

**BIRDING: contact: [birding@okanagannature.org](mailto:birding@okanagannature.org)**

- **Monday Birding:** meet at 8:00 a.m. April-June, September and October at the Apple Bowl\*
- **Thursday birding:** meet 8:00 a.m. (April-Sept.) or 8:45 a.m. (Oct-March) at the Apple Bowl\*
- **Saturday Birding:** 2nd Saturday of month – **STARTING UP MARCH 12, 2022** - meet 7:30 a.m. (April-Sept) or 8:45a.m. (Oct-March) at the Apple Bowl\*

**TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**

**BOTANY: contact: [botany@okanagannature.org](mailto:botany@okanagannature.org)**

- **Friday Botany** trips meet at 9:15 a.m. (departure 9:30 am) at the Apple Bowl\* (Spring to Fall)

**HIKES: All hikers meet at the Apple Bowl\* (Bring a lunch)**

- **Tuesday: Ramblers** contact Robert Lake: (250) 215-3211
- **Wednesday: Sole Survivors** contact Sherrell Davidson (250) 864-4007 & Gerda Watts (250) 862-1925
- **Thursday: Ramblers Plus** contact Robert Lake (250) 215-3211

\*Apple Bowl: 1555 Burtch Road - Apple Bowl parking lot, corner of Burtch and Bernard

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

### OKANAGAN MOUNTAIN PARK BIRD & CRITTER COUNT, JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>

BY LES GYUG

This is an early reminder that the Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park Bird & Critter Count will be held this year on (or about) Saturday June 4, 2022. The count takes place on more than one day so that more can participate. The actual counting is done on a number of separate trails or routes, with anywhere from 10-15 routes done per year. The count has been held annually on the last weekend in May or first weekend in June (almost) every year since 1993, sponsored by our club, and with assistance from others at the south (Naramata) end of the park.

All members, guests and others are welcome, keeping in mind that we'll still meet (or exceed) whatever COVID public health measures are in place at the time. I will be contacting the route leaders from past years as we get closer to count date, but feel free to contact me if you'd like to participate. **Les Gyug, Phone (250) 769-5907**

### JOHNS FAMILY NATURE CONSERVANCY SURVEY, MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> BY EVE WEGSCHEIDLER & MIKE HOWARD

Since 2014, members of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club have conducted an annual survey of the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park for the property trustees, the Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT). This



survey covers avifauna, mammals and reptiles similar to the Critter Count that is carried out for the adjacent Okanagan Mountain Park. Hugh Westheuser, who has been instrumental in the facilitation of this project, has stepped down and this year COLT representative Eve Wegscheidler will assist Mike Howard with coordinating the event.

The results of the overall survey provide the trustee with a permanent record of species and a snapshot indication of the changes occurring in the park year over year. This in turn assists COLT and the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) in their plans for the continued management of the property under their care. The data is also shared with Les Gyug for integration into the Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park survey. In 2021 participants were invited to capture pictures of flowering plants and any unusual insects

encountered during the survey. These photographs were subsequently submitted to iNaturalist as a record of species occurrences on the Johns Family property.

The 2022 survey will cover a larger geographic area of the ecological section of the Johns Family property requiring six or seven teams with an interest in the natural environment. The survey is scheduled for Saturday May 14th from 8am until approximately noon and will follow the CONC group activity protocols. The organisers hope that holding the survey on a weekend will allow additional CONC members to participate.

If you would like to participate in the 2022 survey, please notify **Mike Howard** at [mikehoward@shaw.ca](mailto:mikehoward@shaw.ca) indicating your area of interest (avifauna, mammals, reptiles, insects or plants).

### BC NATURE AGM AND CONFERENCE: MAY 26 - 28, 2022

BY FRAN FISHER

This coming spring CONC is hosting the Annual General Meeting of BC Nature, which will be located at the University of BC, Central Okanagan campus. Plans for the conference are almost complete. We wish to thank CONC members and our community members who have come forward to help with outings and presentations. In the new year we will finalize how many more volunteers are required, and send out a call for support as needed.

The theme for this conference is "Nature in Your Backyard", and will include presentations on National Parks, Ecological Reserves, Naturalizing Your Backyard and Okanagan Birding to name but a few topics. A full schedule of events will be published in the BC Nature Winter magazine. The conference is also a celebration of CONC's 60th Birthday, so of course there will be cake!!

Having attended many of these conferences personally, I know that the level of knowledge and quality of ideas that is shared with our like-minded members is invaluable, and especially so now during these climate changing times.



I am pleased to let all of you know our club will again participate in the Regional Parks Adopt-a-Stream Spring Clean-up. This has been a tradition for our club. Due to Covid we have not taken part for 2 years.

**Date:** Friday, April 22/22

**Locations:** Mindy Tran Memorial area (intersection of Springfield & Ziprick)  
Maude Roxby Wetlands (the end of Francis Ave.)

**Time:** Meet at the Mindy Tran parking lot at 9:30 a.m.

- 1 ½ hours is spent at Mindy Tran
- For those who can spare another hour we will head over to Maude Roxby

**Supplies:** Parks will provide gloves, pick-up sticks

- Bringing your own garden gloves may work for you.
- To avoid using the plastic black bags provided I have had burlap bags donated

It is not necessary to sign-up ahead of time; we just need 12-14 volunteers to arrive. We will work in pairs; each pair given a designated area. I will ask Rick to send out this notice a week before as a reminder. If you have any questions, please give me a call at **250-861-4500** (landline).

## CONC OUTING ACTIVITIES UPDATE

BY VIVIAN MANNING



CONC activities continue to take place, with **Botany outings starting up, on Fridays, soon!** Activity details and organizer contact information can be found on the CONC website calendar: [www.okanagannature.org](http://www.okanagannature.org) and on the 2nd page of this newsletter.

**Birding** outings continue with three formats: the Monday group starts at one location and walks a predetermined route for a few hours, while the Thursday group travels to several sites by way of carpooling. The Saturday group travels on day-long excursions that allow our member birders to explore areas between Osoyoos and Salmon Arm.

Mike Howard is the incoming Birding Director and may be contacted for additional details: [birding@okanagannature.org](mailto:birding@okanagannature.org).

- For details of past birding outings, please see [Margaret's birding report below!](#)

**Hiking (and snowshoeing (Sole Survivors and Ramblers))** continues enthusiastically (although snowshoeing is quickly coming to an end) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, with forays to Rose Valley, UBCO and Carney's Pond, Kuiper area, Sutherland Hills and Crawford Bellevue, among many other locations.



On November 8, 20 birders broke into two groups in Sutherland Hills Park. Fifteen species were identified in total; birds of the day were two **Great Horned Owls** in a willow tree and four **American Dippers** in Mission Creek. On November 11, a group of 10 birders headed up MacKenzie Road. The lower areas gave us a **Northern Shrike**, a **Townsend's Solitaire** and a **Coopers Hawk**. We checked Swainson Road, but no birds were seen, likely due to a loud machine which was preparing ground for a new vineyard. Treetop Road was woodpecker territory with two **Downy Woodpeckers** and four **Red-shafted Flickers**. We pulled up a side road just before 11:00 AM to form a circle for two minutes of silence.

