

December, 2023

# The Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club

www.okanagannature.org



Know Nature and Keep it  
Worth Knowing

## Index

Upcoming Meeting	1
Welcome New Members	1
President's Report	1

## Upcoming Activities

- General Meeting
- Speaker
- Potluck Dinner

## Regular Columns

- Birding Report
- Botany Report
- Hiking Report

## Features

- President's Notes of Interest
- Parks Cleanup
- Winter Birding Surveys
- Photo Contest
- Call for Photos – Thomson Marsh
- A Glance at the Past
- What's New in the News
- Condolences

Club Information	12
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## Monthly Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

The next general meeting takes place on Tuesday, December 12, at 7:00 p.m., at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna. Please see our [Speaker details](#) on page 2.

## 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.

- Louise Perepelken
- Gillian Fyles
- Stephen Jefferys
- Sharon Schleppe
- Brenda Colvin
- Emmy Vuik

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DOUGLAS GRAHAM

This is my last President's message that I will be contributing to the Newsletter. Although I intend to remain quite engaged in CONC after our AGM in February 2024, it will not be as President but as Past President. For me personally, the last three presidential years have been quite an adventure, a lot of fun, and an honour. The Board (aka Executive Committee) relies on the contributions and continuity of its members but for the President position, I personally think it needs regular renewal. Shortish 2- or 3-year terms for the President have two advantages: infusion of new energy and ideas and reassurance to potential candidates that this position is not a long sentence without the possibility of parole!

I still have the pleasure of serving you for the next several months. One major task I've been working on, along with all the members of the Board, is a modernization of our Bylaws and the preparation of an Operational Manual for the Club, basically a "how to run CONC" guidebook. The revised Bylaws will be submitted to the membership well before the AGM; they need to be approved by two-thirds of the membership. The Manual does not need to be approved but will be a living document to assist future Boards to operate; it will be available for consultation to any interested member. There are a few other tasks that I also hope to get to.

There are lots of other things going on in the next months. Birding, hiking, and snowshoeing will all be going strong. For the birders, the Christmas Bird Counts are always a highlight of our year. We still have the upcoming December 12 general meeting with a guest speaker, then our annual Potluck on 9 January, and finally the AGM on February 13. The Thomson Marsh platform will be under construction next spring if all goes well.

As the expression goes, this is *au revoir* and not *adieu*...

Best wishes,  
Douglas Graham  
President, CONC

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

### CONC SPEAKER, DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING – BRAD FOSTER

#### THE PRESERVATION, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF THE COMMONAGE ECOSYSTEMS

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*Spion Kop (looking north)*

Brad Foster will speak to:

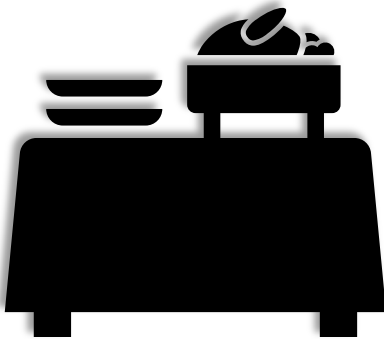
- Introduction to The Commonage
- Location of the Commonage
- Protecting Wildlife Habitat
- Proposed Expansion and New Parks and Protected Areas
- We Have A Choice
- Projects

Brad grew up in the lower mainland (Burnaby and Coquitlam) and then moved up to Vernon in 2002. As long as he can remember, he has had a connection with nature. A few years after moving to Vernon and working in construction, he saw firsthand what the new housing and resort development was doing to the Vernon area and started to look at ways he could help change the trend. He has a particular interest in the Commonage, an area that partially extends into the Central Okanagan.

Brad notes that you can help preserve the Commonage's endangered species and habitats, by donating to <https://bcparksfoundation.ca/donate/> "select Parks Bank". Parks Bank is for land acquisitions, and donations are tracked in such a way that they are returned to the area of the province where they originate.

## CONC ANNUAL POTLUCK SUPPER

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CONC traditionally holds a potluck banquet in place of the first meeting of the year, on the second Tuesday in January. This year the tradition continues on January 9. The usual meeting room at Evangel church will be available from 6:00 pm on, with dinner beginning at 6:30 pm. Bring your favourite dish to share with a few others. Also please bring your cutlery, plates, cups/glasses, and napkins.

As the church has extra charges for setting out the round tables (and tablecloths), CONC sells \$5 tickets for the event. Please get your banquet tickets from Rick at the December meeting, at any of CONC's activities (that Rick attends) before January, or reserve a ticket via email to [pastpresident@okanagannature.org](mailto:pastpresident@okanagannature.org). Each ticket will also enter you in a draw for door prizes.

There may also be a quiz to keep you entertained.

#### **2023 Birding Activities to November 17:**

So far during 2023, members have been able to participate in 73 CONC-organised birding excursions, including:

- 35 Monday outings
- 38 Thursday outings
- 7 Saturday outings including a trip to Douglas Lake (during Sandhill Crane migration) and the Creston Birding Festival
- Swan and Eagle Annual "Sweagle" Count (January)
- Johns Family Nature Conservancy Annual Critter Count (May)
- Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park Annual Critter Count (June – Organised by Les Gyug)

Since opening a "CONC Birding Group" account with eBird we have submitted 321 complete checklists and during the current year-to-date, we have recorded sightings of 183 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 at the end of this article.

We also celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of one of our birding leaders who continues to be a staunch supporter of the birding group, Gwynneth Wilson. Members of the birding group 'flocked' to the Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant for a lovely get-together.

Before the luncheon, we were fortunate to find two species which are rare visitors to the Okanagan: A Blue Jay which is seldom seen west of the Rockies and an American White Pelican which is an occasional visitor. A fitting treat for Gwynneth.

#### **THOMSON MARSH VIEWING PLATFORM PROJECT PROGRESS**

We are actively working on the development of the Thomson Marsh Park Viewing Platform Project, which is a significant undertaking for the club. At this time, the design has been submitted for a Building Permit and the project team continues to work with the City in preparation for a spring installation.

#### **BIRDING ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2023**

Saturday outings are now complete for the year and will return in the spring. We still have a few Monday and Thursday outings planned that will take us to December 7.

Several members of the CONC Birding Group participate in local Christmas Bird Counts commencing on December 14, 2023, the dates of which are provided elsewhere in the newsletter along with the organizer's coordinates if you are interested in joining a group.

#### **PLANNING FOR 2024 BIRDING ACTIVITIES**

If you are interested in becoming a birding excursion leader for 2024, please indicate your interest by sending an e-mail to [mikehoward@shaw.ca](mailto:mikehoward@shaw.ca). You will be well supported if you are new to leading an outing.

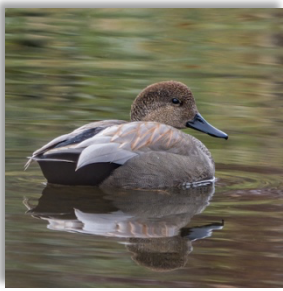
I will be contacting all of the current Birding Leaders to renew their level of interest and availability periods for 2024.

Once the birding leaders are confirmed we will discuss potential birding trips and priorities. A schedule for the Monday, Thursday and Saturday (or multiple-day) trips will be prepared and circulated.

#### **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>

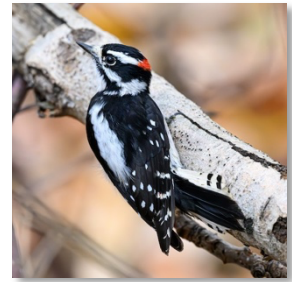




*Gadwall - Vivian Manning*



*Downy Woodpecker (female) - Vivian Manning*



*Downy Woodpecker (male) - Bruce Kennedy*



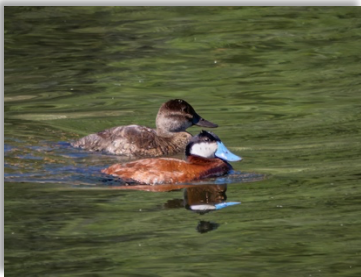
*American Goldfinch - Ian Walker*



*American Wigeons - Ian Walker*



*Great Horned Owl- Bruce Kennedy*



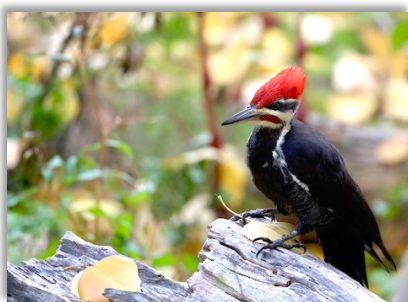
*Ruddy Ducks (male & female) - Vivian Manning*



*Sharp-shinned Hawk - Bruce Kennedy*



*Long-billed Dowitcher - Pam Laing*



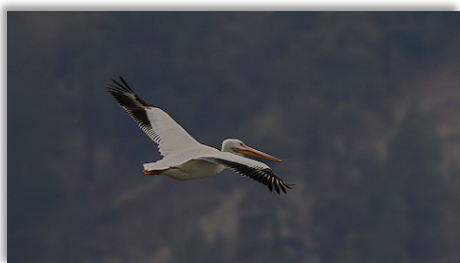
*Pileated Woodpecker (male) - Ian Walker*



*American Dipper - Lisa Rae*



*Blue Jay - Bruce Kennedy*



*American White Pelican - Bruce Kennedy*



*Gwynneth and Pam Laing, with the personalized celebratory photo book for Gwynneth, prepared by Pam.*



CONC's regular weekly botany outings began on May 5 and ended on July 22. In addition to these scheduled events, there was one unscheduled outing to see Steer's Head flowering at Jackpine Meadows on May 7. A fall mushroom outing that was tentatively planned didn't happen due to the scarcity of mushrooms. The number of plant species seen over all the outings was 357 and the average number per regular outing was 61. Details of the 2023 season were reported in the previous newsletter. Information on the botany outings is summarized in the table below.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES	NUMBER OF SPECIES SEEN
<b>MAY 5</b>	Beaver Lake Road/to 1 <sup>st</sup> cattle gate	11	35
<b>MAY 7</b>	Jackpine Meadows	10	Steer's Head + 12
<b>MAY 12</b>	Knox Mountain/Apex & Grainger trails	4	47
<b>MAY 19</b>	Lower Scenic Canyon	7	48
<b>MAY 26</b>	Beaver Lake Road/to lodge	9	53
<b>JUNE 2</b>	Jackpine Meadows/Telemark Nordic	8	52
<b>JUNE 9</b>	Three Forks Community Park	7	59
<b>JUNE 16</b>	Wrinkly Face Provincial Park	14	78
<b>JUNE 23</b>	Prather Creek	8	72
<b>JUNE 30</b>	Larch Hills Nordic	13	79
<b>JULY 7</b>	Big White Rd/FSR 201	5	77
<b>JULY 14</b>	Jackpine Meadows	8	68
<b>JULY 22</b>	Big White summit	11	62

Our outings focus on plants flowering at the time of our visits, and on reproductive features to facilitate identification. A checklist and field guide are used to assist identification in the field and the final list of what was seen is sent to participants after each outing.

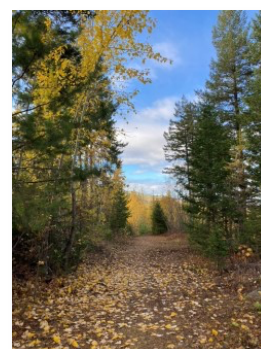
In 2024 we'll continue with a regular schedule for vascular plants from May 3 to July 19. Depending on interest, we may do other excursions. The new schedule, including outing locations and short lists of species we typically see, will be posted shortly on CONC's webpage at <https://okanagannature.org/our-activities/botany/>. Further details will be provided in upcoming newsletters.

## HIKING REPORT (SOLE SURVIVORS AND RAMBLERS) BY ROBBIE BOWERS & GLENDA NEWMAN



Weekly hikes are continuing and scheduled every week depending on the weather, in particular, the presence of snow. We are now in a transition phase as the freezing level drops and we change to snowshoeing. Fall hikes included Talus Ridge, Scenic Canyon, Spion Kop, East Knox Mountain and Goodes Basin.

The perennial favourite hike, Larch trees in Myra Bellevue Provincial Park was done by both Ramblers and Sole Survivors....what a difference a week makes!



## 2024 ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP - JASPER NATIONAL PARK, ALBERTA

The dates have been confirmed to be July 22nd - 27th (6 nights), and accommodations booked at the HI Hostel. For more information, please contact Glenda Newman. ([outings@okanagannature.org](mailto:outings@okanagannature.org)).



## FEATURES:

### NOTES OF INTEREST FROM THE PRESIDENT

DOUGLAS GRAHAM

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#### ROBERT LAKE SURFACE WATER DIVERSION PROJECT

On 8 November CONC was invited to a presentation by the City which was provided to a small number of conservation organizations to brief us on a proposed water diversion project. Douglas Graham and Ian Walker participated on behalf of CONC (the latter also representing Friends of Robert Lake). In brief, the proposal is to divert water from the Glenmore watershed upstream of the landfill site and pipe it around Robert Lake for discharge into Brandt's Creek. The purpose is to better manage water flows above the landfill site in times of exceptional rainfall events. No water or leachate from the landfill site would be included in the diversion waters (these are discharged directly to the City's wastewater treatment plant). No water would be piped into Robert Lake, as was exceptionally done in 2019. As an option, there is a possibility to allow for discharge from Robert Lake to Brandt Creek when the lake exceeds a pre-determined point, which would be approximately the current water level. Keeping the water below a certain level would allow for the upgrading of the parking area at the south end of Robert Lake and the possible future construction of a wildlife platform, a long-time CONC goal.

The City has requested comments from CONC and has provided a complete information package. Anybody interested in reviewing this material and contributing to CONC's views on the project is invited to contact Douglas Graham ([president@okanagannature.org](mailto:president@okanagannature.org)) or Ian Walker.

#### BC WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The BC Wildlife Federation has kicked off its annual conservation lottery to raise funds for the environmental projects they support across BC. Prizes include a 2024 Grand Sierra, a Yamaha ATV, and many others. Tickets can be ordered at [bcwflottery.com](http://bcwflottery.com).

#### JOHNS FAMILY NATURE CONSERVANCY

A parking lot expansion and Elk Trail upgrades were recently completed by the RDCO.

<https://www.rdc.com/en/news/parking-expansion-and-trail-upgrades-for-johns-family-nature-conservancy-regional-park.aspx>

#### GRIPPED BY GUYANA – A MEMOIR OF PURPOSE AND ADVENTURE

On 14 November 2023, we had a presentation by Merle Kindred of Penticton who spoke to us about her time spent in Guyana as a CUSO volunteer, where she worked with indigenous communities on the promotion of ecotourism and birding. It was interesting to hear about a country the size of the UK with a population of only 750,000 people! Her book "Gripped by Guyana: a Memoir of Purpose and Adventure", is available from the author ([www.facebook.com/GrippedbyGuyana](https://www.facebook.com/GrippedbyGuyana)). It can also be purchased in printed or e-book form at [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) and is free to those who subscribe to Kindle Unlimited.

#### BATS!

Paula Rodriguez de la Vega of the BC Community Bat Program has let us know that:

1. White-nose Syndrome Surveillance period is on again during the period November 1 - May 31st. Please report dead bats or flying winter bats to [www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca), [okanagan@bcbats.ca](mailto:okanagan@bcbats.ca), tel. 1-855-922-2287 ext.13 (Okanagan). They will be collecting dead bats and sending them for testing.
2. They would be interested to have someone from CONC join the Bat Friendly Communities Committee for the Central Okanagan. This would require one meeting every month or two. The committee is a group of folks interested in getting the Regional District Central Okanagan to become a Bat Friendly Community. A document is available with more information on BFCs. If you are interested, please contact Douglas Graham or Paula directly.

Paula's contact information is:

Paula Rodriguez de la Vega  
Okanagan Region Coordinator, BC Community Bat Program  
[okanagan@bcbats.ca](mailto:okanagan@bcbats.ca)  
[www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca) Toll-free: 1-855-922-BATS (2287) ext.13



Clean-Up Crew for Bullman Road/Mill Creek, October 13, 2023 Photo Courtesy Robbie Bowers

The Kelowna Parks/Adopt-a-Stream Program fall clean-up was completed in two parts this year. One project was carried out on October 13th along Mill Creek/Rail Trail on Bullman Road. Eight volunteers collected nine large bags of garbage.... much more than was expected.

Two additional cleanup projects were completed on October 20th at Thomson Marsh Park and the Maude Roxby Wetlands. Once again, we had several members volunteer, and several bags of garbage were collected.

A sincere thank you to all volunteers!



Clean-Up Crew for Thomson Marsh, October 20, 2023. Photos Courtesy Lisa Rae

## WINTER BIRDING SURVEYS

## SOURCED BY LISA RAE



### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Source: Birds Canada, <https://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count>

Started in 1900, The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is North America's longest-running Citizen Science project. Volunteers in more than 2000 locations throughout the Western Hemisphere participate in the CBC each year

The counts are administered by Bird Studies Canada and the National Audubon Society. Information collected by thousands of participants forms one of the world's largest sets of wildlife survey data. Results are used by conservation biologists, environment planners, and naturalists to assess the population trends and distribution of birds. is used by conservation biologists to assess bird population trends and distribution.

Count circles are 25 km in diameter and are organized by a local compiler. Field counts occur from December 14 through to January 5 on a date selected by the local compiler.

**For this upcoming 124<sup>th</sup> year**, please get in touch with the local compiler(s) below if you would like to participate, and for additional details:

- Kelowna, December 16, Chris Charlesworth, ([avocettours3@gmail.com](mailto:avocettours3@gmail.com))
- Lake Country, December 14, Les Gyug ([les\\_gyug@shaw.ca](mailto:les_gyug@shaw.ca))
- Big White, December 16, Chris Charlesworth, ([avocettours3@gmail.com](mailto:avocettours3@gmail.com))
- Peachland, December 29, Jason and Mathias Bieber ([mbieber1488@gmail.com](mailto:mbieber1488@gmail.com))



- Penticton, December 18, Dick Cannings ([dickcannings@shaw.ca](mailto:dickcannings@shaw.ca))
- Vernon, December 19, Scott Thomson ([drdrdrx@hotmail.com](mailto:drdrdrx@hotmail.com))

### **SWEAGLE COUNT**

The annual Sweagle (Swan and Eagle) Count will take place on **January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. Volunteer surveyors will monitor seven zones in the central portion of Okanagan Lake. If you wish to take part, please contact Mike Howard ([mikehoward@shaw.ca](mailto:mikehoward@shaw.ca)).

### **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

Source: <https://www.birdcount.org/>

The Great Backyard Bird Count will take place on **February 16-19, 2024**. This is an annual four-day event that engages bird enthusiasts of all ages around the world in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. Anyone can participate, from beginners to experts. You can count for as little as 15 minutes on a single day, or for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy – and it helps the birds! The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon with Canadian partner Birds Canada. Participating is easy, fun to do alone, or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds. Simply watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days, February 16-19, 2024, and tell us what you see! Additional details can be found at: <https://www.birdcount.org/>

## **2023-2024 CONC PHOTO CONTEST**

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As has become recent practice, CONC will host the 2023/24 photo contest online. In the New Year, we will set up a website to facilitate judging.

At this point, it is most important to remind you to submit your photos. Entry is open to CONC members only. Entrants may submit up to four (4) total photos maximum - with no more than one photo per category.

### **There are four categories:**

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

### **Please note, all entries must:**

- have been taken in 2023 or 2024
- be emailed to [concphotocontest@gmail.com](mailto:concphotocontest@gmail.com) together with the entrant's name, the category for each photo, and the title/location for each photo. Acceptable image formats include .jpg, .tiff & .png
- not include any watermarks or other indicators that would identify the entrant.
- be received by [concphotocontest@gmail.com](mailto:concphotocontest@gmail.com) no later than 10:00 am, 4 January 2024

Please note that because of the common dimensions of computer screens, images taken in portrait format may be disadvantaged relative to those having a landscape orientation. Also, your images should be submitted at a relatively high resolution. Low-resolution images will appear pixelated on the judging website.

Winning images will be published in the CONC newsletter.

## **CALL FOR PHOTOS - THOMSON MARSH VIEWING PLATFORM INTERPRETIVE PANELS**

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### **Requirements, Section Criteria and Selection Process**

#### **1. General Requirements**

- To be eligible to submit photos for this project, you must be a member of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club 2023-2024.
- Ideally, a photo should be captured in B.C.
- Photos should be one of the identified target species (2). Exceptional photos of other species which frequent the marsh and meet the requirements (3) will be considered.
- Photos should conform to the technical requirements and aim for the ideal image components given (3).

- Photos must be submitted electronically to [editor@okanagannature.org](mailto:editor@okanagannature.org), December 2023 through to the closing date of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- Entries must contain:
  - The submitter's full name
  - The date and location for the photo
  - The species common name

A reply email will be sent to confirm receipt of the photograph(s).

## 2. Platform and Panel Description

The design of the lower level of the platform allows for photos of 14 bird species. The panel photos at this level will highlight the songbirds, ducks and shorebirds most easily viewed from this level. The upper platform will allow for photos of 17 bird species. The panel at this level will highlight migratory birds, raptors and species that are more easily seen from a height.

In both cases, the panels will provide visitors with a portfolio of bird species; some of which are common, and others that are less common. This photographic portfolio intends *to assist with identification and create appeal and engagement for the novice visitor as well as the more experienced birder*. Each photo will be accompanied by the common name of the species and a QR code (Source: iNaturalist). The photographer will be acknowledged on the panel(s) as a contributor.

### Target Species

LOWER PANEL TARGET SPECIES	UPPER PANEL TARGET SPECIES
Great Blue Heron	Great Horned Owl
Killdeer	Marsh Hawk
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Red-tailed Hawk
Red-winged Blackbird	Bald Eagle
Wood Duck	Osprey
American Widgeon	Northern Flicker
House Finch	Barn Swallow
Yellow Warbler	Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Yellowlegs	American Kestrel
Northern Shrike	Peregrine Falcon
Common Yellowthroat	Tundra Swan
Downy Woodpecker	Trumpeter Swan
Grey Catbird	Snow Goose
Marsh Wren	Belted Kingfisher
Sora	Black-crowned Night Heron
	Common Nighthawk

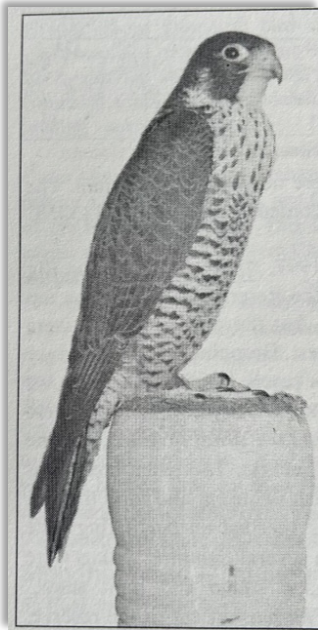
## 3. The ideal image would include the following:

- Sharp (crisp details)
- High-quality composition, lighting, and exposure
- In colour
- Jpeg format
- Clear field markings of the species (e.g., as would be given in Sibley's field guide.)
- Nature story evident (a bird feeding, nesting, minding young... etc.)
- A nature background is preferable.
- Clean background (the bird is clearly defined and predominate)
- Although males of some species show more colourful and distinctive markings than females, bird gender is not a determining factor for photo selection.

### Selection and Use Process

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of CONC members. Decisions of the selection committee are final. Photographers will be advised if their photo is selected by late Spring 2024. After this time, the selected photos will be provided to the City of Kelowna for their use on the interpretive panels. The full copyright of the image remains with the photographer.

## Return of the Peregrine Falcon, Circa 1997



(Gordon Bazzana Photo,  
Kelowna Capital News)

In late 1997, together with BC Parks, CONC became a participant in the Return of the Peregrine Falcon project. At that time, Peregrines had not been recorded in the Okanagan for 50 years. The project included the purchase of 8 seven-week-old falcons from a breeding centre in Southern Alberta. In 1998 the young falcons were reared in a 'hack' box and soon graduated to full release on the roof ledges of the Landmark building. CONC members were involved in the banding and subsequent monitoring of these birds. Gwenneth Wilson organised educational school visits, and other members were involved in various supports. Cec Dillabough for example, was called upon to rescue two birds which had become stuck in a tree. Injuries and some fatalities notwithstanding in this first year, in 1999 the project continued with the transfer of 10 falcons to the Kelowna site. CONC was once more involved with the project.

