

October, 2023

The Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club

www.okanagannature.org



Know Nature and Keep it
Worth Knowing

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Monthly Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of the month.

The next general meeting takes place on October 10, 7:00 p.m., ****in person**** at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna. Please see our [Speaker details](#) on page 3.

WELCOME NEW CONC MEMBERS!

Our club has been growing and thriving. We want to welcome our recent new members. Now that activities are back on and in-person meetings are commencing as of September, we look forward to meeting you in the natural world.

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| □ Shelly Waldern | □ George Athans | □ Janet & Fred Bowles |
| | □ Melissa Therrien | |

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DOUGLAS GRAHAM

Members: since my last communication to you in the newsletter of June 1, it has been a momentous summer indeed. Maybe a better word is horrendous as fires swept through our area in our worst fire season since 2003. I fervently hope that none of our members suffered any losses and if you did, or those close to you, I'd like to express my sympathies. Fires in our area are a normal element of the landscape we inhabit but for sure their ferocity this summer took us by surprise. And of course, knowing that our mosaic of grasslands and ponderosa pine forests are supposed to burn periodically, is cold comfort when you have a residence next to such habitats! As I write this at the end of September, it looks like we are out of the worst of it but there are still several large fires on the West Kelowna side that are not yet classed as "held".

As is the usual case, CONC slowed down in the summer during the hot months. Birding went on a hiatus for much of July and August although the hikers did keep going through much of the summer. I was not able to get to any of them but there were some great botany trips and I heard that the hikers' overnight trip to Lake Louise was a resounding success. We also participated in the Canada Day celebrations on July 1 with a booth and again at the Kikineee Festival in early September. Our biggest project continued apace — the planned construction of a two-story wildlife observation platform at Thomson Marsh. Led by Mike Howard and Archie MacDonald, a group of us continue to work closely with the City of Kelowna on the myriad things that have to be done before we receive the necessary building permits. It remains to be seen whether we can begin construction this fall; if not, we would plan to start building next spring.

Since our return to holding general meetings, we had a great presentation this month by Rick Gee and Jen Matthews on their Newfoundland trip. The October general meeting is on Oct. 10 and as per tradition, it is Members' Night. Please put together a 10-minute presentation to tell your fellow members (and perhaps show some photos) of your recent travels or adventures. In order to plan the evening, please advise me as much in advance as possible if you can participate. I myself will not be there as I'll be traveling internationally but I'll work with my fellow Board members to set up the program.

This is another great newsletter, thanks to Lisa and Vivian. Please enjoy!

Douglas Graham
President, CONC

Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club www.okanagannature.org P.O. Box 21128, RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 9N8 Email info@okanagannature.org for any general enquiry		
EXECUTIVE - 2022-23		
President	Douglas Graham	president@okanagannature.org
Vice-president	Vacant	
Secretary	Vacant	
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Website: www.okanagannature.org	Rick Gee	admin@okanagannature.org
Nature Kids Kelowna	Marjorie Gonzalez	outreach@okanagannature.org
MONTHLY MEETINGS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ 2nd Tuesday of the month, September to June, 7:00 p.m. at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna. □ Visitors are welcome. □ Host: Bev Thomas. <u>Please bring your own cup.</u> 		
MEMBERSHIP: Karen Pedersen membership@okanagannature.org <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ 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. 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. 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Next deadline date for submissions is November 15, 2023 □ Send submissions to editor@okanagannature.org □ Email distribution: Karen Pedersen 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Friday Botany trips meet according to emailed details sent for each outing by Botany Director Peter Courtney (Spring to Fall) 		
HIKES: All hikers meet at the Apple Bowl* (Bring a lunch) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ 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:

CONC MEMBER'S NIGHT, OCTOBER 10 GENERAL MEETING

Our annual Member's Night will be held on **Tuesday, October 10th**. CONC members are invited to share their travel experiences and/or photos with the members. This is a much-anticipated meeting; presentations in the past have been exceptional as members shared their experiences in the natural world both near and far. If you would like to participate, please contact Douglas Graham, CONC President.

ACTIVITIES REPORTS:

BIRDING REPORT

BY MIKE HOWARD

So far during 2023, members were able to participate in 62 CONC-organised birding excursions. This included:

- 27 Monday outings
- 28 Thursday outings
- 6 Saturday outings including a trip to Douglas Lake (Sandhill Crane migration) and the Creston Birding Festival
- Johns Family Nature Conservancy Annual Critter Count

During the above excursions in the Central Okanagan, we submitted 129 complete checklists to eBird and recorded sightings of 177 species. Outings to date 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 Annette Lachaine, Archie MacDonald, Bitten Tisdale, Bruce Kennedy, Deborah White, Douglas Graham, Fran Fisher, Gwynneth Wilson, Ian Walker, Jasmine Korcok, Joyce Fraser, Karen Blumel, Lesley Robertson, Lisa Rae, Pam Laing, Rick Gee, Simon Pethick, Steffany Walker, Mike Howard and Vivian Manning.

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, Douglas Graham, Ian Walker, Karen Blumel, Lisa Rae, Pam Laing and Vivian Manning. I have selected a few examples of their contributions, below:



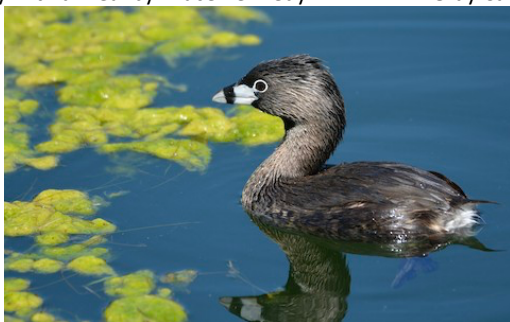
Osprey with a meal by Bruce Kennedy



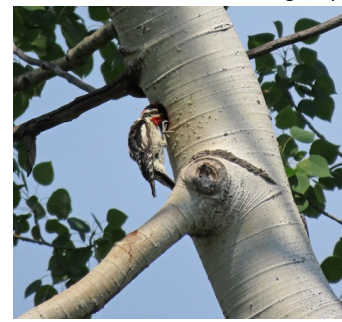
Gray Catbird by Vivian Manning



Male Western Tanager by Bruce Kennedy



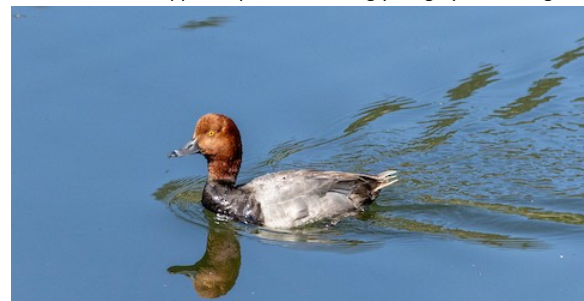
Pied-billed Grebe by Ian Walker



Red-napped Sapsucker feeding young by Pam Laing



American Coot adult with chicks by Lisa Rae



Redhead by Karen Blumel

Birding Activities Planned for the Remainder of 2023:

Now that we have returned from an extended summer birding recess, as a result of the local wildfires, we plan to continue with weekly Monday, Thursday and Saturday outings as well as the Christmas Bird Counts.