The Monday walk on November 15 was broken into two segments: In the morning, 15 birders visited Munson Pond and observed 28 species which included a **Pied-billed Grebe**, a **Belted Kingfisher**, a **Downy Woodpecker** and a **White-crowned Sparrow**. The star of the day was a **Blue-grey Gnatcatcher**. Of note was the high number of **Mallards**: approximately 370. At 03:00 PM, a group met at Woodhaven Park to walk the perimeter trail. A **Brown Creeper** was heard before the weather quickly turned to hail and lightning, so the group called it a day. On November 18 the group headed up Highway 33. Our first stop was at Gopher Creek Linear Park (a new spot for me), where we found 8 species. After this, we went to Joe Riche Road and spotted a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, a **Rough-legged Hawk** and a **Varied Thrush**. The next stop was Pyman Road, where we observed the treat of the day, **Golden Eagles** feeding on a deer carcass. Other birds seen in this area included a **Rough-legged Hawk**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, a **Bald Eagle** and an **American Kestrel**. The day was capped off with a flock of approximately 200 **Bohemian Waxwings** who flew overhead. On November 23, 17 birders walked the icy trails near Hollywood Road. The difficult walk was worth it, as we observed 27 species in total, including a **Green-winged Teal**, a **Hooded Merganser**, a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and a **Northern Shrike**.

On Thursday November 26, we followed a lakeshore route. At Mud Bay we observed many gulls on the sandbar, although the Lesser Black-backed Gull reported earlier was not present. Also seen at this time were **Tundra Swans**,



Western Bluebird - credit Bruce Kennedy

**Trumpeter Swans** and a probable **Cackling Goose**. At Rotary Beach we observed the **Common Goldeneye** and **Barrow's Goldeneye**. The next stop was at Fascieux Creek, where we had excellent views of **Wood Ducks** in fresh plumage. On Monday November 29 the walking group visited the Capital News Center followed by a walk along the Mission Creek Greenway Park up to Casorso Road. Two **Great Horned Owls**, a **Brown Creeper** and a **Pileated Woodpecker** were among the birds seen. On December 2 the Thursday group travelled the shoreline areas of West Kelowna. The weather was very warm on this last day of the atmospheric river, with a high of 14 degrees Celsius at noon. Our stop at Bear Creek included a **Brown Creeper** and a **Red-tailed Hawk**. At Green Bay we observed a **Coot**, **Ring-necked Ducks**, **Pied-billed Grebes** and **Gadwall**. The walking trail at this spot was lively with **Dark-eyed Junco** and **Pygmy Nuthatch**. December 9, we headed south on Lakeshore Road. Our first stop was Bluebird Beach Park, where **Horned Grebe** and **Pygmy Nuthatch** were observed. Near Eldorado we observed a **Common Loon** and a flock of

**Bohemian Waxwings**. We then visited the mouth of Bellevue Creek, which was another new trail for me. We followed Lakeshore Road south and observed **Bald Eagles**.

On January 6 a fresh heavy snow resulted in only two people arriving for the outing, so it was cancelled. By January 13, temperatures were above freezing and I led the group. Our first stop was KLO Bridge, where an active **American Dipper** was observed working the creek, while a **Belted Kingfisher** perched above us. **Red-winged Blackbirds** sang along Spiers Road. We observed several species along Hall Road, including **White-throated Sparrow**, **Varied Thrush**, **Bohemian Waxwings** and a flock of **American Robins**. This group of robins included a leucistic individual. In total 28 species were observed by 11 birders. On January 20 we woke to fresh snow, with rain falling. Even so, 14 birders showed up to travel to the westside of the lake. At the West Kelowna Yacht Club we observed **Hooded Merganser** and **Goldfinch**. We then walked through the Gellatly Nut Farm Regional Park to the docks near The Cove Lakeside Resort. Here we found the **Double-crested Cormorant** that had been reported, as well as **Common Goldeneye**. The little park just south of the yacht club had a family of **Trumpeter Swans** - 2 adults and 5 young. Two adult **Bald Eagles** were



Pileated Woodpecker – credit Ian Walker



Bohemian Waxwing – credit Bruce Kennedy





Double-crested Cormorant – credit Bruce Kennedy

perched on lamp posts at the docks. We checked the old dock and found **Scaup** and **Coots**. On January 27, we had a turnout of 14 birders. The day started well with a flock of **Bohemian Waxwings** who flew over the parking lot. Our first stop was Sutherland Bay, where the birds observed included an adult **Bald Eagle**, **Common Mergansers**, **Pied-billed Grebe** and **Bufflehead**. At Rotary Marsh we observed a large flock of **American Goldfinch**, **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Horned Grebe**, **Red-necked Grebe** and the bird of the day, a **Western Bluebird**. **Wood Duck** were seen at Fascieux Creek.

A very unusual visitor to North America has been recorded; a Steller's sea eagle. This bird is usually seen in Eastern Russian, and, rarely, in Alaska. It was observed in Texas last spring, then was seen on the Canadian east coast, including Quebec, then New Brunswick followed by Nova Scotia. This bird is larger than a Bald Eagle, with white shoulders and tail, and an orange bill. The wing span is two- and one-half meters with a weight of ten kilograms. It is classified as a vulnerable species.

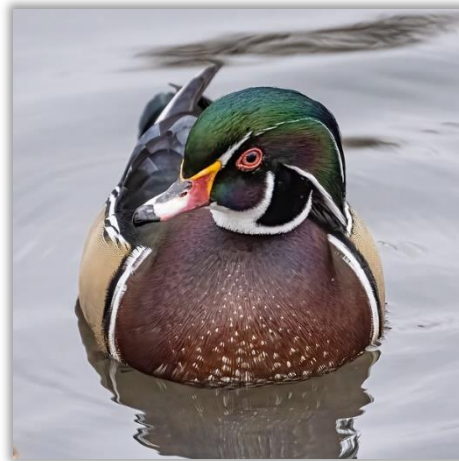
Another unusual visitor to an eastern American city was a Snowy Owl that was perched on the monuments of Washington D.C. This sighting was reported on the television news, and included an interview with the Swiss ambassador who was thrilled with this addition to his life birding list.

Another name change has been made: the Mew Gull is now the Short-billed Gull.

An audio recording of endangered birds is a chart topper in Australia, with proceeds going to a variety of conservation projects. More than 30 years were required in the recording and compilation of this album of bird songs.



American Three-toed Woodpecker – credit Ian Walker



Wood Duck – credit Bruce Kennedy



Varied Thrush – credit Bruce Kennedy



Chestnut-backed Chickadee - credit Ian Walker



Black-capped Chickadee – credit Bruce Kennedy



Robin (winter plumage)– credit Bruce Kennedy

Rare bird records from the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) are reported through various sources such as eBird and as compiled by Chris Charlesworth on the BC Rare Bird Alert. This note covers the 2021-2022 winter period from 16 November 2021 to 25 February 2022.

Overall, it was a pretty quiet period on the rarity side. An exceptionally prolonged cold period in mid-December with temperatures down to the -20's might have limited over-wintering; e.g., Anna's Hummingbirds were widely reported in November and early December with none after 27 Dec.

Various irruptive seed-eating finches (crossbills, grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, some of the finches) seemed to me to be uncommon this winter, particularly compared to the winter of 2020-2021 when we were knee-deep in siskins and other irruptive species were regularly noted. Finch irruptions are complex and result when birds are "pushed" out of normal wintering areas due to low seed availability and when there is a "pull" into other areas with good food availability. In 2020-2021 (Young, et al., 2021, "Summary of the Winter 2020-2021 North American Finch Irruption", *North American Birds*), there was a generalized failure of trees to set seed across much of the boreal forest, resulting in irruptions southward, particularly in eastern North America and particularly of Evening Grosbeaks (a "generational irruption", the most spectacular in several decades). It's too early to report definitive continent-wide trends for this winter but the 2021-2022 finch forecast (<http://tinyurl.com/WFF21-22>) did not predict a strongly irruptive year, at least in the east, and noted that droughts and fires across western North America certainly will have had a negative impact on food sources.

A **Cackling Goose** of the Pacific race *minima* was at Munson Pond 1-2 Dec. (David Bell) and one was again seen on 18 Dec. by Douglas Graham and Rick Durand during the Christmas Bird Count (see photo). Most Cackling Goose in our area are of the larger *taverneri*; Pacific race *minima* birds are primarily seen along the coast and are rare inland. Note the very small size, very small bill, dark chest, and white collar almost lacking. An **Eared Grebe** was seen by Chris Charlesworth 6-7 Dec. at the Yacht Club.



Canada Goose and Cackling Goose – credit Douglas Graham

The previously reported **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continued until 21 Nov. at Maude-Roxby. An apparent Glaucous-winged Gull x Glaucous Gull hybrid ("**Seward Gull**") was reported by David Bell on 28 Nov. at Maude-Roxby and seen by other observers through to 13 Dec.; this hybrid is probably rare away from the coast, but there aren't many observers expert enough to identify one! David Bell also reported an **Iceland Gull (*kumlien*)** 13 Dec. at Maude-Roxby (and that form seen again periodically through to end of the period covered).

An immature **Double-crested Cormorant** was notable in West Kelowna 16-21 Jan. (first found by Julia Proulx). See the photo accompanying [Margaret Bryan's Birding Report](#).

A **Barn Swallow** was photographed by Kalin Ocaña at mouth of Powers Creek on 18 Feb. 18. An amazing record but recall that this column noted a Feb. 5 record last year, from the exact same area. A most unusual leucistic **American Robin** was seen on a CONC outing on 13 Jan. at Sutherland Hills (see photo). Interestingly, the same bird was reported to Douglas by a non-birder on 13 Dec. from near the Kelowna General Hospital.



Leucistic Robin – credit Bruce Kennedy

The fall's sensational **Blue-grey Gnatcatcher** continued at Munson Pond, with the last known sighting on 22 Nov. (first seen 4 Nov. so total duration of stay was 18 days).

A rare **Hoary Redpoll** was photographed 5 Feb. by Kalin Ocaña at Tsinstikeptum Woods. Others were reported during the period but unfortunately without photographs.

Kalin Ocaña had a **Savannah Sparrow** 12 Dec. at Robert Lake, very late for this area. The winter period also saw the usual scattering of records of Swamp Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Harris's Sparrow. Mike Howard photographed an early **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on 18 Feb. along Mission Creek.

A few notable LATE records include:

- 17 Nov.: Common Yellowthroat (Huw Williams)
- 19 Nov.: Say's Phoebe (Kalvin Chan)
- 2 Dec.: Wilson's Warbler (David Bell)

A notable EARLY record is a February 12 sighting of a Say's Phoebe (Chris Charlesworth)

The 2021 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) represented the 122<sup>nd</sup> count held across North America.

The origins of this significant and well-established event are surprising. Prior to the turn of the century, the Christmas 'Side Hunt' was a seasonal tradition in which hunters organized into teams, and went afield in a competition aimed at hunting the greatest number of birds. At this time, conservation was a burgeoning science, and there was a growing awareness and concern around declining bird populations. An ornithologist and early member of the Audubon society, Frank M. Chapman, proposed a new holiday tradition for Christmas Day 1900 – a 'Christmas Bird Census' to replace the Side Hunt, creating a new activity that would count birds instead of hunting them. In this inaugural year, 27 bird enthusiasts counted 90 species in northeastern North America. By contrast, in the Christmas Bird Count of 2021, 641 counts were completed, with a total of 12,841,557 birds overall.

Data collected by CBC's provides a wealth of information to researchers on the early winter bird populations across North America. A bibliography of the work done by ornithologists and conservationists, as enabled by the CBC, can be found at [audubon.org](http://audubon.org) Christmas Bird Count Bibliography.

Many members of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club participate in count circles of four main regions: Lake Country, Big White, Kelowna and Peachland, and so these results are summarized below. Additional details of the CBC can be found at [netapp.audubon.org](http://netapp.audubon.org).

## Lake Country

The Lake Country CBC was held on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The compiler and manager was **Les Gyug**; his report is provided below:

*Weather was agreeable, with a low temperature of -9C at the highest elevation on Beaver Lake Road, and a comfortable range of 0C – 4C elsewhere. The day was partially sunny, with a stiff north breeze arising in the early afternoon. 27 people in 11 teams covered 36.6 party-hours by car (389 km) and 36.2 party-hours by walking (69 km).*

*8541 birds were counted of 81 species, which is below the longer-term average of 83.9 species, but well above the lowest ever (74 species in 2019). One extra species (American Kestrel) was tallied during count week but not on count day, for a grand total of 82 species. The most abundant species were American Coots (1163), followed by European Starlings (955), Bohemian Waxwings (940), Canada Goose (895) and California Quail (828). Only two species, Northern Flicker and Song Sparrow, were seen by every party, and four other species, Canada Goose, California Quail, Bald Eagle and Dark-eyed Junco, were seen by 10 of the 11 parties.*

*Unique sightings for this year included:*

- **Area 1 North** – Western Bluebird and Brewer's Blackbird
- **Area 2A** – White-winged Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak
- **Area 2B** – Wild Turkey (47!) and Ring-billed Gull
- **Area 3** – California Gull
- **Area 5A** – Great Horned Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, White-breasted Nuthatch, White-throated Sparrow
- **Area 5B** – American Dipper
- **Area 6** – Wood Duck, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Canada Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Varied Thrush, **\*Spruce Grouse**
- **Area 7** – Trumpeter Swan, American Widgeon
- **Feeder Count** – Anna's Hummingbird