Designated as an endangered species in 1978, the current conservation status of *Falco peregrinus* has been assessed as "not at risk" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Species. The ban of the insecticide DDT in the US in 1972, its ban in Canada at the end of 1990, and a range of conservation efforts have supported the return of this fascinating and handsome bird.

Since [eBird's](#) launch in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, there have been 799 sightings, 40 photos and 4 audio recordings of the Peregrine Falcon in the Okanagan- Similkameen region. Most recently, the Peregrine Falcon was recorded in eBird on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in the Penticton/Lake Okanagan area.

### Sources:

- Tracks, Trails and Naturalists' Tales, A History of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club 1962 to 2000
- Canadian Geographic, May 6, 2015
- Black Press Media, December 17, 2017
- [eBird.org](#)

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEWS

## CONC EDITORS

### [Historic Protections in Place for the Protection of B.C. Lands and Water](#)

On November 3, 2023, the First Nations Leadership Council, and federal and provincial governments signed a billion-dollar agreement to protect 30% of B.C. land and water by 2030.

With this agreement, the federal government will be contributing \$500 million, and the B.C. government has dedicated more than \$500 million, which includes a fund for old-growth forests and the opportunity for additional funds from the philanthropic community. The agreement includes a commitment to work together toward protecting 25 percent by 2025, including on Indigenous protected areas.

"This is the largest investment into conservation in the history of the province, and the result of historic collaboration." Tori Ball, terrestrial conservation manager for CPAWS-BC.

### [The American Ornithological Society Will Change the English Names of Bird Species Named After People](#)

As announced on November 1, 2023, the AOS will establish a new naming entity and seek the input of the science community as well as the public, with the initial goal of replacing the names of 70-80 bird species in the U.S. and Canada which are characterized by eponyms.

"There is power in a name, and some English bird names have associations with the past that continue to be exclusionary and harmful today. We need a much more inclusive and engaging scientific process that focuses attention on the unique features and beauty of the birds themselves," said AOS President Colleen Handel, Ph.D., a research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Alaska. "Everyone who loves and cares about birds should be able to enjoy and study them freely—and birds need our help now more than ever."

"... the time has come for us to transform this process and redirect the focus to the birds, where it belongs," said Judith Scarl, Ph.D., AOR Executive Director and CEO.



### [Have a rat problem? Replace poison with owls....](#)

Whereas rodenticides are often used by municipalities, businesses, and residential buildings to address unwanted rodent populations, here's a brilliantly effective, humane, and secondary wildlife-friendly means of managing these human and animal conflicts.

The Responsible Pest Management Program in London, Ontario provides clean-up strategies and **installs owl boxes that will house Eastern Screech-Owls to hunt rodents instead.** This project is a partnership between 3 community groups that seek to reduce the secondary impacts of rodenticide poisons on wildlife, pets and people, as well as support the health of the local owl population.

Other proactive strategies that avoid the secondary impacts of rodenticide applications include removing or securing sources of food (bird or animal feed, compost, garbage...), removing piles of brush cover, and sealing building entrances.

*Many thanks to Jen for sending this link along.*

[The paradox of salmon fisheries](#)...a complexity of changing goals, strategies and outcomes

[Halloween decorations may prove hazardous, even life-threatening to birds and other wildlife...](#)

[Spiders and ballooning](#).... the mysteries behind their extensive aerial travels appear to be related to the Earth's electric field...

[Some birds appear to be gaining immunity to the avian flu](#).... emerging good news for the futures of the wild bird populations that have been impacted by the H5N1 virus...

[The B.C. Spotted Owl](#)..... a species with a very tenuous future. It's estimated that before industrial logging there were almost 1,000 spotted owls in B.C. forests. The number has steadily declined from an estimated 200 adults in the late 1980s, to just one wild-born female owl today. What are strategies to protect them? Views differ....

