

March 1, 2024

The Central Okanagan Naturalist

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 March 12, 7:00 p.m., **in person** at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna. Please see our Speaker details on page two.

WELCOME NEW CONC MEMBERS!

Our club has been growing and thriving. We want to welcome our most recent new members. We look forward to meeting you in the natural world.

- Christine Copeman
- Kimberly Archibald
- Rob World

PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DOUGLAS GRAHAM

I was truly honoured to have been the President of CONC for the last three years, and Vice-President for one year before that. I would like to sincerely thank all of you for your participation in our events and meetings, for renewing, and for your patience during the downtime due to COVID. I had the privilege of working with three different Boards — the core group that keeps the Club going year after year.

I've come to understand that a big part of the President's job is to keep things...the same. Most members just want to be able to access the CONC services they enjoy. Keeping the ball rolling is a bit more complicated than it seems and I think we did well along that line. I'm personally proud of: unifying hikers and non-hikers in the use of common calendar and email systems, steering CONC through the difficult years of the Pandemic when we had to reinvent ourselves in many ways, helping manage our BC Nature AGM (although I take little credit for that), revising our bylaws, producing our "how-to-run CONC manual" (the Procedures), launching CONC's Biodiversity Database of the Central Okanagan, participating in the Thomson Marsh Platform project (the biggest investment project in our history), and helping manage a transition to a new newsletter.

For health reasons, I was not able to attend this year's AGM. I had in any event announced well before that I would not be running for re-election as President. From the AGM Minutes, it can be seen that we ended up with a good slate of Board members, including several new faces, who will continue to manage most of the activities of CONC. Apparently, nobody opposed me becoming Past President, so I humbly step into that role. Unfortunately, I also see that no one was elected to the positions of President, Vice-President, Conservation Director, or the important role of Programs Director. In the 60+ years that CONC has existed, there has never been a time when the Club did not have a President.

The new 2023 Board met for the first time on 29 February, to take a leap into the unknown. Our first order of business was to figure out how the Board and CONC could operate without these key positions having been filled. We didn't decide on a rotating presidency or a shared presidency but with everybody pitching in, we will manage. It's also clear however that the lack of members stepping forward has consequences – regrettably, there will be impacts on some CONC activities and services. It is never too late to contribute to your club. If you want to check out a Board meeting, you are welcome to do so; a member can always join if prearranged. Please feel free to contact any member of the Board.

A sincere thank you and I look forward to seeing you out on the trails!

***Editorial Note:** We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Douglas for his considerable work and contributions as President over the last three years. Douglas has been an excellent ambassador for CONC, lending his knowledgeable and agreeable approach to all needs and challenges that have come along. See you on the trails!*

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

CONC SPEAKER, MARCH 12 GENERAL MEETING

NORTH SEA SAGA JUNE 24 – JULY 4, 2023

BY STEFFANY WALKER

The North Sea Saga was the name of the expedition that my sister and I joined on June 24, 2023, with Adventure Canada. This is not an advertisement but a personal journey.

The Ocean Endeavour was our home for the next 11 days. Twenty hours of daylight made it surreal. I will be showing you landscapes, the sea, birds, historical places of Scotland and a little-known island in the North Sea called Fair Isle. But the Faroes is what I will be introducing you to the most.

With pictures and videos, I hope that you will come to appreciate how hardy and tough living can be in such amazing landscapes. Putting this together was a joy. I wanted to share this part of the world with everyone: anyone who enjoys the outdoors, the sea, birds, hiking, history and little-known areas of the world.

I hope you come to see this voyage from Aberdeen to the little Fair Isle, Kirkwall, the Orkneys and the amazing Faroe Islands.

KELOWNA PARKS ADOPT-A-STREAM PROGRAM - CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS
FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024 - 8:30 - 11:30 A.M.

The City of Kelowna program provides community groups and organizations an opportunity to help keep Kelowna's streams and wetlands healthy by supporting a biannual cleanup of litter and debris.

We will be cleaning the Mill Creek area along Bulman Road and the Rail Trail towards John Hindle Drive; Maude-Roxby wetlands; and Thomson Marsh. Supplies including safety vests, gloves, garbage bags and trash pickup tools will be provided.

No need to sign up, just come along and join the fun. Details regarding the meeting place and a reminder will be sent toward the end of March.

2024 JOHNS FAMILY NATURE CONSERVANCY PARK SURVEY, MAY 25**BY MIKE HOWARD**

Members of the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club conduct an annual survey of the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Park for the property trustees, the Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT). This survey covers avifauna, mammals, reptiles, flowering plants and any unusual insects like the Critter Count that is carried out for the adjacent Okanagan Mountain Park. In addition to the Parks records, this information is submitted to iNaturalist as a record of species occurrences on the Johns Family property. The results of the overall survey provide the trustee with a permanent record of species and a snapshot indication of the changes occurring in the park year over year. This in turn assists COLT in their plans for the continued management of the property under their care.