***\*Spruce Grouse** is a new species for the Lake Country count. The upper Beaver Lake Road area is Spruce Grouse habitat, and they are easy enough to find in the spring, but winter access is difficult. Since Ruffed Grouse and Dusky Grouse also live in the same habitat, 'Grouse sp.' is the best that has been managed in the past. Congratulations to team Mike Howard and Nathan Earley for a confirmed Spruce Grouse sighting.*



Spruce Grouse, Photo by musubk CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Further details of this CBC can be found at: [netapp.audubon.org](http://netapp.audubon.org). (select 'Current Year – results by count', then in the search fields for the count circles choose: Canada, British Columbia, Lake Country)



## **Big White**

The Big White CBC was held on December 16; the compiler and manager was **Chris Charlesworth**

A heavy snowfall, cloudy skies and -1.0C to -11.0C temperatures were reported. Nine observers traversed the area in 20.5 hours. The total number of species observed was 18.

Single species observations included: Bald Eagle, Merlin, and Pacific Wren. The most abundant species were: Common Raven (129), American Crow (100), and Mountain Chickadee (65).

Further details of this CBC can be found at: [netapp.audubon.org](http://netapp.audubon.org) . (select 'Current Year – results by count', then in the search fields for the count circles choose: Canada, British Columbia, Big White.)



Mountain Chickadee, Photo courtesy Bruce Kennedy

## **Kelowna**

The compiler and manager of the Kelowna CBC was **Chris Charlesworth**; his report is provided below:

*The total number of species observed was: 104; Total individual birds: 28,479; Number of observers in field: 59; Feeder-watchers: 11; Maximum snow depth: 30 cm; Minimum snow depth: 5 cm; Maximum temperature: -1 degrees Celsius; Minimum temperature: -8 degrees Celsius.*



"Trumpeter Swan". [Online]. Natural History Notebooks. Canadian Museum of Nature.

*The 2021 Kelowna Christmas Bird Count was held on December 18, and it was a snowy day. Overall, the species total of 104 is a little below our 5-year average of 108 species. Our 5-year average has gone up considerably over the past decade or so, probably due to more birders joining the count. We were lucky to hold our count just before a strong cold front arrived in southern BC on Christmas day. Bird counts held after this date recorded fewer species than normal. Overall, our count did not produce any real rarities this year, other than a couple of nice birds like a Hermit Thrush, found by Michelle Hamilton and team in Sutherland Hills Park, and a Swamp Sparrow found on Westside Road by Kalin Ocana. A few species were seen in record numbers, including Trumpeter Swan with 36 counted, Hooded Merganser with 69 tallied, Virginia Rail 5, and Anna's Hummingbird 6. Unfortunately, once the cold front hit, all the*

*Anna's Hummingbirds disappeared, and most likely perished. A total of 86 Western Bluebirds was also a new count high. Other than that, nothing was overly spectacular on this year's CBC. Raptor numbers were lower overall, though we did tally an impressive 12 Great Horned Owls. Tracy Allard had a Short-eared Owl at Robert Lake at dusk, and this is not a species we get too often on our count. Though not seen on count day, Kalin Ocana had a Northern Saw-whet Owl for Count Week (3 days prior and 3 days after the count day). The march of Eurasian Collared-Doves into the Central Okanagan appears to have stalled. For a few years we were tallying new record high counts each year. This year's number of 181 seems to reflect what some birders have been telling me, that Eurasian Collared-Dove numbers have declined slightly since their peak. Other low counts included just 81 Rock Pigeons, where we usually tally between 400-700. Pygmy Nuthatches, at 81, is the lowest count I can remember, and we missed White-breasted Nuthatch altogether. Winter finch numbers were low with just one Common Redpoll reported and a handful of siskins. We missed Evening Grosbeak and Pine Grosbeak on the count altogether.*

*Thanks to everyone who helped on the count this year and I really hope that perhaps by the 2022 CBC, we will be able to hold the post-count gathering once again!*

Further details of this CBC can be found at: [netapp.audubon.org](http://netapp.audubon.org) . (select 'Current Year – results by count', then in the search fields for the count circles choose: Canada, British Columbia, Kelowna.)

## Peachland

The compiler and manager of the Peachland CBC was **Matthias Bieber**; his report is provided below:



Pine Grosbeak, Photo courtesy of Matthias Bieber

*The annual Peachland Christmas Bird Count took place on December 29 this year, on a very chilly day amidst a record-breaking cold snap in the Okanagan. Icy temperatures as cold as -29.5 °C (at higher elevations) started the day, increasing up to -13 °C by the end of the day for those lucky to be counting in the valley bottom. Thankfully, winds were light for most of the day and bright sunshine in the morning helped make the cold more tolerable. More snow than in recent memory also made access challenging in some areas, with depth ranging from about 15 cm at the valley bottom to 75 cm at the highest points within the count circle.*

*A total of 20 birders traversed the seven areas of the count circle, tallying 65 km in 48.2 hours of walking, and 236.2 km by vehicle over almost 27 hours. The amount of birding on foot was a bit lower than during recent counts, as participants spent more time in their cars this year, understandably so. Despite the cold, which seemed to negatively impact bird activity in many*

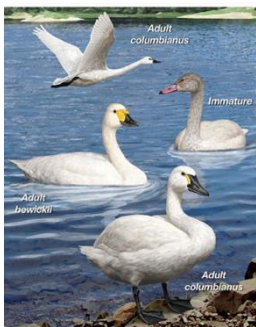
*areas, as a group we recorded 68 species and 4228 individual birds, which is actually above average on both fronts. For reference, the overall count average is 65 species and 3332 individuals; however, these totals are dependent on effort and the number of observers and hours was much lower during the first five years of the count.*

*Two new species for the count were detected: a lone Trumpeter Swan and a Bewick's Wren, both found by Chris Charlesworth's team. The overall species total in the count's nine-year history now stands at 110. Other highlights included 2 Northern Pygmy Owls, 4 Canyon Wrens (both Michelle Hamilton and company, the only owls of the count), Northern Goshawk (Alex Bodden), 2 Canada Jays (Tracy Allard) and a White-throated Sparrow (Chris Charlesworth). Several normally recorded species were missed this year, including Cooper's Hawk, Merlin, American Crow, Western Bluebird, Varied Thrush, Evening Grosbeak and gulls in general.*

Further details of this CBC can be found at: [netapp.audubon.org](http://netapp.audubon.org) . (select 'Current Year – results by count', then in the search fields for the count circles choose: Canada, British Columbia, Peachland.)