In addition, we are actively working on the development of the proposed Thomson Marsh Park Viewing Platform Project which is a significant undertaking for the club.

Thomson Marsh Viewing Platform Project progress to date:

With approval from the membership during the February Annual General Meeting, the CONC Executive Committee subsequently struck a special committee to manage the Thomson Marsh Park Viewing Platform Project. The project team is made up of seven CONC members: Archie MacDonald, Bruce Kennedy, Douglas Graham, Les Gyug, Lisa Rae, Mike Howard and Roy Sinden.

The Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Kelowna "Partners in Parks" Grant Program was finalized with Cadre Simpson on March 29, 2023, confirming approval of the \$20,000 grant from the City for a two-level viewing platform to be located within the Thomson Marsh Park. In addition, the City provided the time charges of one of its key technical resources to support the CONC Project Team.

The CONC Project Team representatives Douglas Graham, Archie MacDonald and Mike Howard have met regularly with the Project Review Team made up of Parks and Building Planning representatives (Cadre Simpson and Amy Nyhof) and Wayne Wilson representing the Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT) who hold the Conservation Covenant on Thomson Marsh.

A preliminary siting study was undertaken in March and reviewed with the Thomson Marsh land donor. Since then, formal support for the project has been received from the Thomson family and COLT. A design package was tendered and subsequently awarded to Peter Chataway, a local architectural designer, who also designed the Swan Lake Platform in Vernon.

A conceptual design was prepared showing a two-level wooden structure with the first level 6 feet above grade and accessible by a wheelchair ramp and a second level 9 feet above the first.

After considering several sites along Thomson Marsh, the preferred location of the viewing platform was flagged in front of "Teal Pond" (as it is known by some locals). The conceptual design and proposed location were the subject of refinement meetings held with the City representatives from various departments the week of May 1, 2023. Constructive comments were incorporated into the design layout prior to the Structural Engineer Joseph Sarkor (JMS Engineering Ltd) commencing his review and detailing of connections.

An Archaeological Assessment of the proposed site location was conducted in June 2023. The results of the assessment confirmed that the site was suitable for the proposed viewing platform.

A two-for-one surface riparian rehabilitation compensation plan was called for in order to meet our project's Environmental Permit requirements. With the assistance of the Okanagan

Similkameen Stewardship (Alyson Skinner), Les Gyug and Lisa Rae prepared a Rehabilitation Plan incorporating local native species and a planting strategy which was submitted for review on June 24, 2023. Comments were received from the City and an updated plan incorporating the constructive comments was resubmitted on August 5, 2023.

Verbal approval to proceed was received and the formal Project Environmental Permit is anticipated. Following the installation of the platform, CONC volunteers will be asked to participate in the preparation and planting of the riparian zone.

The structural analysis of the viewing platform design was submitted to the City for their review on July 14, 2023. The review comments called for further analysis of the structure using pressure-treated lumber. This analysis resulted in a minor modification of the viewing platform design. The structural drawings and schedules were resubmitted on August 16, 2023, and the Development Permit application was subsequently submitted on August 28, 2023.

Once the Project Environmental Permit and the Development Permit have been approved, we will be able to advance the project:

- ☐ Confirm the participation of lumber suppliers (Archie MacDonald has been working diligently on this aspect);
- ☐ Identify local installation companies;

- ❑ Draft the installation tender documents with the aid of the City procurement department;
- ❑ Consider the participation of a sponsor for riparian plan costs; and,
- ❑ Finalise plans for viewing platform displays and content.

Depending upon how long it takes to obtain the Environmental and Development Permit approvals award of an installation contract may be delayed until the spring of 2024.

Note: Please see related, below: [Thomson Marsh Viewing Platform, Preliminary Call for Photos](#)

Rare Bird Sightings:

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>

BOTANY REPORT

BY PETER COURTNEY



Steer's Head, credit: Peter Courtney

This year CONC regular weekly botany outings began on May 5 and ended on July 22. This is the period when the diversity of flowering plants is greatest. In addition to these scheduled events, there was one impromptu outing to see Steer's Head flowering at Jackpine Meadows on May 7. The number of species seen over all the outings was 357 and the average number per regular outing was 61. A summary of the dates, locations, number of attendees, and the number of species seen are shown below.

The outings focused on plants flowering at the time of the visits and keyed on reproductive features to facilitate identification. Flowering began earliest in the valley and progressed up to the higher elevations as the season progressed. Early in the year, we saw lots

of our Okanagan signature species Arrowleaf Balsamroot as well as various species of Desert-parsleys, mustards, violets and popular favorites like Chocolate Lily, Skunk Cabbage, Lemonweed, Ballhead Waterleaf, Yellow Bell, Western Spring Beauty, and Bitterroot.

A checklist and field guide were used to assist identification in the field and the final list of what was seen was sent to the participants after each outing. When Ian Walker was present, he photographed many of the plants seen during the outings and posted the results to iNaturalist - links to some of his postings are included below.



Broad-leaved Twayblade, credit: Peter Courtney

Some notable highlights of the 2023 season:

At Jackpine Meadows, while there was still snow on the ground, we saw the small poppy Steer's Head flowering together with a colourful subalpine flush of white Western Spring Beauty and Yellow Bell interspersed with Long-Flowered Bluebells.



Northwestern Moonwort, credit: Peter Courtney

At Wrinkly Face Provincial Park we had our highest number of attendees (14) and our second highest species count (78) for the year. Needle-leaved Navarretia, currently a blue-listed species (i.e. of special concern in BC), was very abundant compared with previous years. Ian Walker's photos, posted on iNaturalist can be viewed at:

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2023-06-16&place_id=any&user_id=lesfreck&verifiable=any

At Prather Creek, participants found a few uncommon Yellow Coralroot and Sticky Geranium, the first record for this site. We identified 8 species of ferns including 3 species of moonwort. With mushroom experts in attendance, we also found many LBMs (Little Brown Mushrooms) and several larger, more identifiable mushrooms.

At Larch Hills, we found 12 species of orchid and the highest number of species (79) for the year. Two Twayblade orchid species were flowering and a third was just ready to open. We also found and identified some interesting mushrooms during this visit. Ian Walker's photos posted on iNaturalist can be viewed at: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?created_on=2023-06-30&place_id=any&user_id=lesfreck&verifiable=any

At Jackpine Meadows in mid-July, we saw a diverse display of subalpine plants in bloom. Some of the uncommon finds were Gairdner's Yampa, Alaska Rein Orchid, Hooded Ladies' Tresses, Needle-leaved Navarretia (blue-listed: of special concern in BC), and Alpine Sorrel (red-listed: at risk of being lost in BC). Ian Walker's photos, posted on iNaturalist can be viewed at:

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2023-07-14&order=asc&order_by=observed_on&place_id=any&subview=table&user_id=lesfreck&verifiable=any



Sticky Geranium, credit: Peter Courtney

At Big White Road and FSR 201 (Forestry Service Road 201), we saw a mix of middle elevation and some subalpine plants. Some of the uncommon finds were Hooker's Thistle, Robbin's Milk-Vetch, Richardson's Geranium, Cut-Leaved Anemone, Northwestern Moonwort, and Pennsylvania Cinquefoil. Ian Walker's photos, posted on iNaturalist, can be viewed at:

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2023-07-07&order=asc&order_by=observed_on&place_id=any&user_id=lesfreck&verifiable=any

At Big White Mountain we saw a good diversity of subalpine plants in bloom. Some of the uncommon finds were Northern Goldenrod, Lyall's Goldenweed, Alpine Sandwort, Elmer's Paintbrush, Whitebark Pine, and Cascade Willow. We also found a few mushrooms near the bottom of the mountain, most notably the poisonous *Amanita muscaria* and the prime edible *Boletus edulis*.



Needle-leaved Navarretia, credit: Peter Courtney

Orchids and Ferns:

Orchids were of interest to most participants who found 15 species overall, including Yellow, Striped and Spotted Coralroots; Yellow and Mountain Lady's Slippers; Rattlesnake Plantain; Northern, Heart-leaved and Broad-leaved Twayblade; Slender, Fragrant White, Alaska and One-leaved Rein-Orchid; Calypso Orchid; and Lady's Tresses. For some participants ferns were of particular interest and 8 species overall were identified including three species of hard-to-find moonwort species: Dainty, Mingan and Northwestern Moonwort

Mystery plants:

Mystery plants are those whose identity is not readily apparent, and that usually require some follow-up after the outing. Good photos, used in conjunction with eFlora and/or iNaturalist, often solve the mystery. Other times the identity is obtained during a subsequent visit when additional anatomical features are present, such as seeds or berries. As a last resort plant keys are used, usually those in Illustrated Flora of British Columbia or Flora of the Pacific Northwest. For our CONC participants, the usual mystery plants were the yellow-flowered groundsels, butterweeds and arnicas, the various mustards and the blue-flowered asters because there are several of each of these that look very similar.

Ongoing botanical activities, events and information:

While there are no more scheduled CONC plant outings for this year there may be an occasional off-schedule outing such as an outing to look for mushrooms, the timing of which would depend largely on moisture conditions. A notification by email will be sent to interested CONC participants if that happens.

On an ongoing basis, you can see what plants people are seeing in our area by checking 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>.

September and October is the prime time of the year for mushrooms. If you're interested in mushrooms you'll want to check out the Sicomous Fungi Festival September 15-17 in Sicomous <http://www.fungifestival.com/>. Other events are sponsored by the Vancouver Mycological Society <https://www.vanmyco.org/> the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society <https://svims.club/> and other mycological societies in BC and Washington State.

Regarding botany field guides and helpful references, we have been using *Plants of the Southern Interior of British Columbia*, Lone Pine Press as our principal field guide during our outings. The best online resource for BC plants is eFlora <https://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/>. A very good alternative, especially when the eflora webpage is down is the Burke Herbarium site at <https://burkeherbarium.org/imagecollection/>. An excellent FREE cellphone/tablet app is *British Columbia Wildflowers* available for both Android and iPhone/iPad. iNaturalist is a very popular online 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.

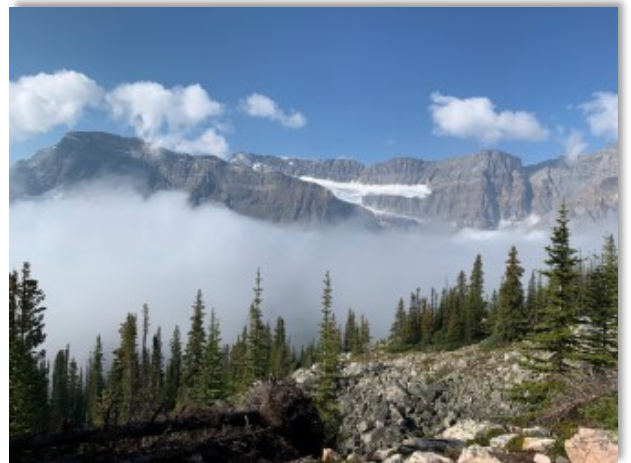
Hiking (Sole Survivors and Ramblers)

Hiking continued through June, July, and early August for both Sole Survivors and Ramblers. As temperatures rose, both groups started earlier and focused on hikes in shadier locations or those at high elevations. Several highlights were Three Blind Mice in Naramata, Enderby Bluffs, Silver Star and Eagle Bluffs and included stops at our favourite ice cream shops on the way home!



Annual Summer Hiking Camp – Lake Louise

Twenty-two Sole Survivors arrived in Lake Louise on August 15 and had 5 amazing days of hiking. We had mostly clear skies, very little smoke, and one afternoon of rain. Hikes included Agnes Lake and beyond (to Bif and Little Beehive), Sentinel Pass, Eiffel Lake, the Plain of 6 Glaciers, Fairview Lookout and Beyond, Helen Lake and The Ink Pots. Fabulous views and great company!