The 2024 survey will cover both the public and the larger geographic area of the ecological section of the Johns Family property. We will require six or seven teams with an interest in the natural environment. The survey is scheduled for Saturday, May 25 from 8 am until approximately noon and will follow CONC group activity protocols. The organizers hope that holding the survey on a weekend will allow additional CONC members to participate.

If you would like to participate in the 2024 survey, please notify either Eve Wegscheidler at ewegscheidler@gmail.com or Mike Howard at mikehoward@shaw.ca indicating your area of interest (avifauna, mammals, reptiles, insects or plants) and you will be assigned to one of the study area teams.

2024 OKANAGAN MOUNTAIN PARK BIRD & CRITTER COUNT, JUNE 1**BY LES GYUG**

This is an early reminder that the Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park Bird & Critter Count will be held this year during the week centering on Saturday, June 1, 2024. Before the 2003 fires, the count was always on the Saturday after Victoria Day. After the 2003 fires, the club committee that organized the count fell apart in the two years that BC Parks would not let us into the park, leaving me as the sole committee member standing by 2006. We hold the count now on the second Saturday after Victoria Day, and on more than one day so that more people can participate. We count on up to 10-15 routes per year. The before-and-after 2003 fire data have made this a unique

long-term study of bird population responses to wildfire. All members, guests and others are welcome, whether you have birding, botany or any other experience or not.

Two special requests this year: Firstly, we need to re-establish a committee to organize this club event. As I contact route leaders and others for this year's count, I'll also be looking for committee members. The time commitment is definitely small, but would be a great help to keep this count going. Secondly, if somebody has a motorboat available, or knows somebody who does, that would be very helpful to cover the park lakeshore, which takes about four hours total. There are usually a few unique bird species on the southern lakeshore that don't occur elsewhere in the park.

Thanks, Les Gyug, Phone (250) 769-5907

REGULAR COLUMNS

BIRDING REPORT

BY MIKE HOWARD

The [winter Birding Report](#) can be found in the AGM package, as part of the Annual Birding Report.

KELOWNA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

BY CHRIS CHARLESWORTH, COUNT COMPILER

The 2023 Kelowna Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 16. 55 observers out in the field, and seven more at feeders tallied 99 species on count day, with four additional species, Wood Duck, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Lincoln's Sparrow, tallied for the count week period (three days before and three days after the count). The total of 99 is below average.

The weather on count day was calm, mild, and dry. Overall, the weather throughout the southern interior of BC was unseasonably mild and dry. Despite the mild conditions, many birds that typically might spend the winter departed. Overall, the numbers of most species were down. Waterfowl, though not present in great numbers, were more numerous than on the 2022 count, when many ponds and wetlands were frozen. This year wetlands had open, running water, and that resulted in new record high counts of two species: Marsh Wren at 21, and Virginia Rail at 13. Because of the open water on lakes and ponds, we had a high number of Green-winged Teal at 53, Northern Shoveler at 22 and Northern Pintail at three. Diving duck numbers were down since there was no wintering flock present. We missed Canvasback on the count. A Ruddy Duck and an Eared Grebe at Robert Lake, which is usually frozen, were nice finds. American Coot numbers were very low.

No unusual gulls were tallied on count day, other than a single Short-billed Gull. Glaucous and Iceland gulls were counted as week birds. Raptor numbers were down, almost across the board. Three Peregrine Falcons was a new high (previous 2). Owls were scarce, but we still managed four species, including Great Horned, Northern Pygmy, Western Screech and Long-eared owls. Interesting passerines on count day included 33 Horned Larks at Robert Lake (a new species for the Kelowna CBC), nine Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and two Bewick's Wrens. After last year's boom year for American Robins and Varied Thrushes, we barely had any this year. Only about a tenth of the Bohemian Waxwings were present this year, compared to last year. The lack of waxwings and winter thrushes can probably be attributed to a poor crop of berries this year, most likely due to drought conditions. Winter finches were not present in good numbers, so it was good to at least get two Common Redpolls and 15 Evening Grosbeaks on count day. Good numbers of sparrows were present in weedy areas, including a long-staying Swamp Sparrow, two White-throated

Sparrows and a count week Lincoln's Sparrow. *Icterids* (blackbirds and kin) were scarce, but a Western Meadowlark at Robert Lake was a highlight.

Thanks to everyone who came out and participated in the count day, and thanks to CONC for sponsoring the event once again.

- Number of observers in field: 55;
- Number of observers at feeders: 7;
- High temperature (Celsius) 7;
- Low temperature (Celsius) -2;
- Time spent in field on foot: 67 hrs;
- Distance covered on foot: 89.85 km;
- Time spent in field in car: 45 km;
- Distance covered by car: 587.4 km.