## 2022 SWAN AND EAGLE COUNT

BY MIKE HOWARD



Tundra Swan – Snap shot from iBird Pro

January 16, 2022 marked the 49<sup>th</sup> annual Interior British Columbia Swan and Eagle count. The total survey area covers the Southern Interior, Central BC, West Kootenay and the Cariboo – Chilcotin. Approximately 60 members and friends of naturalist clubs affiliated with the Federation of BC Naturalists traditionally survey the drainages of the Thompson, Shuswap, Okanagan, Nicola, Crooked and Nechako Rivers.

Our region was broken down into eight survey areas starting from Lake Country and Fintry to the north, all the way down to Peachland and the end of Lakeshore Drive in the south. Survey of the eight areas was led by Michael Force, Gwynneth Wilson with Pam Laing, Joyce Fraser, Margaret Bryan, Rick Gee, Margaret and John Ramsay, Elke Fischer, and Les Gyug. Eight additional volunteers assisted in the count.

The 2022 Swan count for our region was disappointing. A total of 4 adult Trumpeter Swans and 3 adult Tundra swans were observed. No juvenile swans were seen. The 2022 results are approximately 10% of the number of individuals observed in 2021. The Bald Eagle results (31 adults and 13 immature individuals) are similar to the previous year. There has not been any observations of Golden Eagles on the count day since 2020.

Although we experienced gusty and moderate winds during the count today, it was otherwise a mild weather day with ample visibility for this time of the year. It is possible that the cold spell we experienced during December and early January (into the -20C range), which resulted in a number of the bays such Mud Bay and Green Bay being frozen over, limiting the swans access to these feeding locations, and so drove them out of the Kelowna Study Area portion of Okanagan Lake.

Rick Howie, is the BC Interior Swan and Eagle Count Coordinator. Rick issues annual reports which are given in the links below:

- [BC INTERIOR EAGLE COUNT REPORT – 2022](#)
- [BC INTERIOR SWAN COUNT REPORT - 2022](#)



Trumpeter Swan – Snap shot from iBird Pro



A small haul of 'burn' Morels

I like to collect wild mushrooms and have been doing so for close to 45 years. My focus is on taxonomy, identifying the genus and species, and recording the multitudes that occur throughout interior BC. If on occasion I chance upon a prime fruiting of some choice edibles, such as oyster mushrooms or white chanterelles, I'll bring them home to eat. However, when it comes to morels, I have a different perspective.

There is some confusion as to the number of morel species. In the recent past (30 years or so ago) most field guides would direct you to 'blacks' (*Morchella elata*), 'blonds' (*Morchella esculenta*) or 'greys' (*Morchella tomentosa*). However, now the whole mycological world is somewhat in flux as mushroom species are renamed and reclassified with the new knowledge gained by DNA sequencing. Presently, many field guides list a dozen or more species, many of which are difficult to separate macroscopically. Regardless, all of the 'true' morels are edible. Morels are often classified as being either naturally occurring, that is, appearing in forests or gardens randomly each spring, or as 'burn' morels.

For years morels held no more importance to me than most other mushrooms. Then one day about 20 years ago, a friend suggested we pick morels following the McClure Lake wildfires northeast of Kamloops. It opened up a whole new world. Here along the back logging roads, we came across scattered encampments of mushroom pickers, some casual like ourselves while others were serious commercial pickers. There was a 'wild west' atmosphere to some of these encampments, reminiscent of historical mining boom towns complete with makeshift stores, restaurants, bars, and buying stations. Some buying stations could be as simple as a folding trestle table with scales and baskets for the morels. Others were more sophisticated with large tents, diesel powered fans and mobile drying racks. In keeping with the unregulated atmosphere, here everything was strictly cash.

My friend and I picked for an hour or two, then I hesitantly approached one of the buyers with my collection. The buyer looked at my haul. With a snort of disgust, he discarded some dirty or defective morels, flinging them aside. He then weighed the rest and paid me. I don't recall how much it was, perhaps \$40 or \$50, but I was very excited. Imagine, getting paid to do what I love doing.

Since then, I've been picking morels each spring. Morels occur naturally throughout the interior of BC, generally appearing in late April and for a few weeks till mid-June, depending upon the elevation. Morels are generally elusive. You can go looking for them and find none, or, if you know to look for habitats with popular and aspen trees and sandy well drained soil your chances are better. But the exception to these hard to find 'naturally occurring' morels are the burn morels that my friend and I picked.

For reasons not fully understood, the spring following a forest fire there can be a massive fruiting of morels. Perhaps it's the infusion of carbon into the soil. Or perhaps, like a flowering plant growing under stressful conditions and producing an extra vigorous floral display and seeds, the mycelial mass producing the morels fruits prolifically to enhance spore production. Whatever the reason, as long as the moisture, soil type and temperature conditions are right, large quantities of morels can be harvested.

My most memorable morel season was about 10 years ago, picking the Notch Hill fire site west of Salmon Arm. With a couple of enthusiastic coworkers, I was directed to a secret 'backdoor' to the fire site, an obscure and not easily accessible way in. Hiking in about a kilometer and avoiding the antagonistic chicken farmer along the way, we'd scrambled over the wall of debris bulldozed up to form the fire guard and immediately started finding and picking morels. Equipped with large backpacks containing pails, and a large bucket in each hand, we slowly worked our way up the mountainside. The morels would appear in clumps and 'runs', and not wanting to miss any we'd strategize, mapping out a route that would maximize efficiency. We'd work in a line, one person working high, one low, one in



between. The quiet and somber burnt forest would periodically echo with exclamations of excitement as we came across particularly large groups of morels. After a few hours we had 40-50 pounds each, as much as we could carry, and then we'd make our way back to the vehicles, dirty, sweaty, tired, but elated.

We returned to that site every few days for the following 5 or 6 weeks, each time having to hike deeper into the forest and higher up the mountainside to find fresh ground. As the season progressed different morel species appeared. By the end of June, the morels stopped fruiting.

Other than the very first time when I sold my morels freshly picked to a buyer, if I'm able to collect enough morels I'll dry them and sell them in the off season when the prices can be higher. Morels are easy to dry. Being hollow inside they dry quickly. Check them first for bugs and discard any that are infested. You may have to slice some open to make a proper determination. Simply lay them out on old window screens and dry them in the sun, or with a fan. As long as they are bone dry, they'll keep for years. When collecting keep them clean, slicing them off at the base and keeping dirt and debris out of the collection.



Drying a large haul of 'burn' morels on window screens

If you do plan to try eating morels remember that all wild mushrooms should be cooked beforehand. Is there anything poisonous that you might confuse with morels? Possibly. There are numerous fungi going under the title 'false morel', some appearing at the same time and location as the true morels. Fungi in the genus Gyromitra can confuse novice collectors, so until you have become familiar with the true morels, caution is advised.

Each summer I closely monitor and record local forest fires for the following spring's picking. I'll download fire perimeter maps off the BC Wildfire Site and try to gather information about the topography and access. Some sites are too difficult to access. Some are too high, in sparse alpine wilderness. Some are too dry and exposed, or the soil is too thin. Often, despite maps and GPS assistance the fire sites can be hard to find amongst the ever-changing logging spur roads. More than once I've travelled hours to get to a site, only to find few or no morels because the conditions were too poor. However, when the conditions line up, when the burn is not so hot that it kills the mycelium, when it's a light burn that has left some standing live trees and there's a patchily burned edge to work, then an exciting pick can be had.

There's the old saying that we have to be careful of what we wish for. Most summers as I watch the occurrence of fires I do so with anticipation of morel picking the following spring. However, last summer's devastating local fires, with all their accompanying smoke and disruption, gives me pause. I'll still hope for some burn morels, just not as extreme as we've recently experienced.

## MANY THANKS TO PROVISION DATA SYSTEMS!

The Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club would like to thank [Provision Data Systems](#) for their generosity in providing our web hosting and domain names at no cost to the club for 2021 and 2022.

*thank you*

## CENTRAL OKANAGAN BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY

BY MARGARET RAMSAY



The Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club has supported the [Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society](#) (COBSS) for several years. Students in their grade 12 graduating year at affiliated schools are eligible to apply for a COBSS award. These schools are as follows: Aberdeen Hall Preparatory School, Central Programs & Services, École de L'anse-au-Sable, eSchool 23, George Elliot Secondary School, Heritage Christian School, Immaculata Regional High School, Kelowna Christian School, Kelowna Secondary School, Mount

Boucherie Secondary School, Okanagan Christian School, Okanagan Mission Secondary School and Rutland Senior Secondary School.

From 2011 – 2015, \$1000 was awarded annually, and since 2016 to date, \$1500 has been awarded annually to a student taking studies in an Environmental Field, and who demonstrates financial need.



AGM

# **CONC 2022**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **~BY ZOOM~**

## **REPORTS & CONTESTS**

- [2022 AGM Meeting Minutes](#)
- [President's Message](#)
- [Finance Report](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Director's Membership Report](#)
- [Director's Programs Report](#)
- [Director's Botany Report](#)
- [Director's Birding Report](#)
- [Natural History Quiz Winners](#)
- [Photo Contest Winners](#)
- [BC Nature AGM and Conference](#)

1. Natural History Quiz (6:00 pm to 7:00 pm). Quiz photos rotated on the screen.
2. Meeting called to order by President, Douglas Graham at 7:03 pm. It was moved to elect Karen Pedersen as AGM Chair, approved unanimously.
3. Determination of quorum: Thirty-six members voted by email in advance of the meeting and their votes were compiled by Karen Pedersen, the Membership Director. There were 41 member attendees at the Zoom Meeting (35 computers connected to the Zoom session, of which 6 computers with two members). Six persons at the Zoom meeting had not previously sent in their ballots. All members participating in the AGM meeting were asked for each question to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each measure and thus the overall number of members who participated in the voting was 42. As the Bylaws require a quorum of 35 members, based on the current membership total, of 195, the quorum was obtained.
4. Approval of agenda as circulated in the agenda. Tallied votes for this ballot measure: > 42 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained. Carried.
5. Approval of the minutes from the previous AGM (9 Feb. 2021) as circulated with the agenda. Votes: > 42 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained. Carried.
6. Treasurer's Report by Margaret Ramsay (circulated with the agenda and published separately in the newsletter):
  - Margaret reviewed the 2021 Profit & Loss Budget Overview and the 2022 Proposed Budget
  - Past Treasurer Jag Goel approved her Finance Report as he found everything to be in good order
  - Margaret confirmed budget was based on 2022 membership of 195 members
  - Votes: >42 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained
  - The finance report was thus approved.
7. President's Report - Douglas Graham gave an overview of this past year. His full report appears separately in the newsletter.
8. Directors' Reports: The following directors presented brief verbal reports (their full written reports appear separately in the newsletter): BC Nature Director (Fran Fisher), Birding Director (Dave Palsat), Programs Director (Ian Walker), Secretary (Robbie Bower), and Membership Director (Karen Pedersen). The Botany Director was not present but had verbally communicated that due to the shut-down of excursions he had no report to present. Other than expressions of gratitude, no comments on the reports were made by the members.
9. Candidates for Executive positions: a report was received from the Nominating Committee (Glenda Newman, Kristi Jarret & Laura Weir), presented by Glenda Newman, on the process followed to solicit nominations. There was then one call for nominations from the Floor for positions on the Executive. No additional nominations were received.
10. Election of officers. The slate of nominees as circulated for the meeting was voted on. Votes: >42 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained. Therefore, the new Executive Committee is constituted as follows:
  - President: Douglas Graham
  - Past President: Rick Gee
  - Vice-President: Vacant
  - Secretary: Linda Walker
  - Treasurer: Margaret Ramsay
  - BC Nature Director: Fran Fisher
  - Birding Director: Mike Howard
  - Botany Director: Peter Courtney
  - Conservation Director: Mike Whitaker
  - Membership Director: Karen Pedersen
  - Outdoor Excursions Director: Vacant
  - Outreach and Communications Director: Marjorie Gonzalez
  - Programs Director: Vacant
11. New Business - No new business was raised.
12. Announcement of Photo Contest Winners. The full results of the photo contest are separately presented in the newsletter.
13. Answers were provided by Ian Walker for the Natural History Quiz. Winners will be announced at a future time.
14. Adjournment at 8:23 pm. Moved by Margaret Ramsay, seconded by Karen Pedersen, unanimously adopted.



It's hard to imagine that a year ago we were just going into complete lock-down, came out of it and started resuming our activities, only to again retreat as new restrictions came into place.

### **EXCURSIONS**

For most of 2021, excursions were cancelled due to COVID-related public health restrictions. We did start up excursions briefly in the fall of 2021, only to have them promptly shut-down again. However, as of December 2021, birding and hiking excursions were up and running more or less as normal. An important achievement during 2021 was to ensure that all excursion announcements come only from the CONC email account and all excursions are on our main calendar on the web page.

For birding, I would really like to thank Dave Palsat for his leadership. He has carried out this function for 5 years and is now retiring – so he can dedicate more time to birding, I presume! For hiking and snowshoeing, although we had no Outdoors Excursions Directors, the various leaders did a great job of organizing the outings. Thanks are extended to Sherrell, Conny, Robert, Rick, and others. Botany excursions did not take place in 2021 but Peter is looking forward to getting them going in 2022.

### **MEETINGS**

As he has done for nearly 10 years, Ian Walker brought in amazing speakers for our meetings this year. They are briefly summarized in his own report. Ian is stepping down as Programs Director and so I would like to extend thanks for his incredible work over the years. It will be difficult to replace him!

The meetings in 2021 were all held by Zoom. I know that has limited participation as not every member has wanted to go on-line for our meetings. We hope during 2022 to get back to in-person meetings but at the same time, maintain the possibility of participating by Zoom.

### **NEWSLETTER**

Most sincere thanks to Teresa Smith who for many years was our indefatigable Editor. It was a lot of work to solicit all the material and put together every 2 months an interesting newsletter. On the good news side, we are delighted to welcome Lisa Rae and Vivian Manning as our new editors. Publication frequency has been reduced to four per year, reducing the editorial workload and allowing for more content in each number. The new editors produced the Fall 2021 number and are off and running for a good 2022. The editors and I have noticed that our nice little newsletter has no name! Something to tackle this year?!

### **WEBSITE AND TECHNOLOGY**

The website of a club is its public face. Major changes made this year included the addition of a single calendar to the front page, that includes all CONC events. There were also many minor updates and improvements. During 2021, to respect privacy of individuals and to minimize phishing attacks, we suppressed the use of private email addresses on the website and in the newsletter and replaced them with new @okanagannature.org addresses.

Sincere thanks to Rick Gee (Past President) who as webmaster and tech guru takes care of all this work.

### **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (CC)**

I think the conservation focus of CONC is vital. Unfortunately, I would say the CC was not a big success in 2021. We had no Conservation Director to take the reins and we sputtered along with a few meetings. I thank Lisa Rae for her initiative on rodenticides, which still deserves our attention. Our conservation work is too important to let go, so I look forward to some kind of revival in 2022 of our conservation work. I'm delighted to see that we do have a new Conservation Director.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Considerable work is done behind the scenes by the Executive Committee to keep CONC up and running and I would say that this year, although we had fewer events to organize, we had lots of headaches and decisions to make to follow ever-changing public health orders. For me personally, as President of CONC, the best experience I had in 2021 was working with the EC. Every single person on the Committee was proactive, spoke their mind, and generally contributed to keeping us afloat in a collegial and cooperative way. I would really like to thank the outgoing EC: Robbie Bowers (Secretary, leaving us; Linda Walker having been Acting Secretary for the last couple of months), Peter Courtney (Botany Director), Fran Fisher (BC Nature Director), Rick Gee (Past President), Dave Palsat (Birding, also

leaving us), Karen Pedersen (Membership), Margaret Ramsay (Treasurer), and Ian Walker (Programs, also leaving us).

In addition, many individual volunteers step up for a myriad of tasks, although 2021 was certainly one of reduced activity. Thank you to all our volunteers, those who helped out in 2021, and for coming forward in 2022.

I'd be remiss to not mention Rick Gee's unrelenting efforts to not only get us out on the trails but also to keep us nailed to our computers for endless hours, clicking on the nuggets he provides us in "Places to go when you can't go places". What will happen once we can all go places?

### **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022**

Most of all, we hope for a gradual return to complete "normalcy" with excursions and in-person meetings and the many other kinds of activities we engage in such as inventories, clean-ups, etc.

Two really big deals are worth mentioning. The marquee event for the CONC in 2022 is our hosting of the BC Nature AGM at the end of May. It has really involved a lot of work in planning and preparing. As BC Nature Director, Fran Fisher has been leading the work on this and she deserves our thanks. Many others are also helping out with the organization, particularly Rick Gee. Please plan on registering, volunteering, and attending.

Also in 2022, the CONC is celebrating an amazing 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. The very first meeting of the CONC took place on 13 Feb. 1962. We will celebrate this milestone in due course.

For me personally, it's going to be very busy year, as I expect to be consulting about half-time on various international projects and I'm also trying to learn how to be retired. For CONC, other than just trying to keep our collective heads above water, there are a few things I hope to accomplish with the help of the EC and the membership. One I'll mention -- a revision of the Bylaws, which are getting quite long in the tooth. Hopefully, this will be on our AGM agenda in 2023. The EC will also finalize a Procedures Manual for the club, basically a "how to run the CONC manual" -- hopefully will be useful for current and future club administrators.

## **FINANCE REPORT JANUARY 9, 2022**

**BY MARGARET RAMSAY, TREASURER**

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The following reports were distributed to the membership prior to the AGM:

- [Profit & Loss Budget Performance for 2021](#)
- [Balance Sheet as at December 31, 2021](#)
- [Proposed Budget for 2022](#)

The membership is advised that a financial review was completed by our past Treasurer Jag Goel and is reported as accurate.

In summary our Total Asset balance is \$58,677.88. The Profit/Loss for 2020 was -\$50.58. Proposed budget for 2022 is balanced. The proposed budget was circulated by email for the AGM Zoom meeting held on Feb 8, 2022.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**BY ROBBIE BOWERS, OUTGOING SECRETARY**

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It was my pleasure to work with the CONC executive for the last two years as the secretary before Linda Walker stepped in as Acting Secretary, on January 27, 2022. In this position, I prepared the agenda for the Executive Committee (EC) meetings and also participated and recorded the minutes for the EC, General and AGM meetings. These documents are filed in CONC archives.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**BY KAREN PEDERSEN, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**

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As reported at the February 8, 2022 AGM:

- 2021/2022 – Current (Feb. 08, 2022) 88 single and 53 Family memberships = 195
- 2020/2021 – 91 single and 56 Family memberships = 203
- 2019/2020 – Pre-covid – 117 single and 73 Family memberships = 263, so we currently have approx. 30% fewer members.

A real positive is the number of "new" members this year (21), and very recently two UBCO students!

- **1960's:** In the early days there were no organized CONC activities. Through the 60's and 70's, weekend outings were mostly general interest hikes.
- **1970's:** A dedicated Spring birding outing on a Saturday was started.
- **1980's:** Saturday or Sunday day trips, including a picnic, were planned. Initially these were for the botanists and later the birders joined in. With time, some two-day weekend birding trips were organized. These included trips to the Douglas Lake area staying at the historic Quilchena hotel, a weekend in the Oliver area exploring McKinney Road (for the White-headed Woodpecker) and Mount Kobo sharing potluck meals, and overnight one weekend at Okanagan Lake Resort.
- **1990's:** Half day birding outings started on Thursdays which focussed on birding. Saturday birding outings began in order to accommodate a young local birding enthusiast, who was in school weekdays, as well as members who worked weekdays. Half day Thursdays and monthly Saturday trips were led by one or two leaders with the Saturday trips stopping for a period. Saturday trips were restarted in the late '90s by an enthusiastic leader. These trips ranged from Washington State to Salmon Arm. One could expect between 4 and 24 birders and 6 or 7 cars or more on a June trip.
- **2000's:** In the early 2000's, a Birder's Luncheon social event was held in January or February. In the early to mid 2000's, the Birders had a separate Birder's Night Meeting the fourth Monday of the month at the EECO Center featuring a speaker and a study of "the term of the month".
- **2010's** Leaders for Thursday Birding included all of the regulars who each who took a turn leading (about 3 times a year). Saturday Birding continued under the leadership of various senior members.
- **2017,** half-day walks on Mondays during Spring (April to June) and Fall (September to October) Migration were introduced which were extended through the winter in 2020.
- There are many social aspects of our birding excursions beyond birding. Thursday Birders celebrated milestone birthdays of our senior members at a local restaurant and enjoyed coffee and baking at a senior birder's home (overlooking her feeders and Okanagan Lake) on the last regular Thursday before Christmas Bird counts season every December.
- **2020's:** COVID resulted in all birding excursions being cancelled in March 2020. All (except Saturday Birding) were successfully restarted in October 2021.
- Over the years CONC Birders have supported the community through their involvement in annual bird counts of Okanagan Mountain Park, the Sweagle (Swan and Eagle) count and John's Family Property (which began before the Property began a designated park), the Big Day counts, Canadian Nightjar Survey as well as annual Christmas Bird Counts through the Okanagan Valley. Over time our Birders have seen many habitat changes in the valley, many destructive and irreversible due to urbanization, and others transitory due to Mother Nature. There have also been changes to local bird species - some new, some gone (some will recall travelling to Keremeos to seek out an Eurasian Collared-Dove - now they flourish in the Okanagan). Also technology has changed how birders learn and bird-sound identification apps, data bases on your phone to identify and call birds to replace field books, databases to report and access bird locations, and communication tools to allow many to learn quickly of the location of uncommon or rare birds in real time. Many of these technologies have only been developed and commercialized over the past few years.
- When I joined the Birders in 2014 after moving from Alberta, I didn't know a Lazuli Bunting from a Western Bluebird, never saw or heard of an American Avocet, had never observed any swallow other than a Barn Swallow and the only gull I could identify was a seagull! I was fortunate to learn much of what I know now from the more seasoned CONC birders in the field, watching and listening.
- The successful story of CONC Birding will continue as long as there are birds to watch, hear and study.
- Contributions from **Gwynneth Wilson, Pam Laing and Lesley Robertson.**



## PROGRAMS REPORT

BY IAN WALKER, OUTGOING PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

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Since January 2021, all regular monthly meetings have occurred over Zoom. Details of presentations, including bios of the speakers, have appeared in past newsletters; an overview of each meeting is provided below:

- **12 January 2021:** Green Wildlifing (or The Lockdown Naturalist)  
Speaker: Richard Gregson
- **9 February 2021:** Annual General Meeting  
Speaker: Rick Gee  
This meeting provided members with a review of CONC activities during the preceding year.
- **9 March 2021:** Flower Power - Experiences in Forensic Botany  
Speaker: Rolf Mathewes
- **13 April 2021:** Bats and White Nose Syndrome: Lessons from Atlantic Canada  
Speaker: Donald McAlpine
- **11 May 2021:** Why are there so many Bird Species in the Tropics?  
Speaker: Jason Weir
- **14 Sept 2021:** Botanical Travels in Yukon's Beringia (7:00 PM via Zoom)  
Speaker: Terry McIntosh
- **12 Oct 2021:** Member's Night
- **9 Nov 2021:** Community Science for Endangered Species (7:00 PM via Zoom)  
Speaker: John Reynolds
- **14 Dec 2021:** Driving by volcanoes: a Botanist's account of the great Millennial Bird Tour (2002)  
Speaker: Terry McIntosh
- **8 February 2022: Annual General Meeting**  
This meeting included a review of the year past, as well as a Photo Contest & Natural History Quiz. Photo Contest Winners will be published in detail in this Winter newsletter. In terms of the Natural History Quiz, Douglas Graham was the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner, and Linda Walker and Rick Gee took the second and third place spots, respectively. Only two points separated these three competitors. Thanks to all who participated.

## BOTANY REPORT

BY PETER COURTNEY, BOTANY DIRECTOR

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There were no official botany excursions due to Covid restrictions. The CONC is looking forward to relaunching both botany and mushroom outings.

## NATURAL HISTORY QUIZ WINNERS

BY IAN WALKER

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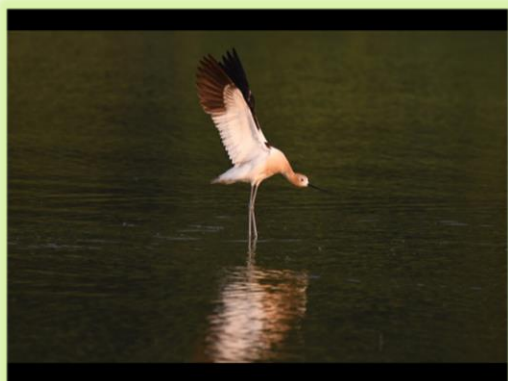
- **Douglas Graham** won this year's Natural History Quiz, run in conjunction with our AGM.
- **Linda Walker** and **Rick Gee** took the second and third place spots, respectively.

Only two points separated these three competitors. Thanks to all who participated.



### FLORA

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE – SHEILA MACKENZIE BROWN  
“MILKWEED’S SEEDS”  
(MUNSON POND)

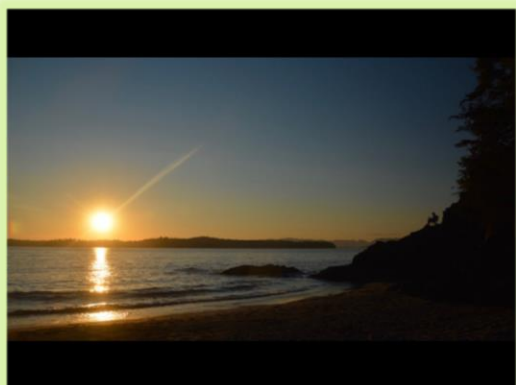


### FAUNA

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE – CATHERINE GREENOUGH  
“AVOCET STRETCHING AT SUNSET ”  
(AT ROBERT LAKE)

[Please click here to view full presentation including all 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winning photos, with descriptions](#)

Thanks to all who contributed and judged photos, making the Photo Contest a success!



### PEOPLE IN NATURE

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE – IAN WALKER  
“BAMFIELD SUNSET”  
(BAMFIELD, BC)



### LANDSCAPES

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE – VIVIAN MANNING  
“MY SPECIAL PLACE”  
(KLO CREEK)

The BC Nature Conference and AGM has consumed most of my time in the past year and a half. Programs, Bookings, Outings and Speakers are all on track and now we are just waiting for mandates from the BC Government as how and if we proceed. I believe things are looking up.

The Conference/AGM will be held at UBCO May 26-28, with the BC Nature Executive meeting on the 25th. Full details will be on the CONC Website starting March 1, 2022.

We are hosting speakers from the Federal Government, Quebec and many of our local experts on a wide range of topics. Our outings will highlight our beautiful areas, parks, geography, birds and plants. In April (or when we have the go ahead) we will put forth a call for volunteer positions needed to host club members from all across our province and perhaps more places, as we are open to all.

A big thank you to Rick Gee, Douglas Graham, Karen Pederson, and Annette Lachaine as the initial committee members.

Thank you for allowing me to represent our club and work with such a great group of caring people. You are all inspiring.



**Blossom by blossom the spring begins.**

*– Algernon Charles Swinburne*