Biking

A number of cycling trips led by Dave Newman were held on Fridays in May, June and early July. Destinations included Wood Lake Loop, Rail Trail/Quail Ridge, and Oyama to Vernon via the Rail Trail.

Hiking and Cycling continue to be well attended and we give a big thank you to our many leaders. We also want to gently remind members that detailed information about our weekly outing can be found on the CONC calendar.



The Gallagher's Canyon Bluebird Trail consists of 26 Bluebird boxes in 2 distinct areas – an original group of 12 boxes on the plateau behind the Pinnacle Ridge area of the Gallagher's Canyon community, and a newer group of 14 boxes on the plateau along and behind the 8th green of the golf course. This year's maintenance work and monitoring was complicated by the closure of a portion of the Scenic Canyon Trail in Mission Creek that joins access between the two areas.

Trail work began on March 30 with a cleanup of the previous year's boxes. On April 6 we began weekly trail monitoring. The first week of monitoring revealed the beginnings of three nests, one of which was identifiable as a Bluebird nest. April 14 revealed the same situation, however this week an adult pair of Bluebirds were seen in and on a box with no nest. Tree Swallows were also viewed perched on 3 separate boxes. April 21 revealed the same, but with no Bluebirds in view. April 29 found 9 complete or partially completed nests, 5 of which were identifiable as Bluebird nests.

May 8th & 9th monitoring began with a number of nests with eggs: 15 Bluebird eggs over four nests, two House Wren eggs in one nest, and one Tree Swallow egg in one nest. May 19th-20th monitoring brought 26 Bluebird eggs in 5 boxes, with adult Bluebirds noted coming and going from the boxes. Tree Swallows were also viewed flying to and from boxes. Two House Wren hatchlings, less than one week old, were observed, along with five House Wren eggs in another box. May 24th brought Bluebird hatchlings into view: 21 hatchlings, plus one viewable egg, over 6 boxes. House Wrens had hatchlings in 2 boxes, and another box contained a full Tree Swallow nest containing 5 eggs.



June 1&4 monitoring revealed one Bluebird nest that previously contained hatchlings now appeared to be vacant of birds, however, the remaining 5 nests held 28 Bluebird hatchlings/nestlings (with adults coming and going), along with 2 House Wren nestlings and a Tree Swallow incubating eggs and an additional nest with five Tree Swallow eggs. June 10th saw 24 Bluebird nestlings over 4 boxes, with one set of 5 nestlings appearing to have fledged from one nest. Adult Bluebirds were observed throughout the area. Tree Swallow nestlings/fledglings and House Wren nestlings/fledglings were also viewed, along with adult birds. By June 11th monitoring, all Bluebirds appeared to have fully fledged, as all nests were empty of birds. Tree Swallow nestlings were still viewed, as were additional House Wren eggs in another nest. On June 21st, all Bluebird nests remained empty, although numerous juveniles were spotted in the area. Also, I had some contact with neighbours whose houses back onto the ridge advising that they were seeing numerous juveniles and adults in the area.



July monitoring commenced with views of Tree Swallows coming and going, including two nestlings. This week also brought a second round of Bluebird eggs: 28 eggs spread over 6 boxes. July 11th monitoring revealed the same sets of eggs. Tree Swallows and House Wrens continued in small numbers. The following week all Bluebird eggs had hatched, with 28 hatchlings visible over 6 boxes. Over the next week, the same hatchlings were viewed with eyes opened and feathers developing. The next week of monitoring was, unfortunately, missed, and the following week, in early August, all Bluebirds appeared to have fledged.

A very successful season, with 2 successful hatches, all appearing to have successfully fledged! Many thanks to Rick Gee for providing me the opportunity to monitor the trail this season, and for his generous onsite "how-to" teaching. It was quite a thrill watching the entire process, from nest building to successful fledging, and the learning experience was very rewarding.



The Central Okanagan Naturalists once again continued our annual ritual of the Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park Bird and Critter Count. The count has been going since 1993, including 11 years of solid count data prior to the 2023 firestorm that burned over almost the entire park. This study continues to be the only long-term study of a bird community before and after a major fire in the mountain forests of western North America.

On (or about) June 3rd, 2023, 25 observers tallied 1733 birds of 92 species on 13 routes in 45 party hours (not including the John's Family Conservancy Park count done the week before).

Most birds that increased in numbers after the 2003 firestorm continue to do well but we are starting to see decreases from maximum post-fire numbers. The top six species were: Warbling Vireo (135), Spotted Towhee (132), House Wren (132), Cedar Waxwing (87), American Robin (81) and Dusky Flycatcher (74). These are the most successful shrub-habitat birds that seem to have done quite well after the 2003 fire. This is the first time Cedar Waxwings have made it into the top six as they were very slow to increase after the fire until the broad-leaved shrubs at low elevations had grown to 5-m tall or more.

House Wrens are a good example of a species that benefited from the fire. After the two-year hiatus in 2004-2005 when the park was closed and the count was not done, House Wrens had increased very quickly from an average of 2.6 per count prior to the fire to 51 counted in 2006. That kept increasing year after year until they were the most abundant bird counted from 2010-2019, with an average of 271 counted per year, topping the count list each of those years. As most of the fire-killed snags have now fallen, cavity nests have become fewer, and the open habitats that House Wrens prefer are closing into very dense 5-m and taller lodgepole pine at mid-elevations. Consequently, House Wren numbers have decreased, with an average of only 112 counted from 2021-2023.

Some forest birds continue to do rather poorly. Again this year, there were no Golden-crowned Kinglets counted, and only 2 Townsend's Warblers, which compares to 27 and 55 averaged per year respectively before the fire. Brown Creepers have still not been recorded on the count since 2003. Only 4 Red-breasted Nuthatches were counted this year, which is way down from the average of 83 counted per year before the fire.

The most common critters were Yellow-pine Chipmunk (42), Yellow-bellied Marmot (8), Columbian Ground Squirrel (8), and Red Squirrel (5).

Once again, Ian Walker deserves a special mention for contributing 88 observations, photos and/or recordings of all manner of birds, beasts, butterflies and plants to iNaturalist from the Rimrock trail with the Monday morning birders.

Once again thanks to all the volunteers, both this year and other years, who have kept this count going since 1993.

The 2023 bird species list for the Okanagan Mt Prov Park Bird and Critter Count:

Canada Goose	32	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	6
Barrow's Goldeneye	1	Tree Swallow	20
Ruddy Duck	5	Violet-green Swallow	34
California Quail	22	Barn Swallow	10
Ruffed Grouse	7	Cliff Swallow	2
Eurasian Collared-Dove	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7
Mourning Dove	12	Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
Common Nighthawk	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	4
Common Poorwill	2	Pygmy Nuthatch	23
White-throated Swift	5	Rock Wren	6
Rufous Hummingbird	9	House Wren	132
Calliope Hummingbird	11	Marsh Wren	1
American Coot	3	European Starling	23
Spotted Sandpiper	2	Gray Catbird	32
Common Loon	1	Western Bluebird	4
Turkey Vulture	49	Mountain Bluebird	11
Osprey	8	Townsend's Solitaire	3
Golden Eagle	3	Veery	43

Cooper's Hawk	1	Swainson's Thrush	32
Northern Goshawk	1	Hermit Thrush	4
Red-tailed Hawk	9	American Robin	81
Red-naped Sapsucker	2	Cedar Waxwing	87
Downy Woodpecker	1	House Finch	27
Hairy Woodpecker	3	Cassin's Finch	10
Pileated Woodpecker	2	American Goldfinch	24
Northern Flicker	41	Chipping Sparrow	40
Merlin	1	Dark-eyed Junco	14
Olive-sided Flycatcher	8	White-crowned Sparrow	4
Western Wood-Pewee	23	Vesper Sparrow	9
Willow Flycatcher	5	Song Sparrow	15
Least Flycatcher	3	Spotted Towhee	132
Hammond's Flycatcher	14	Bullock's Oriole	13
Dusky Flycatcher	70	Red-winged Blackbird	5
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	14	Brown-headed Cowbird	20
Say's Phoebe	3	Brewer's Blackbird	1
Western Kingbird	4	Orange-crowned Warbler	31
Eastern Kingbird	9	Nashville Warbler	46
Cassin's Vireo	13	MacGillivray's Warbler	41
Warbling Vireo	135	Yellow Warbler	31
Red-eyed Vireo	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	45
Steller's Jay	1	Townsend's Warbler	2
Black-billed Magpie	7	Wilson's Warbler	3
Clark's Nutcracker	9	Western Tanager	31
American Crow	1	Black-headed Grosbeak	37
Common Raven	6	Lazuli Bunting	2
Black-capped Chickadee	9	Hummingbird sp.	1
Mountain Chickadee	2	Empidonax sp.	1
		Swallow sp.	4

CONC's RDCO BIODIVERSITY CHECKLIST UPDATE: SPIDERS

DOUGLAS GRAHAM

In the last newsletter of June 1, 2023, CONC launched its biodiversity database of the Central Okanagan: RDCOChecklist.info. In this regular column, we plan to provide short updates on the regional district's biodiversity and on the features of the Checklist.

It's a pleasure to announce that Jim Nastos has agreed to "curate" the spiders in the Checklist. He will keep those records up to date and respond to queries on spiders. Jim is a Kelowna-based spider aficionado and well-connected to many of the province's spider experts. He is also an Information Technology expert associated with Okanagan College and was instrumental in setting up the student "capstone project" that allowed the database's website to be developed. Hopefully, other knowledgeable persons will play a similar role as "curators" for other plant or animal groups.

Spiders form the Order Araneae of the Class Arachnida. The spider fauna of the RDCO is poorly known. In part, this is because the identification of many species is quite difficult, sometimes requiring collection of specimens, and the province's leading spider experts haven't done much collecting in the district. iNaturalist is not able to identify many spiders to the species level, which means that there are reduced numbers of reliable species-level records on that platform. Finally, there are a great many spider species and many of them are small and difficult to find or collect.

What does the Checklist currently say about our knowledge of the district's spider fauna? Summary information is available by choosing Spiders from the group pulldown menu on the home page. There are currently 80 confirmed species, 178 probable species, and 43 "to be determined", for a total of 301 species. There are 900 species of spiders in BC so even those impressive numbers for the Central Okanagan are surely conservative.

The probable species all have distributions that strongly suggest they occur in the Central Okanagan and most of them are represented in collections from nearby locations in the north and south Okanagan. Almost all of these probable species will eventually be confirmed in the RDCO, but somebody has to find them, identify them, and report them!

As for other animal groups, E-Fauna BC and iNaturalist have been important sources of distribution information for spiders that we consulted to put together the spider list for the RDCO. In addition, a very good checklist is available to the Spiders of British Columbia: Bennett, R., et al. 2020. *Checklist of the Spiders (Araneae) of British Columbia*. It can be downloaded at: [https://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/efauna/documents/BC Spider Checklist 25 Mar 020 FINAL.PDF](https://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/efauna/documents/BC_Spider_Checklist_25_Mar_020_FINAL.PDF). The BC Checklist includes specific mentions of many Okanagan specimens.

The Bennett checklist now seems to be moving online with updated records and information being posted at https://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/spiders/taxa/spiders/bc_spiders.html by a number of BC's leading spider experts: R.G. Bennett, D. Copley, C. Copley, and D.C.A. Blades. To a limited extent, this team is also posting verified records on iNaturalist. Jim will be looking at these records and sources to update the RDCO Checklist's information.

All of which suggests that this is a group where a relatively small investment in developing some expertise could pay off by expanding considerably our knowledge of the Okanagan spider fauna. To provide inputs or for any guidance or questions, please feel to drop Jim a note at RDCOChecklist.info@gmail.com.

The photo is of a spider from near Mission Creek, observed by me on 11 July 2020. It is the non-native Hobo Spider, *Eratigena agrestis*.



On a non-spider note, it's big news in the birding community to add a new bird species to the Checklist for the Central Okanagan. On September 11, Kalin Ocaña spotted a Northern Parula in West Kelowna. This eastern warbler is rare anywhere in western North America and a great record for the Okanagan! And then on Sept. 24 he added our first Black-throated Grey Warbler!

MUSHROOM CLASSIFICATION - WHAT IS A SPECIES?

BY MITCHELL MILGRUM

Trying to identify mushrooms can be rewarding. It can also be frustrating, in part because of the vast number of mushrooms - well over 3000 different species in British Columbia alone. There are long-established protocols which can assist us. And assistance we need, as not only are we dealing with vast numbers, but there's turmoil in the mycological community these days, with mushroom names frequently changing.

There's a binomial (two names) naming system for all plant and animal life on Earth that has been in use for hundreds of years. Carl Linnaeus, an 18th-century Swedish naturalist, was the first to promote this system, which consists of a genus name and a species name for all plants and animals. This binomial naming system is part of a classification hierarchy established in science that starts at the most general and works down to the specific. In the broadest sense, mushrooms are part of the fungi kingdom, a kingdom with equal status to that of the plant and animal kingdoms. We descend through divisions, subdivisions, class, order, and family associations until we arrive at the bottom two rungs of the ladder, the genus and species. Most of the time when doing mushroom identification we focus on these last two rungs, and the idea is that with this scientific exactness, we prevent confusion. The binomial system gives us unambiguous clarity, unlike common names that can vary from place to place or get applied to many different mushrooms. A good example of the unreliability of common names is 'false morel', applied to species in the genera of *Helvella*, *Gyromitra*, and *Verpa*, all very different mushrooms. That's the theory, the promise of the binomial scientific classification system. In practice, it's a little more complex and confusing.

David Arora, one of the gurus of present-day mycology, jokingly identified two types of mushroom identifiers. There are the 'lumpers', those who see similarities and commonalities and group mushrooms together, and the 'splitters', those who recognize fine distinctions and separate mushrooms into more and more species. Presently, the splitters are ascendant, and consequently, the relative consistency of mushroom names that have existed for years is in flux. There are several reasons for this.

Early European-trained mycologists, arriving on the east coast of North America, thought they recognized species of mushrooms from back home and called them by the same name. And over the years, as identification progressed westward, the similarities seemed to persist, so that North American fungi had binomial Latin names applied to them to match their European cousins. Gradually over time, with more research, many North American mushrooms were recognized as distinct, different from the European species, and were renamed. There have always been debates about how to classify particular mushrooms. In the years that I've been collecting, I've watched 'the blewit' change names from *Clitocybe nuda* to *Tricholoma nudum* to *Lepista nuda*, back to *Clitocybe* again, and then back to *Lepista*.

Now, however, the relatively new science of DNA sequencing has dramatically changed the landscape so that we've got two things happening; mushrooms being reclassified, and other species are being split into new and distinct species. Many of the big genera, like *Tricholoma* and *Cortinarius*, are going through significant name changes. For amateur mycologists and casual mushroom hunters this upheaval is hugely frustrating. I was advised a few years ago not to get too upset with the constant flux, but to wait at least 15 years (or more) until the dust settles before committing new names to memory. Any mushroom field guide is out of date as soon as it's released with all these rapid name changes happening.

Much of this makes sense. It's helping to clarify inconsistencies that have lingered for years. For example, not long ago when you talked about the 'honey mushroom', *Armillaria mellea*, it described a particular mushroom considered to be a good edible, but at the same time many people were made ill by it. Because it was of such interest to foresters, causing great damage to marketable timber, it was studied closely. It's turned out that we weren't looking at a single species, but multiple species (10 and counting) all going under the same name. This may help explain the variations in people's reactions to it; they've been eating different species.

However, this proliferation of new names and classifications can also give one pause. Are these differences, too small to be distinguished macroscopically, and often too small microscopically also, enough to warrant the elevation of some mushrooms to the status of a new species? Ben Panko, writing in the Smithsonian Magazine in the May 19 2017, issue stated, "Some express concerns about 'taxonomic inflation', as the number of species identified or reclassified continue to sky rocket." He goes on to say that "some scientists worry that as scientists draw lines based on the narrow shades of difference that DNA technology enables them to see, the entire concept of a species is being diluted". As little as a 2% difference in DNA can elevate an organism into a new species. It raises the question, what is a species?

Traditionally, a species was recognized as a group of plants or animals that shared common traits and were able to sexually breed fertile offspring among the species group. This concept of a species was put forth by Ernst Mayr, an evolutionary biologist, in 1942. Hence a horse and a donkey interbreeding, producing a sterile mule, must be considered different species. And at the same time, despite the vast differences between them, all dogs, *Canis familiaris*, are all one species. Though still recognized by some as the standard for the definition of a species, there are great debates within many scientific communities as to how to define a species. There are dozens of definitions out there, compensating for the shortcomings in Mayr's original definition. For example, how do you contend with bacteria that reproduce asexually, or how do you tease apart distinct species interbreeding and producing hybrids?

For most casual mushroom collectors and amateur mycologists, the implications of these changes make for challenging times. However, it's good to remember that the mushroom you've collected and are puzzling over hasn't changed, it's still the same mushroom. We can still learn to recognize and distinguish most of them. Though the name may change, resources on the internet and in many field guides can allow us to cross reference and come up with the most current name. And despite its name, the mushroom before you still retains its beauty, mystery and fascination, and your wandering through the woods is still a pleasure.



Helvella crispa— credit: Michael Beug



Gyromitra californica – credit: Mitchell Milgram

Both these mushrooms go by the common name 'false morel', even though they are in entirely different genera. Thus, the shortcomings of using common names for identification.

Every year, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) releases bird taxonomy updates; the 63rd published supplement to the *AOS Checklist of North American Birds* was just issued. All AOS updates are adopted by the American Birding Association and by eBird; in the latter, the changes to our checklists will be made automatically, as they get around to making the necessary programming changes. Relevant changes have also been made to CONC's RDCO Biodiversity Checklist (RDCOChecklist.info). A summary of all the new changes can be found at <https://www.aba.org/aos-checklist-supplement-redux-v-2023/> or the full details at <https://academic.oup.com/auk/article/140/3/ukad023/7220602?login=false>.

There are many changes that affect birds that occur to the south of us, especially in Central America and in the Caribbean. Only two changes are of immediate relevance to BC birders — you can scribble these changes into your field guides:

- **Northern Goshawk was renamed to American Goshawk. *Accipiter atricapillus*.** Both the common and scientific name of our goshawks change because of splitting off the New World birds from those of the Old World, which become Eurasian Goshawks, and which get to keep the scientific name of *A. gentilis*. The split is based on vocal and morphological differences. The change takes us back to a time prior to 1957 when the two species were distinct and North American birds were known as...American Goshawks.
- **Resurrection of Western Flycatcher, *Empidonax difficilis*.** This is another case of *déjà vu* all over again. Pacific-slope and Cordilleran Flycatchers are lumped back into a single species, Western Flycatcher. For further details, see the prescient article on Western Flycatchers in the last newsletter (I did not know then that a lumping proposal was actively under consideration by the AOS!). The two former species live on as the "*difficilis* group" (formerly "Pacific-slope Flycatcher") and the "*occidentalis* group" (formerly "Cordilleran Flycatcher"). So, if you can provide sufficient call or song details, you can perhaps identify Okanagan birds in eBird as "*difficilis* group", but in my opinion it's still an open question whether RDCO birds belong in that group or are better considered as intergrades between the two groups. I for one, will be happy to just call them Western Flycatchers!