Field Observers: Ainley, Jody; Auty, Merle; Beaulieu, Joanne; Bredahl, Kari; Bredahl, Mabel; Buers, Megan; Cecile, Don; Charlesworth, Chris; Coburn, Norma; Dudeck, Blair; Elmore, Linda; Fisher, Fran; Force, Michael; Gee, Rick; Graham, Douglas; Guild, Don; Gyug, Les; Hannebauer, Jesse; Heinrichs, Markus; Howard, Mike; Jansen, Gerald; Jansen, James; Jansen, John; Jones, Barry; Korcok, Jasmine; Kragh, Douglas; Lachaine, Annette; Laing, Pam; Layman, Eve; Lewis, Craig; MacDonald, Archie; McDonald, Laurel; Malkinson, Paul; Malkinson, Sharon; Morgan, Joan; Ocana, Kalin; Powell, Clive; Rae, Lisa; Robertson, Lesley; Swan, Nick; Vissia, Brad; Walker, Ian; Walker, Linda; Walker, Steffany; Weilmeier, Markus; Weilmeier, Martin; Weir, Stu; White, Deborah; Whitman, Ann; Whitman, Reford; Williams, Huw; Wilson, Don; Wright, Wendy; Zander, Kurt; Zander, Pat.

Species Observed:

Cackling Goose	5	Short-billed Gull	1	Mountain Chickadee	43
Canada Goose	4166	Ring-billed Gull	66	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9
Trumpeter Swan	19	California Gull	10	Golden-crowned Kinglet	14
Tundra Swan	14	Herring Gull	134	Red-breasted Nuthatch	23
Wood Duck	CW	Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	CW	White-breasted Nuthatch	6
Northern Shoveler	22	Glaucous-winged Gull	20	Pygmy Nuthatch	190
Gadwall	94	Glaucous Gull	CW	Brown Creeper	2
American Wigeon	157	gull sp.	244	Pacific Wren	4
Mallard	2791	Great Blue Heron	14	Marsh Wren	21
Northern Pintail	3	Northern Harrier	2	Bewick's Wren	2
Green-winged Teal	53	Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	American Dipper	3
Redhead	16	Cooper's Haw	10	European Starling	3979
Ring-necked Duck	32	Bald Eagle	43	Townsend's Solitaire	5
Greater Scaup	27	Red-tailed Hawk	70	Varied Thrush	5
Lesser Scaup	20	Rough-legged Hawk	1	American Robin	42
Bufflehead	70	Western Screech-Owl	1	Bohemian Waxwing	1254
Common Goldeneye	69	Great Horned Owl	7	Cedar Waxwing	12
Barrow's Goldeneye	20	Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	House Sparrow	629
Hooded Merganser	69	Long-eared Owl	1	House Finch	720
Common Merganser	40	Belted Kingfisher	7	Common Redpoll	2
Ruddy Duc	1	Downy Woodpecker	20	Pine Siskin	7
California Quail k	529	Hairy Woodpecker	6	Evening Grosbeak	15
Ring-necked Pheasant	5	Pileated Woodpecker	3	American Goldfinch	344
Common Loon	5	Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	206	American Tree Sparrow	6
Pied-billed Grebe	13	American Kestrel	9	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)	376
Horned Grebe	35	Merlin	11	White-crowned Sparrow	101
Red-necked Grebe	17	Peregrine Falcon	3	White-throated Sparrow	2
Eared Grebe	1	Northern Shrike	3	Song Sparrow	220
Western Grebe	2	Steller's Jay	25	Lincoln's Sparrow	CW
Rock (Feral) Pigeon	596	Black-billed Magpie	389	Swamp Sparrow	1
Eurasian Collared-Dove	228	Clark's Nutcracker	6	Spotted Towhee	6
Mourning Dove	148	American Crow	110	Red-winged Blackbird	73
Virginia Rail	13	Common Raven	221	Western Meadowlark	1
American Coot	328	Horned Lark	33	Brewer's Blackbird	64
Wilson's Snipe	6	Black-capped Chickadee	269		

As per usual, the Lake Country Christmas Bird Count was held on the first possible day, December 14th, 2023, with 23 people covering the count circle in 10 parties. The weather was exactly the opposite of pretty good this year, and was the worst day ever for weather I can remember in the 21 years of this count.

The not-very-pleasant weather conditions – heavy wet snow that started freezing to the roads in the late morning – made driving conditions treacherous in the north end of the count circle in particular, and some areas could simply not be covered. That resulted in a total of 58.6 party-hours, eclipsing the previous low of 62 hours, and much lower than the long-term average of 69.7 hours. Similarly, the 4814 birds counted was the lowest ever (previous low of 5816, long-term average 7761 birds), and lowest species total of 67 (previous low of 74, long-term average of 83 species per year). Five species were found in count week, rather than count day, but these don't get included in the count day results.

Only three species broke the 500-count mark: Canada Goose (807), Mallard (525) and California Quail (577). Other species that typically surpass the 500-bird count mark like European Starlings or Bohemian Waxwings seemed to be laying low in the weather conditions.

Many thanks to all the stalwart volunteers who come and help, and who make it a pleasure to organize this count. And here's hoping for some better weather next year.

Participants: Kari Bredahl, Mabel Bredahl, Don Cecile, Chris Charlesworth, Chery DeMara, Dan Durall, Rick Durand, Michael Force, Rick Gee, Douglas Graham, Don Guild, Les Gyug, Mike Howard, Melanie Jones, Doug Kragh, