

MARCH 1, 2023

# 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**, Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Dr., Kelowna

The next general meetings are scheduled for:

- Tuesday March 14, 2023 at 7:00 pm.
- Tuesday April 11, 2023 at 7:00 pm.
- Tuesday May 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

## CONC GENERAL MEETING: MARCH 14, 2023, 7:00 PM



Daphne Richard and Penny Gubbels of FOSS will speak to us about FOSS' mandate and activities.

The Friends of the South Slopes Society advocates for – and provides access to – connected, well-maintained recreation areas across the South slopes of Kelowna and the Kettle Valley Railway by constructing and maintaining public facilities, trails,

and signs; and working with government partners to protect and expand natural areas.

FOSS and CONC collaborate on some trail maintenance (Goode's Basin). We can also discuss if and how we could expand our partnership. Please join us to hear from a sister society.



## WELCOME NEW CONC MEMBERS!

Our club continues to grow and thrive!

We welcome our new members who made the choice to join us in late 2022 & early 2023. We look forward to meeting you in the natural world.

- Shauna Burnel
- Tobin Benedict
- Marlene Boehm
- Elizabeth Hargreaves
- Cal Francis

<b>Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club</b> <a href="http://www.okanagannature.org">www.okanagannature.org</a> <b>P.O. Box 21128, RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 9N8</b> <b>Email <a href="mailto:info@okanagannature.org">info@okanagannature.org</a> for any general enquiry</b>		
<b>EXECUTIVE - 2022-23</b>		
President	Douglas Graham	<a href="mailto:president@okanagannature.org">president@okanagannature.org</a>
Vice-president	Vacant	
Secretary	Vacant	
Treasurer	Roy Sinden	<a href="mailto:treasurer@okanagannature.org">treasurer@okanagannature.org</a>
Past President	Rick Gee	<a href="mailto:pastpresident@okanagannature.org">pastpresident@okanagannature.org</a>
<b>Directors - 2022-2023</b>		
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>
Botany	Peter Courtney	<a href="mailto:botany@okanagannature.org">botany@okanagannature.org</a>
Conservation	Vacant	
Outings	Robbie Bowers and Glenda Newman (co-directors)	<a href="mailto:outings@okanagannature.org">outings@okanagannature.org</a>
Membership	Karen Pedersen	<a href="mailto:membership@okanagannature.org">membership@okanagannature.org</a>
Outreach and Communications	Marjorie Gonzalez	<a href="mailto:outreach@okanagannature.org">outreach@okanagannature.org</a>
Programs	Vacant	
<b>Resource Persons</b>		
Ecological Reserves	Don Guild	<a href="mailto:guilds@telus.net">guilds@telus.net</a>
Host Committee	Bev Thomas	<a href="mailto:cymru@telus.net">cymru@telus.net</a>
Library	Jen Matthews	<a href="mailto:jematthews@yahoo.ca">jematthews@yahoo.ca</a>
Newsletter	Lisa Rae & Vivian Manning	<a href="mailto:editor@okanagannature.org">editor@okanagannature.org</a>
Website: <a href="http://www.okanagannature.org">www.okanagannature.org</a>	Rick Gee	<a href="mailto:admin@okanagannature.org">admin@okanagannature.org</a>
Nature Kids Kelowna	Marjorie Gonzalez	<a href="mailto:outreach@okanagannature.org">outreach@okanagannature.org</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 WILL NOW BE TAKING PLACE IN PERSON!**
- Visitors are welcome.
- Host: Bev Thomas. 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
- **MEMORIAL MEMBERS:** Arthur Hughes-Games, Brenda Thomson, Muriel Westwood, Harry Almond

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

- Next deadline date for submissions is May 15, 2023
- 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. We are also launching Weekend Explorers outings on the last weekend of each month – check the Calendar for details. Non-members are very welcome to join one or two CONC outings. All outing details are on our calendar at our website. 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 7:45 a.m. (April-Sept.) or 8:45 a.m. (Oct-March) at the Apple Bowl\*
- **Thursday Birding:** meet 7:45 a.m. (April-Sept.) or 8:45 a.m. (Oct-March) at the Apple Bowl\*
- **Saturday Birding:** Day-long bird trips take place on the second Saturday of the month March to November (with an August recess). Meet at the Apple Bowl at 7:30 am (April through September) or 8:30 am (October and November)

**TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**

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

- **Friday Botany** trips meet according to emailed details sent for each outing by Botany Director Peter Courtney (Spring to Fall)

#### **SNOWSHOEING & 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 3

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 3, 2023**. The count takes place on more than one day so that more can participate. The actual counting is done on several 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. The before-and-after 2003 fire data have made this a unique long-term study of bird population responses to wildfire.

All members, guests and others are welcome, whether you have birding, botany or any other experience or not. 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 because all are welcome. In particular, if somebody has a motorboat available, that would be very helpful to cover the park lakeshore, which takes about 4 hours total. There are usually a few unique bird species on the southern lakeshore that don't occur elsewhere in the park.

Les Gyug, Phone (250) 769-5907

### JOHNS FAMILY NATURE CONSERVANCY SURVEY, MAY 27

BY EVE WEGSCHEIDLER & MIKE HOWARD

Annually, members of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club conduct a survey of the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Park for the property trustees, the Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT). This survey covers avifauna, mammals, and reptiles similar to the Critter Count which is carried out for Okanagan Mountain Park. In 2022, participants were invited to also record flowering plants and any unusual insects encountered during the survey. This information was subsequently submitted to iNaturalist as a record of species occurrences on the Johns Family property. The results of the overall survey provide the trustee with a permanent record of species and a snapshot of the changes occurring in the park year each year. This in turn assists COLT in their plans for the continued management of the property under their care.

The 2023 survey will cover the larger geographic area of the ecological section of the Johns Family property and **will require six or seven teams** with an interest in the natural environment. The survey is **scheduled for Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup> from 8am until approximately noon** and will follow 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 2023 survey, please Mike Howard [birding@okanagannature.org](mailto:birding@okanagannature.org) indicating your area of interest (avifauna, mammals, reptiles, insects or plants) and you will be assigned to one of the study area teams.

## OUTING ACTIVITIES REPORTS:

### BIRDING REPORT

BY MIKE HOWARD

#### 2022 Birding Activities:

During 2022 members were able to participate in 104 CONC organised birding excursions. This included:

- 39 Monday outings
- 45 Thursday outings
- 8 Saturday outings
- 12 special events outings (Sweagle Count, Critter Counts, BC Nature AGM tours etc.).

During these excursions in 2022 we submitted 157 complete checklists to eBird and recorded sightings of 193 species. These outings have been possible thanks to all the birding excursion leaders who selected a location, led the excursion, and then reported the results of the outing. Our thanks to Dave Palsat, Deborah White, Annette Lachine, Bitten Tisdale, Merle Auty, Douglas Graham, Sheila MacKenzie Brown, Bruce Kennedy, Stu Weir, Margaret Bryan, Elke Fischer, Fran Fisher, Rick Gee, Pam Laing, Margaret Ramsay, Lesley Robertson, Ian Walker, Gwynneth Wilson and Jasmine Korcok.

Several of our very talented photographers have added photographs of the birds we observed for the benefit of our members and as evidence to eBird in our role as citizen scientists. Our contributing photographers included Bruce Kennedy, Vivian Manning, Ian Walker, Karen Blumel, Douglas Graham, Lisa Rae and Pam Laing.

### **2023 Activities to Date:**

As of February 12, 2023, members were able to participate in 10 2023 CONC organised birding excursions so far this year. This included:

- 5 Monday outings
- 6 Thursday outings
- 1 special event outing (Sweagle Count).

During these excursions in 2023 we submitted 25 complete checklists to eBird and recorded sightings of 67 species.

### **2023 Planned Activities:**

Provided we have sufficient Birding Excursion Leaders we plan to continue with weekly Monday and Thursday outings, eight monthly Saturday outings, the Sweagle Count, the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Park Survey, and contribute to the Okanagan Mountain Regional Park Critter Count.

In addition, we plan to organise a group outing to the Creston Birding Festival in May and aim to launch the Thomson Marsh Park Viewing Platform Project as approved by the membership (AGM February 2023).



**Eurasian Wigeon (left); American Wigeon (right)**  
Photo courtesy Bruce Kennedy



**Pygmy Nuthatch**  
Photo Courtesy Pam Laing



**Bewick's Wren**  
Photo courtesy Bruce Kennedy

If you would like to become a Birding Leader for the 2023 season, please contact Mike Howard at [birding@okanagannature.org](mailto:birding@okanagannature.org). Advice on selecting a location and other supports are available.



## Rare Bird Sightings in 2023

The most significant rare bird sighting so far this year was a Fieldfare, discovered by Jasmine Korcok on January 10, 2023, at Munson Pond. This sighting caused enthusiastic birders from across British Columbia and a few from further afield, to come to Kelowna and try to catch a glimpse of it. Fieldfares, a robin sized bird (see image below), are a common sight in parts of Europe but seldom seen in Canada. Jasmine's discovery is believed to be only the third record for British Columbia. Several subsequent observations of this individual were recorded in Kelowna, usually found feeding on Mountain Ash berries with a group of American Robins.



**Fieldfare**  
Photo courtesy Chris Charlesworth

For members who enjoy following the rare sightings of birds in the Okanagan and Southern Interior the following link will be of interest: <https://bcbirdalert.blogspot.com/p/okanagan-southern-interior.html>. For rare birds records from late 2020 through to the end of 2022, see also the rare birds articles by Douglas Graham that appeared in the CONC Newsletters.

## MEMBERSHIP BIRDING EXCURSIONS SURVEY RESULTS

BY MIKE HOWARD

Typically, we have between 10 and 20 members (and sometimes visitors) attend each of the Monday, Thursday and Saturday outings. Ten active members responded to the survey which was intended to help shape the future direction of the Birding Excursion plans. A summary of the responses to the 14 survey questions are provided below:

1. **Do you currently participate in CONC Birding Excursions?**
  - The respondents were all active participants in CONC Birding Excursions.
2. **Would you participate if Birding Excursions were offered at a different time such as on a weekend? Please state your preference.**
  - Most respondents preferred the status-quo while a few members indicated they would participate whatever day of the week outings were offered. A couple of members pointed out that the sites we go to would likely be busier on the weekends which could affect the quality of the outings.
    - ⇒ **Action:** The weekday activities will be maintained. CONC has added a monthly "Weekend Explorers" out on the last weekend of the month, which will sometimes be on a bird-oriented theme, and is in addition to the current 2nd Saturday Birding Outings, Critter Counts and Sweagle Count which are also held on weekends.
3. **We traditionally have a summer recess from Birding Excursions for the month of August, due to heat and low member availability. Should this recess period be extended to include July and August?**
  - Most respondents were in favour of extending the summer recess while several members proposed starting the recess earlier to better coincide with the start of fall migration in late August.
    - ⇒ **Action:** The start of the summer recess in 2023 will start in early July and conclude by the third week of August.
4. **Should the frequency of Monday Birding Excursions be reduced to every second Monday?**
  - Active members responded that they enjoy the weekly outings and would keep the frequency as is. Two members acknowledged the difficulty in finding sufficient leaders and were concerned that we may burn out the existing leaders.
    - ⇒ **Action:** The Monday outings frequency will stay unchanged and members are being encouraged to become outing leaders.

5. **The Monday Birding group typically walks about 5km over a three-hour period during the outing. Is this a comfortable distance?**
  - Respondents are comfortable with the 5km distance.
  - ⇒ **Action:** No change
6. **Should the frequency of Thursday Birding Excursions be reduced to every second Thursday?**
  - The respondents indicated the frequency might need to be reduced because of a lack of leaders.
  - ⇒ **Action:** The Thursday outings frequency will stay unchanged and members are being encouraged to become outing leaders.
7. **Would you like to see the stop and go format of the Thursday outings changed?**
  - Most respondents like this format.
  - ⇒ **Action:** No change.
8. **Should all day Saturday outings be held in the Winter months in addition to the current schedule of Spring to Fall?**
  - Most respondents prefer no winter travel.
  - ⇒ **Action:** The Spring and Fall schedule will be maintained provided leaders are available. Currently only four members have volunteered to lead a Saturday outing.
9. **Would you be interested in participating in an overnight trip to Birding Festivals such as the Creston Spring Birding Festival?**
  - All respondents were in favour of an overnight outing.
  - ⇒ **Action:** Douglas Graham will lead the "Saturday group" to the Creston Birding Festival from May 12-14, 2023.
10. **Can you think of any other overnight outings you would be interested in going to?**
  - Members offered locations from Calgary to Vancouver Island and sites in between.
  - ⇒ **Action:** In 2023 we will start with the Creston Birding Festival and other Saturday leaders are invited to consider and plan for alternative outings.
11. **Should we organise one major multiple day Birding trip per year?**
  - The response was positive.
  - ⇒ **Action:** We will start with the Creston Birding Festival in 2023 and learn from this experience.
12. **Would you be in favour of 2 Monday outings/month + 2 Thursday outings/month + 2 Saturday all day outings/month?**
  - The response was mixed with half the respondents indicating they liked the current format or had no preference while the remaining respondents indicated it may be worth a try particularly if finding sufficient leaders becomes a significant issue.
  - ⇒ **Action:** We will maintain the current format in 2023 and see what the participation is in the new CONC monthly "Weekend Explorer" outings.
13. **Should we consider matching experienced leaders with first time leaders to encourage greater participation?**
  - Again a mixed response with 60% of the respondents agreeing this could be beneficial.
  - ⇒ **Action:** Members considering becoming a future outing leader are invited to approach Mike Howard and he will match them with an experienced leader.
14. **Would you like to learn how eBird works and start creating your own checklists?**
  - Half the respondents would like to learn the eBird process while the balance already have this knowledge or just prefer observing wildlife.
  - ⇒ **Action:** CONC leadership will be encouraged to hold a workshop for those members who would like to start keeping their own eBird outing checklists.

## AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2022

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT INFORMATION

By Lisa Rae

The 2022 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) represents the 123<sup>rd</sup> count held across North America. This season, **1,675** count circles were completed, with a total of **25,665,018** birds counted.

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

Many members of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club participate in the count circles of four regions: Peachland, Kelowna, Lake Country, and Big White.

This year, Kelowna counters were able to resume the tradition of meeting at the end of the day for a warm bowl of chili, sweets, coffee, and the sharing of birding outcomes for each counting team. Thanks are extended to all who helped to make this event a success: to Chris Charlesworth for organizing the count teams and chairing the meeting, to CONC executive for organizing and assuming the hosting costs, and to the many CONC members who prepared and served the treats.

***The 2022 Christmas Bird Count results for 3 Okanagan count circles are summarized below by the count compilers.***

## PEACHLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

**By Matthias Bieber, Count Compiler and Organizer**



**Red-breasted Nuthatch,**  
**Photo courtesy M. Bieber**

The tenth annual Peachland Christmas Bird Count took place on December 29th this year, on a relatively mild day. While the day started with a chilly morning, as cold as -14.5°C higher up, temperatures increased up to +2°C by the afternoon in the valley bottom. Calm conditions and mostly clear air made for comfortable walking, but the daylight hours ended with some snowfall which became increasingly persistent in the evening. Crusty-topped snow up to 1 m deep was present at higher elevations, which is probably the most we've seen on this count, while some areas along the lakeshore were completely devoid of snow.

A total of 23 birders in up to 11 parties traversed the seven areas of the count circle from Darke Lake to Okanagan Mountain Park, tallying 77 km in almost 53 hours of walking, and 142 km by vehicle over almost 18 hours. Despite the deep snow at higher elevations, which seemed to negatively impact abundance for some species, we recorded a total of 66 species and a record 5888 individual birds. For reference, the overall count average is 65 species and 3431 individuals; however, these totals are dependent on effort and the number of observers. As well, total survey hours were much lower during the first five years of the count.

One new species for the count was detected - a single Brewer's Blackbird found by Markus Weilmeier and company at the Cove in West Kelowna. The overall species total in the count's ten-year history now stands at 111. Other highlights included 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Evening Grosbeaks (both Markus Weilmeier and team), 4 Canada Jays (Kristen Mancuso's and Michelle Hamilton's teams) and one Canyon Wren (Michelle Hamilton and company). Several normally recorded species were missed this year, including Northern Pygmy Owl, Pacific Wren, Northern Shrike, Western Bluebird, and Pine Grosbeak. It was a good count overall for bird numbers with many species counted in record high numbers, including Bohemian Waxwing, Ruffed Grouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Red Crossbill which were all noticeably abundant this year.

Below are the totals, including indicators of new high and low counts:

Canada Goose	50	Low	Cooper's Hawk	1	
Trumpeter Swan	5	High	Bald Eagle	11	
Gadwall	5	High	Red-tailed Hawk	9	
Mallard	91		Belted Kingfisher	1	
Redhead	4		Downy Woodpecker	8	
Greater Scaup	47	High	Hairy Woodpecker	7	
Bufflehead	6		N. (Red-Shafted) Flicker	79	
Common Goldeneye	9		Pileated Woodpecker	6	
Hooded Merganser	7		Merlin	1	
Common Merganser	14		Canada Jay	4	High
Red-breasted Merganser	3	High	Steller's Jay	32	
California Quail	54	Low	Clark's Nutcracker	19	
Ruffed Grouse	13	High	Black-billed Magpie	67	
Pied-billed Grebe	6	High	American Crow	87	High
Horned Grebe	37		Common Raven	138	
Red-necked Grebe	2		Black-capped Chickadee	81	
Eurasian Collared-Dove	54	High	Mountain Chickadee	53	
Mourning Dove	5		Red-breasted Nuthatch	123	
American Coot	15		White-breasted Nuthatch	19	High
Ring-billed Gull	1		Pygmy Nuthatch	162	
California Gull	1		Brown Creeper	3	

Glaucous-winged Gull	1		Canyon Wren	1	
gull sp.	12		American Dipper	5	
Common Loon	2	Low	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	
Great Blue Heron	7	High	Townsend's Solitaire	23	High
Golden Eagle	1		American Robin	128	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	High	Varied Thrush	14	
European Starling	154		Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)	304	
Bohemian Waxwing	3219	High	Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)	2	
Cedar Waxwing	12		Song Sparrow	30	
House Sparrow	130		Spotted Towhee	6	High
House Finch	196		Brewer's Blackbird	1	New
Red Crossbill	200	High			
Pine Siskin	1		Total Species	66	
American Goldfinch	93		Total individuals	5887	High
Number of Observers			23		
Max Parties			11		
Total Hours (on foot)			52.75		
Total Hours (by car)			17.75		
Total KM's (on foot)			77.3		
Total KM's (by car)			141.7		

## KELOWNA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Chris Charlesworth, Count Compiler and Organizer

The 2022 Kelowna Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 17. Fifty-nine observers out in the field, and 10 more at feeders tallied 105 species on count day, with one additional species, Northern Harrier, tallied for the count week period. The total of 105 is just below the five-year average of 107 species. Weather on count day was cold and windy, especially near the lakeshore, as a cold front was arriving. Counts held after the 17th endured much colder temperatures and low species counts, therefore the Kelowna Christmas Count tallied the most species of any count in the interior of the province. In addition to the weather, another factor that aided Kelowna in achieving a high species tally was a strong, and knowledgeable team of observers.