PRELIMINARY CALL FOR PHOTOS

THOMSON MARSH VIEWING PLATFORM - INTERPRETIVE PANELS

On March 29, 2023, a \$20,000 "Partners in Parks" grant was approved by the City of Kelowna for CONC's construction of a two-level bird viewing platform in Thomson Marsh Park. ONC-acquired funds have also been accessed (a BC Nature grant and a contribution from an anonymous donor), to complete the total funding necessary.

Numerous meetings have occurred since, between the City of Kelowna, Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT) and CONC representatives. A CONC Project Team was created to manage the planning and construction details. Approvals to date include the architectural design, the Archaeological Assessment, the platform site, and the Riparian Rehabilitation Plan. Environmental and Development Permit Applications are underway.

Part of the platform design includes two interpretive panels which will provide photo images of birds that could be expected to be seen in this area. The common name of the bird and QR code (Ref. iNaturalist) will accompany each photo.

CONC members are invited to submit images for consideration. There is no limit on the number of images an individual may submit. Approximately 30 photos will be required for the panels. The aim is to create a coherent portfolio of species which is representative of the Thomson Marsh. The lower panel will focus on songbirds and shore birds, while the upper panel will focus on raptors, migratory species (e.g., swans) and birds which tend to be more easily seen from a height (e.g., swallows).

Photo submissions may be made up to and including early 2024. The exact date will be provided as the platform construction progresses and end dates are confirmed. The hope is that this early call for images will allow ample time for photographers to review their current catalogue of photos and allow for their strategic use of time in the field to capture images through the next months to later spring.

Further details pertaining to photo specifications and submission criteria will be provided to members in late Fall.

Questions not answered by this information may be sent to: editor@okanagannature.org

We would like to make a new CONC logo! The current logo has served us well for a long time but is starting to show its age and there is no version of it with high resolution. We know our members are very creative and passionate about nature, so we would like to have a contest to decide on our new logo. All members are invited to submit proposals for a new CONC logo. The requirements and rules of the contest are described below. **Submissions must be received by November 10** and they can be emailed to outreach@okanagannature.org or sent by mail to CONC Logo Contest, Box 21128 RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna BC, V1Y 9N8. Any questions about the contest can be sent to the above email address.



Current CONC Logo

Requirements for submissions from members:

- ☐ The proposed logo must include items representative of our activities, location, etc. (e.g., botany, birds, hiking, mountains, etc.).
- ☐ The proposed logo must include our acronym ("CONC") or full name ("Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club). It's left up to participants to decide on this.
- ☐ Participants can also decide to include BC Nature's motto ("Know Nature And Keep It Worth Knowing"), but be mindful that the resulting logo isn't too busy.
- ☐ Each submission must include a brief explanation of the key elements of the logo.
- ☐ A maximum of 2 logo submissions may be made per person or group.

Rules for the contest:

1. Proposed logos may be submitted at all stages of development, from rough sketches to nearly finished.
2. Submissions may be made by individuals or groups.
3. Submissions will be anonymized by the Outreach and Communications Director.
4. A Logo Committee will be created with members of the EC and up to 2 volunteers from the members at large (a call for volunteers will be made and participation will be on a first-come-first-served basis). Members of the EC and Logo Committee are welcome to make a submission, but they will be ineligible for the prize.
5. The Logo Committee will decide on 3 finalists for the competition.
6. The EC will make a call for a member who can volunteer to create professional, high resolution, digital versions of all 3 finalist submissions. If no member is able to volunteer, the EC will hire a graphic artist to create the digital versions of the 3 finalist submissions.
7. Once the digital versions of the final submission are available, they will be shared with CONC members and all members will be able to vote on the 3 options to choose a winner.
8. We are hoping to announce the winner at the 2024 CONC AGM in February.
9. The member(s) who submitted the winning logo will receive one year of free CONC membership as the prize (they can choose the type of membership – single, family or student).

BRENDA THOMSON MEMORIAL BURSARY

In 2011, CONC initiated and continues to sponsor the Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary. This award is administered by the Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society (COBSS) and has been awarded annually to a student taking studies in an Environmental Field, and who demonstrates financial need.

This year, the Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary recipient is a graduating student of Rutland Senior Secondary, who has received \$1500 toward their post-secondary studies.

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.

A reminder that your membership dues for the upcoming year were due on September 1st – **the membership year is September 1st to August 31st.**

There are two membership application forms available - a fillable (.DOCX) form which you can type your information onto and then print and a printable (.PDF) form which you print and then write your information onto. These forms can be downloaded from the CONC website at <http://okanagannature.org>.

Membership fees have not changed - \$47.00 (family), \$35.00 (single), \$14.00 (student) or if you are an existing member/s of another Naturalists Club \$19.00 (single) and \$29.00 (family).

Please complete the membership form, sign in both places and mail to -Central Okanagan Naturalists Club, Box 21128 RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna, BC V1Y 9N8 - Attn. Membership Director. If paying by cheque make it payable to Central Okanagan Naturalists Club.

You can also pay via e-transfer, the email address is: membership@okanagannature.org. If you use the e-transfer method you still need to either mail in your application form or scan a copy and send via email to membership@okanagannature.org, as your signature is required for insurance purposes.

On the membership application form, there is a "main interest(s)" section where you can indicate your interests, Birding, Botany, Hiking - Ramblers, &/or Hiking and cycling - Sole Survivors. The interests that you check off are used to establish email lists so please check only the groups that you are interested in to avoid receiving unwanted emails.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Everyone (including life members) needs to sign both the "Central Okanagan Naturalist's Club Membership Form" and the "Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Agreement".
2. If you wish to receive a printed and mailed copy of the newsletter, there is a Canada Post surcharge of \$10.00 for all classes of membership.
3. An email confirming receipt of your payment and application form will be sent to everyone with an email address on file. Your hardcopy receipt for payment of membership will be kept on file and will be available at the membership table at the next in-house monthly General Meeting.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**BY ROBBIE BOWERS****KELOWNA PARKS/ADOPT-A-STREAM PROGRAM - CONC FALL CLEANUP 2023**

It's that time of year again to take part in our club's Fall cleanup/Adopt-a-Stream program. This City of Kelowna program gives organizations, families, and community groups an opportunity to help keep Kelowna's streams healthy by focusing on a bi-annual cleanup of litter, debris, and noxious weeds at a designated stream site.