For details on the Spotted Owl breeding program: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023WLRS0053-001493>

## **CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF BETTY WEIR, WIFE OF STU WEIR**

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It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Elizabeth "Betty" Weir, wife of long-time member Stewart "Stu" Weir, on Saturday, November 18, 2023, at the age of 91. Our deepest condolences to Stu and family and friends. A service is not currently planned. The family is hoping to plan a service for the Spring 2024. Additional information is available at: <https://www.springfieldfuneralhome.com/obituaries/weir-elizabeth-betty/>



*Photo Courtesy Lisa Rae*

The thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of. The mite which November contributes equal in value to the bounty of July

Henry David Thoreau

<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</b> <a href="mailto:info@okanagannature.org">info@okanagannature.org</a> for any general enquiry		
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Secretary	Vacant	
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Website: <a href="http://www.okanagannature.org">www.okanagannature.org</a>	Rick Gee	<a href="mailto:admin@okanagannature.org">admin@okanagannature.org</a>
Nature Kids Kelowna	Marjorie Gonzalez	<a href="mailto:outreach@okanagannature.org">outreach@okanagannature.org</a>
<b>MONTHLY MEETINGS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, September to June, 7:00 p.m. at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna.</li> <li><u>Visitors are welcome.</u></li> <li>Host: Bev Thomas. <u>Please bring your own cup.</u></li> </ul>		
<b>MEMBERSHIP:</b> Karen Pedersen <a href="mailto:membership@okanagannature.org">membership@okanagannature.org</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ANNUAL DUES:</b> Single \$35, Family \$47, Students \$14. Includes the quarterly newsletter. (Additional \$10 annual charge for newsletters sent by mail).</li> <li><b>MEMBERSHIP FORM AND WAIVER:</b> Available on the CONC website: <a href="http://www.okanagannature.org">www.okanagannature.org</a>. 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.</li> <li><b>DUES:</b> Dues may also be paid by e-transfer to <a href="mailto:membership@okanagannature.org">membership@okanagannature.org</a>. Please note your full name(s) in the field for providing additional information.</li> <li><b>HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERS:</b> Hugh Westheuser, Pat Westheuser, Eileen Dillabough, Cec Dillabough</li> <li><b>MEMORIAL MEMBERS:</b> Arthur Hughes-Games, Brenda Thomson, Muriel Westwood, Harry Almond</li> </ul>		
<b>NEWSLETTER:</b> Editors - Lisa Rae & Vivian Manning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next deadline date for submissions is February 15, 2024</li> <li>Send submissions to <a href="mailto:editor@okanagannature.org">editor@okanagannature.org</a></li> <li>Email distribution: Karen Pedersen <a href="mailto:membership@okanagannature.org">membership@okanagannature.org</a></li> </ul>		
<b>ACTIVITIES:</b> <u>All activities are seasonal.</u> 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.  <b>All outing details are on our calendar at our website. If in doubt, check with the activity contact, or contact any of the Executive.</b>		
<b>BIRDING: contact:</b> <a href="mailto:birding@okanagannature.org">birding@okanagannature.org</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Monday Birding:</b> meet 7:45 a.m. (April-Sept.) or 8:45 a.m. (Oct-March) at the Apple Bowl*</li> <li><b>Thursday Birding:</b> meet 7:45 a.m. (April-Sept.) or 8:45 a.m. (Oct-March) at the Apple Bowl*</li> <li><b>Saturday Birding:</b> 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)</li> </ul> <b>TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE!</b>		
<b>BOTANY: contact:</b> <a href="mailto:botany@okanagannature.org">botany@okanagannature.org</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Friday Botany</b> trips meet according to emailed details sent for each outing by Botany Director Peter Courtney (Spring to Fall)</li> </ul>		
<b>HIKES: All hikers meet at the Apple Bowl* (Bring a lunch)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tuesday: Ramblers</b> contact Robert Lake: (250) 215-3211</li> <li><b>Wednesday: Sole Survivors</b> contact Robbie Bowers &amp; Glenda Newman <a href="mailto:outings@okanagannature.org">outings@okanagannature.org</a></li> <li><b>Thursday: Ramblers Plus</b> contact Robert Lake (250) 215-3211</li> </ul>		
*Apple Bowl: 1555 Burtch Road - Apple Bowl parking lot, corner of Burtch and Bernard		