Several high counts were obtained on this years' count, including 3 Eurasian Wigeon, all found in the downtown area, as an apparent immature male and two females were observed. A Long-eared Owl was tallied, the first on a Kelowna CBC since the 1970s. Twenty-five Townsend's Solitaires were noted, one up from the previous high count. A whopping 266 Varied Thrushes were noted on this years' count, up from the previous high of 29 way back in 1965! An amazing total of 10,583 Bohemian Waxwings was tabulated, up from a 1978 high of nearly 6000 birds. A new high count of Dark-eyed Juncos, with 1125 of them counted, was up slightly from the previous high count, and three Rusty Blackbirds tied for that species high count. Reasons for good numbers of thrushes and waxwings is most likely a bumper crop of Mountain Ash berries, as well as colder temperatures further north that drove the birds south to the Okanagan.

Overall waterfowl numbers were average, due to many of the small ponds and lakes being completely frozen. Winter arrived early in 2022, with snow and cold temperatures in early November that persisted until the new year.

Ring-necked Pheasants are rapidly disappearing from the Central Okanagan, and we only tallied two of them on the count. An Anna's Hummingbird braved the elements at a feeder in Lakeview Heights. Gull numbers were low, as expected in a cold and snowy winter. Raptor numbers were average, and we managed to detect 6 species of owls on count day; Great Horned, Western Screech, Northern Pygmy, Long-eared, Short-eared and Northern Saw-whet.

Overall numbers of 'feeder' birds were down, and we only tallied 6 Pine Siskins, and no Evening or Pine grosbeaks on the CBC. Of note were 2 Brown-headed Cowbirds at Thomson Marsh. This is a species that is very rare in the winter in the Okanagan.

Thank you to all who participated in the count, and thank you to the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club for sponsoring the CBC!

**Number of observers in field:** 59; Number of observers at feeders: 10; High temperature (Celsius) -1; Low temperature (Celsius) -8; Time spent in field on foot: 74.43 hrs; Distance covered on foot: 108.15 km; Time spent in field in car: 52.55 km; Distance covered by car: 576.3 km.



**Field Observers:** Ainley, Jody; Auty, Merle; Bell, David; Buers, Megan; Cecile, Don; Chan, Calvin; Charlesworth, Chris; Coburn, Norma; Courtney, Peter; Darlington, Siobhan; Dudeck, Blair; Force, Michael; Fraser, Joyce; Gee, Rick; Graham, Douglas; Guild, Don; Gyug, Les; Halm, Grant; Hamilton, Michelle; Hannebauer, Jesse; Heinrichs, Markus; Hindmarch, Ted; Howard, Mike; Kennedy, Bruce; Korcok, Jasmine; Kragh, Doug; Lachaine, Annette; Lewis, Craig; MacDonald, Archie; Malkinson, Paul; Miller, Brittany; Morgan, Joan; Ocana, Kalin; Pethick, Pam; Pethick, Simon; Rae, Lisa; Ramsay, Margaret; Riordan-Short, Eamon; Robertson, Lesley; Sewell, Louise; Sharplin, Carol; Swan, Nick; Tomlinson, Ryan; Vanderpol, Hank; Vissia, Brad; Walker, Ian; Walker, Linda; Walker, Steffany; Weilmeier, Markus; Weilmeier, Martin; Weir, Stu; White, Deborah; Whitman, Ann; Whitman, Reford; Williams, Huw; Wilson, Don; Wright, Wendy; Zander, Kurt; Zander, Pat.

**Species Details:** Greater White-fronted Goose 1; Canada Goose 3342; Trumpeter Swan 17; Tundra Swan 14; Wood Duck 2; Northern Shoveler 1; Gadwall 40; Eurasian Wigeon 3; American Wigeon 113; Mallard 2866; Green-winged Teal 15; Canvasback 3; Redhead 236; Ring-necked Duck 14; Greater Scaup 68; Lesser Scaup 4; Bufflehead 39; Common Goldeneye 66; Barrow's Goldeneye 9; Hooded Merganser 60; Common Merganser 32; California Quail 971; Ruffed Grouse 4; Ring-necked Pheasant 2; Pied-billed Grebe 22; Horned Grebe 56; Red-necked Grebe 6; Western Grebe 2; Rock (Feral) Pigeon 164; Eurasian Collared-Dove 252; Mourning Dove 231; Anna's Hummingbird 1; Virginia Rail 2; American Coot 1340; Killdeer 2; Wilson's Snipe 1; Short-billed Gull 2; Ring-billed Gull 132; California Gull 6; Herring Gull 61; Iceland (Thayer's) Gull 3; Glaucous-winged Gull 36; gull sp. 13; Common Loon 5; Great Blue Heron 10; Golden Eagle 2; Northern Harrier CW; Sharp-shinned Hawk 8; Cooper's Hawk 7; accipiter sp. 1; Bald Eagle 71; Red-tailed Hawk 96; Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk 2; Rough-legged Hawk 1; Western Screech-Owl 1; Great Horned Owl 19; Northern Pygmy-Owl 2; Long-eared Owl 1; Short-eared Owl 1; Northern Saw-whet Owl 2; Belted Kingfisher 3; Downy Woodpecker 22; Hairy Woodpecker 3; Pileated Woodpecker 5; Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker 268; American Kestrel 4; Merlin 15; Peregrine Falcon 2; Northern Shrike 9; Steller's Jay 12; Black-billed Magpie 403; Clark's Nutcracker 1; American Crow 179; Common Raven 541; Black-capped Chickadee 228; Mountain Chickadee 51; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3; Golden-crowned Kinglet 24; Red-breasted Nuthatch 17; White-breasted Nuthatch 4; Pygmy Nuthatch 279; Brown Creeper 1; Pacific Wren 5; Marsh Wren 2; American Dipper 17; European Starling 4606; Western Bluebird 25; Townsend's Solitaire 25; Varied Thrush 266; American Robin 1015; Bohemian Waxwing 10,583; Cedar Waxwing 67; House Sparrow 427; House Finch 380; Cassin's Finch 5; Red Crossbill 33; Pine Siskin 6; American Goldfinch 371; American Tree Sparrow 12; Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) 1125; Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-co) 1; White-crowned Sparrow 46; White-throated Sparrow 1; Song Sparrow 214; Spotted Towhee 15; Red-winged Blackbird 723; Brown-headed Cowbird 2; Rusty Blackbird 3; Brewer's Blackbird 262; Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) 3.

## **LAKE COUNTRY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

**by Les Gyug, Count Compiler and Organizer**

As per usual, the Lake Country Christmas Bird Count was held on the first possible day, December 14<sup>th</sup>, with 25 people covering the count circle in 11 parties. The total of 70.9 party-hours was very similar to the long-term (2002-2020) average of 69.7.

Weather was pretty good this year, actually really good, and one of the best days for weather on this count that I can remember. Perfectly calm, just below 0 C, and clear skies. That is except for the few parties that got mired in persistent fog patches that did not burn off all day.

All told, we counted 8069 birds counted of 81 species on count day, which is below the long-term average of 83.9 species, but well above the lowest ever (74 species in 2019). Two extra species (Rough-legged Hawk and California Gull) were tallied during count week but not on count day.

The most abundant species that broke the 500 count were Bohemian Waxwings (1239), Canada Geese (1229), European Starlings (895), Dark-eyed Junco (713), Mallard (601) and California Quail (503). For juncos that was a bit of a surprise because the previous high count had been 541 in 2016. The most unusual species count was 152 Varied Thrushes, which was way above the typical count total of 3 or fewer.

Four species were seen by every party (Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Common Raven and Red-breasted Nuthatch), and four other species (California Quail, Northern Flicker, American Robin and Black-billed Magpie) were seen by 10 of the 11 parties. Other interesting birds were 15 Wild Turkeys and 2 Anna's Hummingbirds. There were no new species added to the count list this year, with the total count list through all the years from 2003 to 2022 being 138 species.

Many thanks to all the stalwart volunteers who come and help out, and who make it a pleasure to organize this count.

## 2023 SWAN AND EAGLE COUNT

BY MIKE HOWARD

The 2023 Swan and Eagle (Sweagle) Count deserves special mention. CONC participated in the Sweagle Count on Sunday January 15, 2023. This was the 49<sup>th</sup> consecutive annual count for Swans and 29<sup>th</sup> annual count of Interior Eagles that has been held mid-January.

This is the first year that Rick Howie of the Kamloops Naturalists' Club has not been able to coordinate this effort. Rick sadly lost his battle with cancer on January 20, 2023. He will be missed by many. Several organizations, including CONC, are working on transferring the past five decades of Swan and Eagle data to Birds Canada, [NatureCount](#) database.

The Kelowna area 2023 submission was gathered under foggy, cold conditions this year by Bruce Kennedy, Deborah White, Don Guild, Douglas Graham, Francis and David Palsat, Jennifer Matthews, Les Gyug, Lisa Rae, Margaret Ramsay, Merle Auty, Pam Laing, Rick Durand, Rick Gee, Steffany Walker and myself.



Photo Credit Pam Laing

We recorded 27 Adult Bald Eagles; 8 immature Bald Eagles; 1 unidentified Eagle and no Golden Eagles this year (the Trepanier area, where we often observe Golden Eagles, was under heavy fog during the count).

In addition, 11 Adult Trumpeter Swans, 3 immature Trumpeter Swans and two unidentified swans were observed. No Tundra Swans were seen during the count which covered the "Kelowna Area" from Lake Country and Fintry in the north to the base of Lakeshore and Peachland to the south. The number of Swans and Eagles was significantly less than what we observed in 2022.

We invite you to learn more about the history of the Interior swans by reading Rick Howie's paper titled: Wintering Trumpeter and Tundra Swans in the Southern Interior of British Columbia available here:

[https://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/file\\_download/inline/3875e852-ba52-4dce-9254-03a901c3eb27#page=24](https://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/file_download/inline/3875e852-ba52-4dce-9254-03a901c3eb27#page=24).



Immature Bald Eagle  
Photo Credit Bruce Kennedy

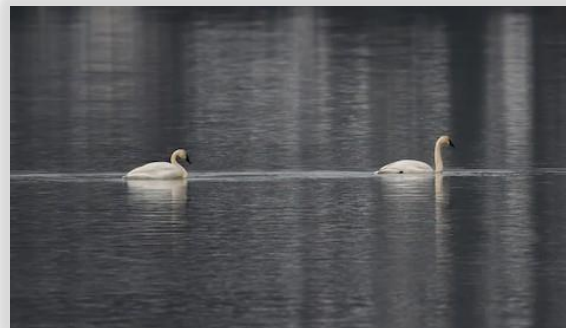


Photo Credit Bruce Kennedy

## CONC OUTING ACTIVITIES UPDATE

BY VIVIAN MANNING



CONC activities continue to take place during the winter months! 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 two 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. Saturday and longer trips have also started up. Mike Howard is the Birding Director and may be contacted for additional details of CONC's many birding opportunities: [birding@okanagannature.org](mailto:birding@okanagannature.org).

**Hiking (and snowshoeing) (Sole Survivors and Ramblers)** continues enthusiastically (although the end of the snowshoe season is in distant sight, as spring inevitably approaches) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, with outings to Bear Creek, Beaver Lake, Rose Valley, Nordic Ski & Snowshoe, Fraser Lake, Sutherland Hills, Myra Bellevue, Pym's Cabin, and even a moonlight snowshoe outing, among many other locations.

In this and future newsletters I'll provide news and events of botanical interest under this heading. In addition to vascular plants, we'll also be watching for mushrooms.

CONC botany excursions resumed last year after a hiatus due to the pandemic. The regularly scheduled season for vascular plants last year ran from May 6 to July 22 with outings normally on Fridays. These focused on flowering plants (wildflowers). There were also two unscheduled outings, one to look at aquatic plants and the other to look at mushrooms. In 2023 we'll continue with a regular schedule for vascular plants from May 5 to July 21. This is the period of peak flowering when there's lots to see. Depending on interest, we may do other excursions. For example, in previous years we've searched for Steer's Head blooming in April and looked for rare plants when they're blooming. The new schedule, including outing locations and short lists of species we expect to see, can be found on CONC's webpage at <https://okanagannature.org/our-activities/botany/>.

Of interest for this first quarterly period will be early spring flowering plants (see photos below), which could begin in mid-February. Typically, first flowering will occur lower in the valley in areas of good sun exposure. Knox Mountain [https://okanagannature.org/Knox\\_Mountain.pdf](https://okanagannature.org/Knox_Mountain.pdf) and roadsides along the lower part of Beaver Lake Road <https://okanagannature.org/Beaver%20Lake%20Road.pdf> are good places to look for early spring wildflowers.



**Sagebrush Buttercup** *Ranunculus glaberrimus*



**Geyer's Lomatium** *Lomatium geyeri*

To see what's flowering in our area check out iNaturalist projects such as the Mission Creek Greenway Biodiversity Project at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/mission-creek-greenway-biodiversity-project> and the Okanagan Biodiversity project at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/okanagan-biodiversity>

With respect to upcoming events, you might want to register early for Washington's annual weekend botany get-togethers, Botany Washington (June 2-4) <https://www.wnps.org/calendar/1777> and Study Weekend (July 28-30) <https://www.wnps.org/calendar/1791>. Having attended these in the past I highly recommend them. BC's one comparable event, Botany BC, will be held in Wells Gray Park June 22-25 <https://eastons.ca/botanybc/>. Also watch for events of botanical interest offered during the Meadowlark Festival May 19-22 at <https://meadowlarkfestival.ca/>.

Regarding botany field guides and helpful references, I recommend *Plants of the Southern Interior of British Columbia*, Lone Pine Press. The best online resource for BC plants is eFlora <https://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/>. An excellent FREE cellphone/tablet app is *British Columbia Wildflowers* available for both Android and iPhone/iPad. iNaturalist is a very popular on-line resource for identifying plants from photos at <https://inaturalist.ca/>. If you want a simplified approach to learning plants, *Botany in a Day*, *The Patterns Method of Plant Identification* is a good place to start.

We don't get up as early as the birders and we don't walk as much as the hikers but we do enjoy great scenery, fresh air and good company. Details of when and where to meet are provided on CONC's webpage and by email to interested members. If you have questions or suggestions regarding this upcoming season please forward them to [botany@okanagannaturalist.com](mailto:botany@okanagannaturalist.com).



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### OKANAGAN HIGHLANDS TRAIL

BY DON GUILD



Craig Lewis, Gord Miller, and Don Guild,  
30 June 2022, Turtle Lake

In 2022 CONC again helped maintain “our” section of the Okanagan Highlands Trail (OHT); see the attached map. The team was coordinated by Don Guild with core members George McFeeters, Craig Lewis, Gord Miller, and Robin Digby and thanks also to Douglas Graham for coming out on one occasion.

There was an exceptional amount of blowdown on the trail last year which to clear, took an incredible amount of exertion and perseverance. Both George and Gord attacked the limb overhangs and brush along the trail as well as tossing and clearing the pieces of blowdowns that Craig sliced and diced with his chainsaw! Due to Robin's skills and determination, the collapsed bridge over the diversion ditch has been replaced. The new structure has a split cedar plank deck over peeled Douglas Fir stringers. I helped Robin out for one day and learned a lot about how to use hand tools for constructing with logs. In November 2022, I submitted the detailed

2022 Trail Work Report and 2023 Trail Annual Operating Plan to Recreational Sites & Trails BC (RSTBC); it is available for consultation to anyone who is interested.

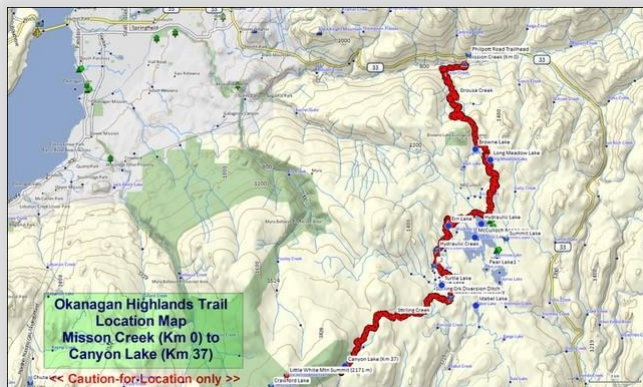
As the coordinator, I am always impressed by the crew's dedication, enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to do what needs to be done. My heartfelt thanks for all of your efforts! CONC members are encouraged to hike the OHT and if available, to come out this year to help with the maintenance of this little-known gem of a local trail. Here is a quick update for 2023.

#### Signage

The most immediate need to see the trail being hiked in safety is signage that meets RSTBC standards. I am developing a sign package which will include all of the necessary safety notices, km markers, points of entrance onto and off of resource roads, route markers, and points of interest. It is hoped that CONC will provide some of the needed funding but I am also making efforts to line up outside financial support through RSTBC, and Friends of the Environment Foundation.

#### Bridge over Mission Creek

With regards to construction of a bridge over Mission Creek at km 0 of the OH Trail, I had Bruce Dalrymple (a retired professional engineer who began his career working for BC Highways) come to the site to give his opinion on feasibility and cost. Bruce is the President of the Gellatly Bay Trails & Parks Society (GBTAPS). He is aware of current construction standards and costs for works similar to this bridge. His assessment for a bridge is that it would need to be about 25 meters long with a support pier in the middle of Mission Creek, comprised of steel piles and concrete, so the cost would be well over \$1 million dollars. Costs could be even higher depending on the extent of the floodplain on the far side of the creek. The cheapest crossing structure, Bruce said, would be a suspension bridge but there doesn't appear to be suitable bedrock on either side of the creek to anchor one. This is disheartening news for the short term, but if the trail becomes popular with use then it could perhaps happen in the future.



#### Trail reroutes

The trail requires 3 reroutes to move it off resource roads in 3 places as follows:

- Grouse Creek, km 0-10 = 10km
- McCulloch (Hydraulic) Lake to Turtle Lake, km 17-24 = 7 km
- Upper Stirling Creek to Canyon Lake, Km 31-37 = 6 km

We currently have only reroute (2) fully determined with preliminary work having been done for a short section of each of reroutes (1) and (3). RSTBC requires us to submit all 3 reroutes at the same time for stakeholder vetting and their final approval.

#### Partnership Agreement

Our PAES (Partnership Agreement) with RSTBC expires in November 2023 so it will be up for renewal if our interest in the trail continues. Our hope is to get it fully hike worthy by that time with approved signage in place.

Effective January 21, 2023, and following an 18-month temporary restriction and consultation period, the B.C. provincial government has applied [permanent changes to rodenticide use regulations](#). These changes apply new requirements to the sale and use of [second-generation](#) anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARS). The intention of these changes is to reduce the risk of secondary wildlife poisoning and death of raptors and mammals.

The new rules will:

- ban the sale and use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARS) in **residential and non-essential commercial settings**,
- increase oversight of rodenticide use,
- require essential services to use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for rodent control,
- increase training and education on rodenticides for essential services.



Great-horned Owl, Bear Creek Regional Park

A licence is now required to purchase SGARS. **Only the licence holder of an essential service, or pest control company can buy and use SGARS.**

Two references on this topic are provided below.

The first link is the **BC provincial website** which details the new requirements, rodenticide chemistry, and **the essential services permitted to continue use of SGARS. These essential services include agricultural practices, food-related industries, health services, transportation, sanitation and recycling, communications, environmental services, electrical and gas operations, mortuary and similar services.**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/pesticides-pest-management/legislation-consultation/rodenticide-ban>

The second link provides the **BCSPCA perspective**, and additional information on rodenticide use, impact, and rodent deterrent alternatives.

<https://spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/take-action/urban-wildlife/humane-rodent-control/rodenticides/>

Thanks to Fran Fisher for the notice of the new regulations, and for suggesting this article.

## SPRING MUSHROOMS

BY MITCH MILGRAM

When and where mushrooms appear can often seem random, and to some extent it is. Their fruiting can be affected by variables such as moisture and temperature, their symbiotic relationship with surrounding trees, and a multitude of other factors. But like most fruits and vegetables, many mushrooms have a specific fruiting season. Spring is one season, and spring mushrooms are particularly appreciated after a long barren winter, delighting mushroom enthusiasts.

The fact is, most mushrooms fruit in the fall, fewer in the spring and summer. This is a bit of a mystery. One would think that just as most vascular plants flower and set fruit in the warmer temperatures and rains of spring and summer, fungi would too. Yet fall is the main season for mushrooms. Perhaps a reason for this is that it takes more time for the fungi to gather the resources to fruit. Perhaps it's the fall rains and the infusion of carbon and resources transferred to the fungi living in close symbiotic relationship with the roots of trees. As the trees start their fall hibernation and move their resources down below ground to the roots, the fungi have a boost to their reproductive ability. Whatever the reason for fall's bounty, those fungi that do fruit in the spring are that much more appreciated.



*Gyromitra esculenta*





*Morchella* sp.

Some of the most well-known spring mushrooms are the morels, (*Morchella* species) and 'false' morels (*Gyromitra* and *Helvella* species). Because of the publicity around the huge morel fruitings in wildfire sites, some people are surprised that morels occur 'naturally', that is, that they will appear almost anywhere in the spring, although in far fewer numbers.

*Gyromitra esculenta*, the 'brain mushroom', is one of the false morels and often appears a little before the true morels, indicating that the soil temperature will soon be warm enough for the morels to fruit. Interestingly, false morels are consumed by some people, even though they are highly toxic, containing poisonous compounds such as gyromitrin. Gyromitrin is toxic when eaten, especially raw, and even the vapours produced when cooking are harmful.

Another sought after spring mushroom for people interested in edibles is the oyster mushroom. The principal one in our area is *Pleurotus populinus*, and as the name suggests, it fruits on poplar trees. Oyster mushrooms are saprobes, decomposers, and they'll appear for a few years in succession on a dead or dying poplar trees until they've extracted the nutrients they seek. Some people, finding a fruiting log, will transport it home to their backyard to harvest successive flushes of mushrooms.

Another interesting mushroom that will fruit in the spring (though it can fruit in other seasons as well), is *Agaricus bitorquis*, the 'Urban *Agaricus*'. This is a large, robust white mushroom in the same genus as our familiar white button mushroom found in the supermarket. *Agaricus bitorquis* comes by its common name because you'll often see it in surprising places as you walk around in urban settings, erupting in crowded clumps in disturbed soil, in garden beds, along road verges and sidewalks, even pushing up through asphalt. It's a good edible mushroom, commercially cultivated in Europe, but because of the conditions in which it fruits, it's seldom suitable for consumption. Mushrooms are like sponges, absorbing moisture and minerals, but because *Agaricus bitorquis* fruits often in questionable soils, it can often be laced with harmful heavy metals.



*Pleurotus populinus*

The coral mushrooms are colourful and distinctive, reminiscent of sea coral. They come in a wide variety of colours, and the bright yellow branches of the Spring Corals are an exciting sight as they erupt in the spring. Though many corals fruit later in the season, *Ramaria rasilispora* and *Ramaria magnipes* are two corals that fruit in the spring. With their many branched heads and thick fleshy bases, they at times resemble cauliflowers.



*Caloscypha fulgens* (cup fungi)

Some of the more well-known snowbank mushrooms are the 'Snowmelt *Clitocybe*', *Clitocybe albirhiza*, and the 'Snowbank Orange Peel' mushroom, *Caloscypha fulgens*, a vivid orange cup fungi that will stain blue. Spring subalpine snowbank mushrooms may not appear until July, thus extending the spring mushroom season.

There are numerous other spring mushrooms, with names like *Hygrocybe vernalis*, and *Nolanea verna*. Their species epithet of 'vern' means Spring in Latin. Whatever their name, the arrival of these fungi in the spring is the long awaited and appreciated signal of the start of another exciting mushroom season.

All photos courtesy Mitch Milgram

'Snowbank' mushrooms are another group of spring mushrooms. This is a general term applied to a variety of mushrooms that fruit in the spring, generally in subalpine settings, at the edge of melting snowbanks. Taking their nourishment from the melting snow in what is often a harsh, dry environment, snowbank mushrooms will appear as soon as the snow melts, often even before it has melted, emerging right through the ice crystals.



*Ramaria rasilispora*

## WHAT IS BC NATURE AND WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO JOIN BC NATURE? BY RICK GEE

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[BC Nature](#) (officially The Federation of BC Naturalists) is a federation of over 50 organizations in BC which have an interest in natural history and conservation. These organizations include CONC, SONC (South Okanagan Naturalists Club), NONC (North Okanagan Naturalists Club), Nature Vancouver, Rocky Point Bird Observatory (on Vancouver Island), Mackenzie Nature Observatory (in north-east BC), and the Northern Amphibians Naturalists Society (in north-west BC). As a member of CONC or any of the federated clubs, you are automatically a member of BC Nature. Should you not live in an area with a federated club (e.g. Campbell River) you can become a direct member.

Each year, direct members and the federated clubs pay a small administrative fee (approximately \$15 per member) to BC Nature; this fee is part of your CONC dues. This fee covers part of the cost of producing the quarterly magazine BC Nature (advertising and grants cover the rest) and insurance for participants in BC Nature (and CONC) sponsored activities. The insurance provided is a very good deal and is one of the reasons some of the federated clubs join BC Nature. If you are injured on a CONC-sponsored activity, you are covered in case of accident.

BC Nature lobbies for nature and conservation; this administrative fee also covers the cost of the lobbying and occasional legal fees. A major lobbying effort, for example, involves opposition to the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project. This payment also covers the cost of office staff; the main office is in North Vancouver.

BC Nature sponsors a variety of annual camps, hosted by federated clubs. These are on a cost-recovery basis; the federated club splits any profit with BC Nature. CONC has sponsored several of these camps, ably organized by Fiona Flook and Pat Westheuser.

BC Nature has an Annual General Meeting (The AGM is part of a conference hosted by one of the federated clubs; in May 2023 the conference is hosted by the Langley Field Naturalists Society) and, often, a Fall General Meeting (part of a smaller conference). CONC has hosted these meetings several times. Profits from these meetings are also split between a federated club and BC Nature.

BC Nature is directed by a 15-member Board of Directors (elected at the AGM) and an Executive Director (first appointed approximately one-year ago), both operating in conjunction with the Council of Club Representatives. CONC member and past-president Rick Gee is a Director-at-Large and will be running for a final one-year term at the Langley AGM. CONC member and CONC director Fran Fisher is the CONC representative on the Council of Club Representatives.

Support is provided by office staff, including an office manager and an IBA/KBA Co-ordinator and various contractors. The Office Manager is responsible, amongst other things, for producing the quarterly magazine and various emails. BC Nature has provincial responsibility for IBA/KBA. The IBA/KBA Co-ordinator handles relations between BC Nature and the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (now being converted to Key Biodiversity Areas). Previously a contractor, this co-ordinator has recently been converted to an employee.

BC Nature also has an awards program, recognizing service to the natural history community by federated club members and others. Club Service Awards, in particular, recognize service to club members. CONC recipients of this award include Harvey Abraham, Don Guild, and Teresa Smith, among others.

What is the relation between [BC Nature](#) and [Nature Canada](#)? In the same way that BC Nature is a federation of organizations within BC, Nature Canada is a federation of organizations within Canada. That is, each provincial natural history federation is a member of Nature Canada but they do not pay dues; Nature Canada operates on grants and donations.

Speaking of donations, BC Nature is a registered charity, as is CONC, and welcomes your donations. A second body, the [BC Naturalists' Foundation](#), is the charitable counterpart of BC Nature. As the BC Nature and BC Naturalists' Foundation websites say "The purpose of the BC Naturalists' Foundation is to promote the preservation of the natural environment for future generations through conservation, education, and research projects. The BC Naturalists' Foundation is a registered charity formed in 1990 by members of the Federation of BC Naturalists, now known as BC Nature. The Foundation is autonomous from BC Nature but is inextricably linked to it by shared goals and by the power of the BC Nature to appoint members and nominate directors."

The Foundation provides grants for which the federated clubs may apply. CONC has received such grants towards, for example, the Muriel Wardlaw Nature Trails at the Kelowna Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Club trails at McCulloch Lake and a viewing platform at Robert Lake, a project that was never completed.

Feel free to donate to CONC, to BC Nature, or to the BC Naturalists' Foundation.

## HELP! REPORT SICK OR DEAD BATS IN THE OKANAGAN AND SIMILKAMEEN AREAS

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The province's bats are threatened by disease and researchers are asking the public for help.

**White-nose Syndrome** (WNS) is a disease that devastates bat colonies when they tuck into their underground homes to escape winter. The disease is caused by a fungus that grows on bats' skin while they hibernate, disrupting their long winter nap and causing them to starve to death before spring. Since WNS was discovered in New York state in 2006, it has killed more than 90% of bat populations in eastern North America. WNS is present in 38 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces. WNS has been confirmed in bats just 100 kilometers south of the B.C./USA border.