The area along Mission Creek that was cleaned in past years is now being routinely monitored by Parks staff, so a new area was chosen; the Mill Creek/Rail Trail on Bullman Road, as it is used by both the birding and cycling groups of CONC. Details on the upcoming event are provided below:

- ☐ **Date:** Friday, October 13, 2023
- ☐ **Time:** 9:00 – 11:30 am
- ☐ **Clean-up Site:** Mill Creek/Rail Trail on Bullman Road
- ☐ **Meeting Place:** Volunteers are asked to meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Bullman Road parking lot to pick up supplies and sign the Parks Service consent forms.

We will be cleaning the Mill Creek area along Bullman Road and the Rail Trail towards John Hindle Drive. I will be at the parking lot by 8:45 am with the supplies (collection bags, safety vests and trash pick-up tools) and consent form.

Please note that we are also responsible for the cleanup of the Maude Roxby Wetlands Boardwalk area and Thomson Marsh Park. These will be done the week of October 16 by Merle Auty and myself.

If you have any questions, please contact me, Robbie Bowers, at outings@okanagannature.org

Are you familiar with themes and plugins? Can you use WordPress with proficiency? Would you like to take over **maintenance of the CONC website**? If you can answer yes to these questions, please contact Rick at admin@okanagannature.org



HELP WANTED! MONTHLY MEETINGS – COFFEE AND SNACK COMMITTEE

BEV THOMAS

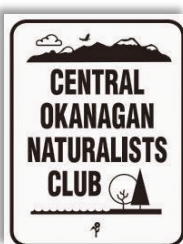
We are looking for members who would like to help with making the coffee and carrying out light kitchen duties on meeting nights. This is a great way to meet others and only takes a little time. We are also a very flexible group that helps each other out if you have a change in your plans. We are all busy and don't want to be tied down! If you would like to help, please talk with Bev at the next meeting.

And, a sincere word of thanks to all of you that bring us goodies to share, and those that help with cleaning up.



A GLANCE AT THE PAST

SOURCED BY LISA RAE



The CONC logo has a noteworthy origin, as it was conceived by a CONC Wednesday hiker, Robert Vickers in 1990. Robert (Bob) sketched and painted the local scenery in acrylics, and captured the local beauty of our valley in many of his paintings. Bob also did many sketches of members on hiking trips, which were sometimes featured on the front cover of the CONC newsletter.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEWS

- ☐ [Rattlesnakes can calm down their friends....who knew?](#)
- ☐ [Why Watching Birds Is Good for Your Mental Health](#), the Economy, and the Environment
- ☐ [Is there such a thing as an eco-friendly hike?](#) Maybe not. We may have more impact on wildlife than we realize...
- ☐ [Threatened seabirds are given a life raft](#)...literally, complete with a beach and faux vegetation.
- ☐ [50 years ago, Project Puffin used puffin chicks from Newfoundland to repopulate the seabird's population in Maine.](#) And, it was a great success!
- ☐ [The Atlantification of the Arctic Ocean is underway.](#) A reminder that our oceans have no borders.
- ☐ [Insects as sentient creatures](#), capable of experiencing pleasure and pain, with complex and deliberate social interactions that include play. The ethical implications are huge....
- ☐ Many of you will recall that CONC nominated **Robert Hobson**, a long-time community leader, for a special BC Nature award last year and Robert joined us at our picnic. On June 9th of this year, another public tribute was established, when the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) honoured Robert by renaming the Environmental Education Centre for the Okanagan at Mission Creek Regional Park. It is now called [the Robert Hobson Environmental Education Centre for the Okanagan](#).

- [Moths – not to be taken lightly](#), considering that there are 160,000 species found in terrestrial plant communities from subpolar regions to the equator, 1/10 species on earth is a moth, they are superior pollinators and a significant dietary source for birds and animals. Yet, they are slowly disappearing...
- [Wildlife fires may make a permanent change to the Okanagan landscape](#).....

CALLING ON ALL AVID READERS – HAVE YOU READ AN INTRIGUING BOOK OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE THAT HAS A CONNECTION TO OUTDOOR LIFE OR NATURE LATELY? WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE A BRIEF REVIEW OF THIS GEM IN THE CONC NEWSLETTER?

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU! JUST SEND US AN [EMAIL](#) WITH THE NAME OF THE BOOK/MAGAZINE, THE AUTHOR, AND YOUR REVIEW.

What we're reading: [Better Living through Birding](#)

- Better Living through Birding is a memoir by Christian Cooper, the Black birder falsely accused of threatening a white woman in Central Park in 2020. In his book Cooper relates the story of his life, from his childhood in the South Bronx; to his career as a graphic designer at Marvel Comics; and finally, to his passion for birding. He describes how birding has helped him to connect with nature, build community, and find peace and solace in the world. He also reflects on the racial and gendered dynamics that led to the Central Park incident, and he offers his thoughts on how to create a more just and equitable world for all.

IN MEMORIUM

Cecil Dillabough (1930-2023)

With great regret, we note the passing of member Cecil Dillabough (1930-2023). Cecil was President of the CONC from 1996-1997. He died on June 2 in Kelowna. He is survived by his wife Eileen. The full obituary is at

<http://www.springfieldfuneralhome.com/obituaries/dillabough-cecil/>.

A memorial ceremony was held on 27 July which was attended by many members of CONC, several of whom shared memories and stories of Cec, many about his important and lasting contributions to the conservation of key areas of the Central Okanagan. Our condolences to Eileen.

Judith Anne Lewis (1952-2023)

We are very sorry to note the passing on 30 March 2023 of Judith Anne Lewis (1952-2023), wife of 51 years of Craig Lewis. Originally from White Rock, BC, she married Craig in 1972 and they moved to Kelowna in 1979. Our most sincere condolences to Craig, an active CONC member and ex-President. For the full obituary of Judith, please see:

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/kelowna-bc/judith-lewis-11228122>



I see trees of green
 Red roses too
 I see them bloom
 For me and you
 And I think to myself
 What a wonderful world
 I see skies of blue
 And clouds of white
 The bright blessed day
 The dark sacred night
 And I think to myself
 What a wonderful world

~Louis Armstrong