Detection of WNS in B.C. is challenging because bats in B.C. hibernate alone or in small groups across the province.

"While you're out enjoying winter wonderland, please keep an eye out for bats," says Paula Rodriguez de la Vega, Okanagan region coordinator for the BC Community Bat Program. She further explains that "To monitor the spread of the disease, we need more eyes on the ground. Outdoor enthusiasts and homeowners with roosts on their property may be the first to find evidence of trouble."

As a result of ongoing research, biologists are finding that healthy bats are also somewhat active in winter, and that a few bats even choose to hibernate in woodpiles or under house trim. These sleeping bats should be left alone — keep your distance, snap a photo and report it to the B.C. Community Bat Program. Although WNS does not affect people, **if you must move a bat, visit [www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca) for advice and never touch a bat with your bare hands.**

**Overall, if you see any bat activity or find a dead bat, please report it to [www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca), 1-855-9BC-BATS ext.13, or email [okanagan@bcbats.ca](mailto:okanagan@bcbats.ca).** Deceased bat carcasses will be collected and tested for WNS.

### Contact:

Paula Rodriguez de la Vega, BC Community Bat Program, Okanagan Region Toll free: 1-855-922-2287 ext.13  
C. 250-809-8152

For more information on WNS see <https://whitenosesyndrome.org/>, which includes a map of where affected bats have been found, as well as a scary spread map that shows progression of the disease across North America from 2006 to 2022.

## NOTICE OF PUBLICATION - COLUMBIA BASIN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION NETWORK (CBEEN)

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**Duncan Whittick, Executive Director, Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN)**  
**Syilx Plants & Animals Student Guides - Pre-orders now available!**

In partnership with Syilx apprentice knowledge keeper Krystal Withakay, and the Regional District of Central Okanagan, the CBEEN charity is able to make [syilx plants & animals guides](#) available through our charitable social enterprise, [The Outdoor Learning Store](#). This guide covers the territory of the traditional, ancestral, and unceded  $\text{trnx}^w\text{úla?x}^w$  (land) of the Syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial.

This fold-out guide is weatherproof and printed on 100% recycled paper. \$1 from every guide is directed to the Syilx Language House, and any remaining proceeds go back to supporting non-profit outdoor learning initiatives.

You can find out more & place your pre-orders at: <https://outdoorlearningstore.com/product/syilx-plants-animals-guide/>. These will be mailed out in January. To save on shipping, you can also include other books/resources, and these can be shipped as one order.

CBEEN also offers a number of other [Indigenous Learning Resources](#), including:

- [Pacific Northwest \(Indigenous\) Plant Cards](#)
- [Ktunaxa Ethnobotany Handbook](#)
- [Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use](#)
- [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants](#)

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions!



## 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 2022 and 2023.



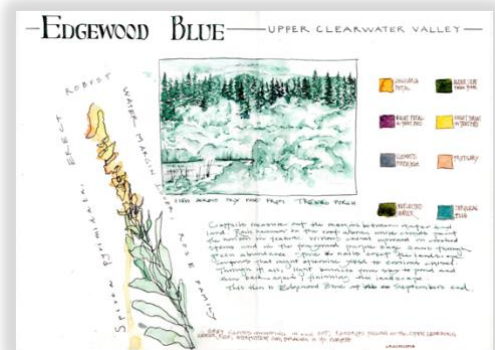
## DRAWING (BOTANY) HOME: FINDING HOME WITH NATURE JOURNALING

### Description:

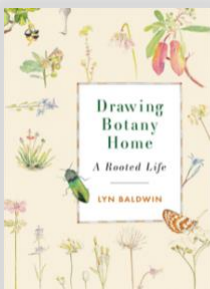


serve as an immersive practice in place and community. In a too-busy world, nature journals can prompt us to pay close attention to the “here and now,” giving voice to what we experience through diagrams and sketches, schematic maps and creative writing exercises.

Naturalists and ecologists have argued that our ever-increasing “extinction of experience” with the natural world may, in fact, be its greatest threat. We know that place matters, but, what in the Euro-Canadian tradition can work to restore care between people and place? Long ago, illustrated nature journals were important tools in the European project to name and claim North America. Since then, however, artists and naturalists have recognized that ‘on-the-spot’ observations can



Artist, author and botanist Lyn Baldwin periodically organizes hands-on workshops drawing on her new book, **Drawing Botany Home: A Rooted Life**. Lyn Baldwin is an award-winning educator and plant conservation biologist who uses art and science to help mitigate society's extinction of experience with the botanical world. From her home in the sagebrush-steppe and coniferous forest of the South Thompson Valley, Lyn teaches botany, ecology and creative writing at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC. For more than two decades, she has worked to cultivate care between the people and plants of place by sharing the stories she finds with her field journals in art galleries and science museums, and within the pages of journals such as *The Goose*, *Camas*, *The Fourth River*, and *Terrain.org*. Lyn's first book *Drawing Botany Home: A Rooted Life* will be released by Rocky Mountain Books in Spring 2023. For more info about Lyn, see <https://lbaldwin.sites.tru.ca>.



A beautifully illustrated natural history memoir that reminds the reader that re-storying our relationship with the plants of home can be our first step in restoring the world.

In a world made precarious by human mobility, all of us can learn from those who root in place. Plants surround us, yet all too often we ignore their quiet and complex lives. When a new job brings botanist and artist Lyn Baldwin back to her childhood home in southern British Columbia, she is challenged to confront both the cost of her mobility and the assumptions of her profession. If nearly three decades spent in motion gave Lyn scientific credentials and a career, it also made her a stranger to home and country. Lonely and homesick, Lyn runs outside. She doesn't go far—rarely more than a day's drive from Kamloops, BC—but within the pages of her field journal, the slow confluence of art and science allows Lyn to learn not just about but from the green wisdom of her neighbours.

Tutored by the plants of forest and garden, wilderness and wetland, Lyn realizes that her botany never has been, and never will be, a placeless science. Instead, *Drawing Botany Home* gives Lyn the metaphors to reconcile the dark horror of settler/indigenous relations and the hard edges of her own childhood: poverty, a traumatic fire, unwanted stepfathers, a hippie mother.

## CONC LAUNCHES ITS OWN FACEBOOK PAGE

BY MARJORIE GONZALEZ



The Club has launched its own Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/okanagannature](https://www.facebook.com/okanagannature). The page will be used to reach out to members and non-members (AKA potential new members!). Initially the page will focus on providing information on Club activities, but we could expand its scope down the road. Information on our activities will continue to be available on our website ([www.okanagannature.org](https://www.okanagannature.org)), on its calendar, and announced to members in accordance with their activity preferences.

To find the Facebook page, click on the above link or type it in your web browser. You will be able to see the page at any time even if you don't have a Facebook account, but you will not be able to interact with it without an account.

If you have a Facebook account, you can also find the page by searching for “CONC” or “Central Okanagan Naturalists” in the search box in the upper left corner. Once you find the page, you can click on the “Follow” button and you will get updates from the page on your personal Facebook feed. If you also want others on Facebook to see that you support our page, you can also click on the “Like” button.

Once you start seeing our posts in your personal Facebook feed, please promote the posts by sharing them or by liking or commenting on the posts.

We hope that this Facebook page will help us reach new audiences and allow us to communicate in a new way with member and non-members.

Please let me know (at [outreach@okanagannature.org](mailto:outreach@okanagannature.org)) if you have any questions, suggestions or if you have any issues accessing the Facebook page.

## **COFFEE AND REFRESHMENTS AT CONC GENERAL MEETINGS**

**BY BEV THOMAS**

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We all really seemed to enjoy the coffee and treats at our meetings, so much fun seeing old and new friends.

Since we have had such a long break from in-person meetings, I thought I would mention that it is very helpful if you can bring your own mug to the meeting. This saves us having to wash them and bring them back and forth. But, if you haven't remembered yours, there are always extras available.

A reminder that decaf coffee or tea is 50 cents, however if you don't have coins with you, please help yourself, you can pay double next time!

For those generous people that have signed up to bring goodies, Thank you. We always send a little phone reminder a few days before the meeting. If your plans have changed, not to worry, just let us know.

We still need volunteers for the coffee committee. We are just trying this out for now and we will see if it is still enjoyed.





# CONC 2023

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### REPORTS & PHOTO CONTEST

- [2023 AGM Meeting Minutes](#)
- [President's Message](#)
- [Finance Report](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Director's Membership Report](#)
- [Director's Birding Report](#)
- [Director's Outreach & Communications Report](#)
- [Director's Botany Report](#)
- [Director BC Nature Report](#)
- [Photo Contest Winners](#)

**1. Call of the Meeting to Order:** CONC President Douglas Graham called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm. The President made a Motion to elect Archie MacDonald as AGM Chair. Seconded by Margaret Ramsay. All in favour.

**2. Determination of Quorum:** A total of 37 CONC members in good standing were in attendance. The Bylaws state that “quorum shall consist of 20 percent of the membership, but never less than 30 persons”. CONC currently has 147 memberships (including 52 family memberships), establishing therefore the quorum as 30 persons (the Bylaws are not currently clear if the quorum is intended to be based on the number of memberships or the number of members). Moved by Merle Auty that quorum was reached. Seconded by Bitten Tisdale. All in favour.

**3. Adoption and Approval of the AGM Agenda:** With one amendment (addition of a “Door Prize” item) the circulated agenda was adopted. Moved by Sheila McKenzie Brown. Seconded by Pam Laing. All in favour.

**4. Adoption and Approval of Previous AGM Minutes:** The minutes from the AGM of February 8, 2022 were previously circulated by email in February 2022 and again with the invitation to this AGM. Their adoption and approval moved by Ian Walker. Seconded by Laura Weir. All in favour.

**5. Treasurer’s Report by Margaret Ramsay:** Attachments were circulated with the AGM agenda).

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

1. Profit & Loss Budget Performance for 2022
2. Balance Sheet as at December 31, 2022
3. Proposed Budget for 2023

The membership is advised that a financial review was completed independently by Trena Smith of Capital Accounting & Bookkeeping Co. and meets with the Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. To Summarize:

- 1) Total Asset balance is \$64,923.09
- 2) The Profit/Loss for 2022 was \$6,036.14. Profit distribution of \$3,008.70 from operations and \$3,065.01 from the BC Nature AGM and Conference.
- 3) 2023 Proposed budget is balanced. The proposed budget was circulated via email prior to the AGM meeting.

**Motion to accept the financial reports and the budget for 2023.** Moved by Linda Walker. Seconded by Mike Howard. All in favour.

**6. Report from the Nominating Committee (Glenda Newman, Kristi Jarrett & Laura Weir):** The Committee reported on the process followed to solicit nominations and indicated that the following seven persons had agreed to be part of a slate of members proposed for election:

- President: Douglas Graham
- Treasurer: Roy Sinden
- BC Nature Director: Fran Fisher
- Birding Director: Mike Howard
- Botany Director: Peter Courtney
- Membership Director: Karen Pedersen
- Outreach and Communications Director: Marjorie Gonzalez

**7. First call for nominations from the floor:** Douglas Graham prefaced the three calls for nominations with short explanation of the role of each director. Robbie Bowers accepted a nomination by Glenda Newman to be considered for Outings Director. (See No. 12 for important additional information on this nomination).

**8. Directors’ reports:** The Birding Director Mike Howard made a presentation of his report as did the Secretary, Linda Walker. Other Directors were not able to attend and so their reports were presented by the AGM Chair. All reports will appear in full in the newsletter that will be published on March 1, 2023.

As part of his report, Mike Howard introduced a proposed CONC project, to build an observation platform at Thomson Marsh. As this represents a major expenditure, it is subject to approval by the Members. The proposal, as worded in the agenda, was discussed and slightly amended to incorporate the possibility of approaching other granting organizations. The amended proposal was: “That the Executive Committee is authorized to negotiate grants from the City of Kelowna, from BC Nature, and from other granting organizations, to be combined with CONC’s own resources, and then proceed with the construction of an observation platform at Thomson Marsh, in close collaboration with the

City of Kelowna.” Acceptance of this amended proposal was moved by Gwynneth Wilson. Seconded by Pam Laing. All in favour.

**9. Second call for nominations from the floor:** No additional nominations were made from the floor.

**10. President’s Report (Douglas Graham):** The President presented his 2022 report, including thanks to the many persons who contribute to the success of the Club as well as a few short notes on the remarkable life history of Black Swifts. This had reminded him of why he is a member of CONC – a forum to share information about nature and to collaborate with others committed to the stewardship of our natural resources. His full report will appear in the March newsletter.

**11. Third Call for nominations from the floor.** No additional nominations were made from the floor.

**12. Election of Officers:** The final slate of potential candidates was as described above under No. 6 and No. 7. Motion to elect the slate by Ian Walker. Seconded by Bruce Kennedy. All in favour.

Subsequently it was clarified that the Outings Director was actually intended to be filled by two co-directors, Robbie Bowers and Glenda Newman. An amendment to this effect was proposed by Douglas Graham. Seconded by Margaret Ramsay. All in favour.

The final list of elected officers was:

- **President:** Douglas Graham
- **Treasurer:** Roy Sinden
- **BC Nature Director:** Fran Fisher
- **Birding Director:** Mike Howard
- **Botany Director:** Peter Courtney
- **Membership Director:** Karen Pedersen
- **Outreach and Communications Director:** Marjorie Gonzalez
- **Outings Director:** Robbie Bowers and Glenda Newman (co-directors)

Note that Rick Gee also will sit on the Executive Committee as a full member but as Past President, did not need to be elected. The following four positions were not filled: Vice-president, Secretary, Conservation Director, and Programs Director.

**13. Door Prize:** Gwynneth Wilson won the bottle of “Black Swift” wine that was presented as a door prize, contributed by Douglas Graham and France Marcoux.

**14. Announcement of Photo Contest Winners:** Ian Walker presented the results of the annual CONC Photo Contest. The full results of the contest will also appear in the newsletter with links to view all the excellent winning photos.

**15. Presentation on Club Activities during 2022 (Rick Gee):** Rick presented a most enjoyable slide show retrospective of club activities during the past year.

**16. Adjournment:** Pam Laing motioned adjournment at 8:50 pm. Seconded by Sherrell Davidson. All in favour.

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

DOUGLAS GRAHAM, PRESIDENT

In February 2022 in my-end-of-term message, I wrote “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.” Today it seems to already be a distant memory that a year ago we had not yet met in-person. Thankfully we have pretty well got back to something close to normal. This year we had a more traditional in-person AGM on February 14, 2023. I think that CONC’s 2022 was a pretty good one; here are a few thoughts and thank-you’s.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Your dedicated Executive Committee kept CONC running. In 2022 we didn’t have a full slate but we had an enthusiastic one -- the EC members all contributed to keeping us afloat. Some members were stalwarts; others brought some new energy to the Committee. I would really like to thank the outgoing 2022 EC: Margaret Ramsay (Treasurer), Linda Walker (Secretary), Rick Gee (Past President), Fran Fisher (BC Nature Director), Peter Courtney (Botany Director), Mike Howard (Birding Director), Mike Whitaker (Conservation Director), Karen Pedersen (Membership), and Marjorie Gonzalez (Outreach and Communications). Their reports are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **MARQUEE EVENTS**

A big deal for CONC is that we hosted BC Nature's AGM in May 2022. A lot of people put long hours into organizing this successful event. Special thanks to Fran Fisher (our BC Nature Director) and Rick Gee. We also in 2022 celebrated our 60th birthday at our annual picnic. We were grateful at the picnic to have the participation of almost all the living ex-Presidents of CONC (non-extant ones were excused).

## **EXCURSIONS**

Since December 2021, our excursions have been up and running normally. All excursion announcements come from the CONC email account (to distribution lists determined by member preferences) and all excursions are on our calendar on the web page.

For birding, Mike Howard has organized more than a hundred outings – responding to one of the main interests of our members. Although we had no Outdoors Excursions Director, the various leaders did a great job of organizing hiking, cycling, and snowshoeing outings; thanks are extended to Sherrell, Conny, Robert, Rick, and others. Regular botany and fungi excursions came back on our agendas this past year, thanks to Peter Courtney.

## **MEETINGS**

In this past year, we held all our usual general meetings with a great list of interesting speakers. As the year progressed, our meetings went from Zoom-only to hybrid Zoom/in-person and finally back to exclusively in-person. Thanks to Bev Thomas and others for much appreciated coffee and snack services.

## **NEWSLETTER**

Most sincere thanks to our new editors Lisa Rae and Vivian Manning. Publication frequency has been reduced to four per year, allowing I think for more carefully prepared content in each number. Personally, I print out each newsletter to read, reread, and enjoy the content. There is always lots of interesting material, thanks to our many contributors.

## **WEBSITE AND TECHNOLOGY**

The website of a club is its public face. Sincere thanks to Rick Gee (Past President) who as webmaster, ensures our website is current and working. Now that we can go places, Rick in 2022 put the pause on his "Places to go when you can't go places" emails, which kept many of us busy at our computers during the pandemic.

## **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (CC)**

Our Conservation Director Mike Whitaker brought a new energy to CONC's conservation agenda in early 2022. The Conservation Committee met on multiple occasions with the City of Kelowna and other groups and moved forward multiple agendas. That being said, for a small club such as ours, it's hard to sustain momentum on conservation issues that these days have complex and multiple stakeholders. It remains pending to fully find our niche in the conservation landscape.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

CONC carried out lots of other activities, all of which required dedicated members to put in time and energy toward good causes. These included our participation at various festivals, clean-up activities coordinated by Merle Auty (now retired, with no replacement so far having come forward), sitting on the Standing Committee of the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP), faunal and floral inventories (thanks Mike Howard and Les Gyug), etc.

## **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023**

The full slate of elected candidates is presented elsewhere in the newsletter. Sincere thanks to those who have agreed to stay on the Executive Committee and thanks to the new blood who have stepped forward. Please note there are still vacancies which can be filled at any time...

Its hard to say what 2023 holds for CONC but it will include at the least staying "normal" in terms of our outings and activities. Some activities and foci will be dropped, mostly because of a lack of volunteers, but we are also adding new things which we hope will make the Club more relevant and interesting to all of you and bring in newer members. Of note are the following we plan to pursue: building an observation platform at Thomson Marsh, adding a new set of monthly Weekend Explorers outings, adding a Facebook page, a multiple-day excursion of the birding group to the Creston Valley Bird Festival in May, a revamp of our Bylaws and Procedural Manual, and other announcements still to come.

For me personally, I'm honoured to be selected again as President of the CONC and look forward to serving you. This will be my third and final year in this position – I'm a believer in the importance of renewal and new ideas at the President level.

**Douglas Graham**

**President, CONC**

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3. [Proposed Budget for 2023](#)

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## SECRETARY'S REPORT

LINDA WALKER, SECRETARY

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Although I am now leaving the CONC Executive Committee, I would like to say that it was my pleasure to work with the CONC Executives and invited guests (e.g., Newsletter Editors) for the past year. As the secretary who replaced Robbie Bowers (previous CONC secretary from 2020/22), I would like to thank both Robbie and Douglas Graham (current CONC president) for showing me how to prepare the agenda for the Executive Committee (EC) meetings and how to participate and draft the minutes for the ZOOM EC, General (in-person) and AGM meetings. Extra thanks to both Robbie and Douglas for filing these documents in the CONC archives.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

KAREN PEDERSEN, DIRECTOR

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The CONC's current Membership numbers are in line with this same time last year.

### February 2023

95 single

52 Family

147 Memberships

95 single

105 Family

200 individual Members

### February 2022

93 single

53 Family

146 Memberships

93 single

107 Family

200 individual Members

We have had both "new and renewed" interest in our Club this year with (16) persons joining for the first time ever and (5) returning after some years away.

In the past the CONC has gone through a bit of a growth spurt between March and June as new and old come out to enjoy the warmer weather outings. We hope that history repeats!

## BIRDING REPORT

MIKE HOWARD, DIRECTOR

---

104 CONC organised birding excursions, including:

- 39 Monday outings
- 45 Thursday outings
- 8 Saturday outings
- 12 special events outings (Sweagle Count, Critter Counts, BC Nature AGM tours).



*Creation of an eBird account for the CONC Birding Group;*

- 157 checklists submitted of 193 bird species.
- One year of outing records for 2023 leaders to consult.
- [eBird - Discover a new world of birding...](#)

Submitted a grant application to *Partners in Parks* for a viewing platform at Thomson Marsh.

Conducted a membership Birding survey to determine needs and interests.

### **2022/2023 Birding Leaders:**

*Our birding excursions have been possible thanks to:*

Annette Lachine, Archie MacDonald, Bitten Tisdale, Bruce Kennedy, Dave Palsat, Deborah White, Douglas Graham, Elke Fischer, Fran Fisher, Gwynneth Wilson, Ian Walker, Jasmine Korcok, Joyce Fraser, Karen Blumel, Lesley Robertson, Lisa Rae, Margaret Bryan, Margaret Ramsay, Merle Auty, Pam Laing, Rick Gee, Sheila McKenzie Brown, Simon Pethick, Steffany Walker, Stu Weir, and Vivian Manning.

*Our contributing photographers included:*

Bruce Kennedy, Douglas Graham, Ian Walker, Karen Blumel, Lisa Rae, Pam Laing and Vivian Manning.

### **2023 Birding Activities Plan:**

- Membership Birding Survey results were incorporated into the 2023 Plan
- Maintain Monday, Thursday, and Saturday birding excursion format/schedule
- Modify the timing of the summer recess
- Participate in the Sweagle Count, Johns Family Nature Conservancy Park Survey, Okanagan Mountain Regional Park Critter Count and organise a Birding Outing for Heritage Week
- Participate in the Creston Birding Festival
- With membership approval initiate the Thomson Marsh Viewing Platform Project (see details below)

### **Thomson Marsh Viewing Platform Project:**

- *November presentation to the CONC membership*
- *Partners in Parks Grant application submitted November 30, 2022*
- *Notification of \$20K grant award in principle on January 27, 2023*
- *Estimated platform cost ~\$55K; CONC contribution \$35K + volunteer hours*
- *BC Nature Grant application for contingency (everything costs more today)*

**Motion:** *That the Executive Committee is authorized to negotiate grants from the City of Kelowna and from BC Nature, **or other organizations**, to be combined with CONC's own resources, and then proceed with the construction of an observation platform at Thomson Marsh, in close collaboration with the City of Kelowna.*

Motion Approved unanimously, with a modification as shown in bold. Refer to the AGM 2023 Minutes for details.



**Key activities in 2022:**

- Participated in the following community events:
  - July 1: Canada Day Celebrations, Kelowna
  - Sept 10: Kikinee Festival, Kelowna
- Partnered with NatureKids BC for the above community events: good to increase cooperation between clubs.
- Awarded the Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary:
  - In memory of Brenda Thomson and her family: responsible for the land donation that makes up Thomson Marsh Wetland.
  - This \$1,500 bursary is given to “A student taking studies in an Environmental Field who demonstrates financial need”
  - The 2022 recipient is a student who graduated from Kelowna Secondary School and is majoring in Biology at UBCO.
- Created a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/okanagannature>
  - Just went live and will be used to promote CONC activities
  - Reaches new audiences and gives a new way to communicate with CONC members and the public

**Upcoming activities in 2023:**

- Continue to participate in community events whenever members are available to volunteer, for example:
  - Meadowlark Festival, May 19-22
  - RDCO Volunteer Program, May 26-27
  - Many events are new or returning since 2019
  - We will send emails to members asking for volunteers when there is an opportunity to participate in events
- Possible projects in 2023, to be decided with EC:
  - Print updated materials for community events?
    - For example: Update poster and/or handouts with website address and Facebook page
  - Are members available to do classroom presentations?
    - Sometimes we are asked this question
    - We can send a message to members asking:
      - Would you be able/willing to volunteer for this?
      - What topic could you present about? What grades?
    - If there are members who would like to do this, it could be advertised on our website and perhaps also on the Facebook page

**BOTANY REPORT****BY PETER COURTNEY, DIRECTOR**

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Every year a small group of CONC members visit various locations in the Okanagan to look for wildflowers and other vascular plants. We do this during the May to July period because that's the peak flowering period. We also look for mushrooms during this time and in the fall when the mushrooms are fruiting. We did 14 botany outings overall in the season.

Unlike the birders, we spend most of our time looking down rather than up and walking is often slow, but our walks are for all levels of learners wanting to know the names of things and a bit about the plants. To assist those who have difficulty registering and remembering names we provide checklists of the plants we expect to see at each of the outings as well as a follow up list of what we actually saw.

This year we'll be doing the same routine as in the past, **Fridays from May 6 to July 22**. In May we'll begin by visiting places in the valley such as Beaver Lake Road, Knox Mountain, and Scenic Canyon. Later as it gets warmer at higher elevations, we'll visit sites on Highway 33 and Glenrosa Ave and in late July we'll check out Big White Mountain for alpine flowers.

The **2023 schedule is posted on the CONC web page** under **Our Activities – Botany** together with **short lists and pictures** of plants we expect to see at the various locations. **On the CONC calendar**, there are details of when and where to meet. And finally, email event notifications will be sent out to members who have indicated an interest in botany when they signed up for their membership.

In each CONC newsletter there is a **Botany News column** that provides information on CONC botany outings as well as other botany events and items of interest.

**BC NATURE AGM AND CONFERENCE: MAY, 2023****FRAN FISHER, DIRECTOR**

---

Briefly I just wanted to thank all those who helped at the 2022 BC Nature AGM and remind everyone of the BC Nature AGM in Langley, BC, on May 4-7th this year.



### FLORA

1st Place – Karen Blumel  
“Sunflowers Galore”  
(Armstrong, BC)

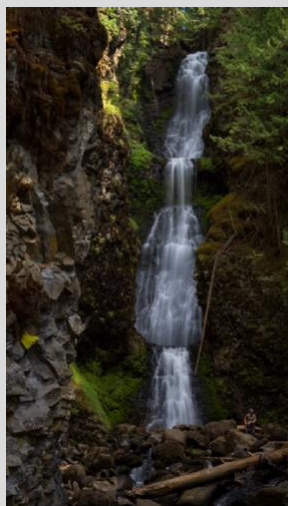


### FAUNA

1st Place – Vivian Manning  
“Western Bluebird Patient Parent”  
(Kelowna)

**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**

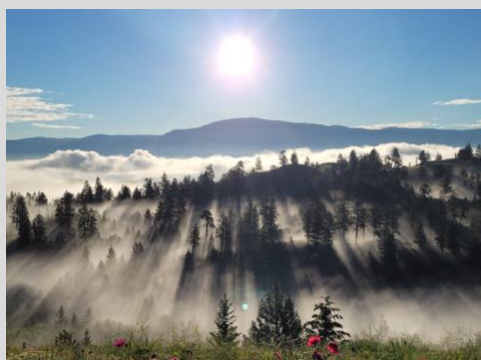
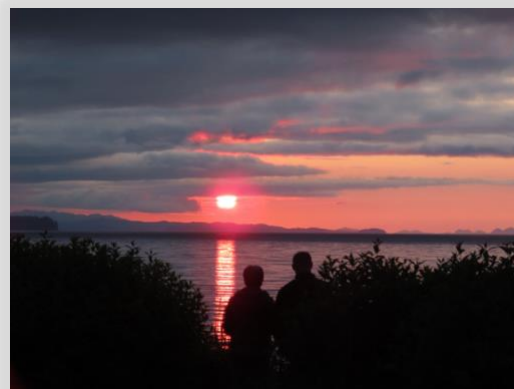
Thanks to all who  
contributed and  
judged photos,  
making the Photo  
Contest a success!



### PEOPLE IN NATURE

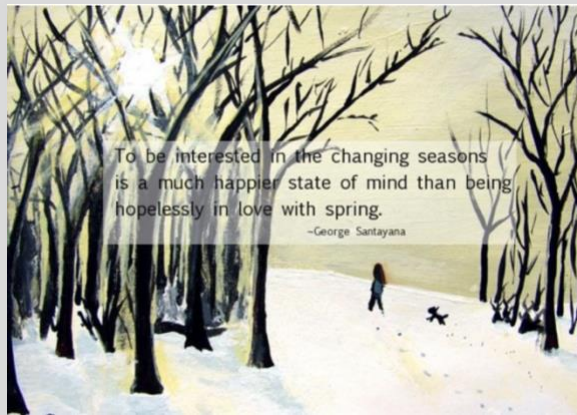
1st Place (Tie): Vivian Manning –  
“Triple Decker Falls Contemplation”  
(Wells Gray Provincial Park)

1st Place (Tie): Pam Laing –  
“Sharing the Sunset”  
(Cluxewe, Vancouver Island)



### LANDSCAPES

1st Place – Maryse Hervieux  
“Misty Sunrise”  
(Oliver, BC)



To be interested in the changing seasons  
is a much happier state of mind than being  
hopelessly in love with spring.

—George Santayana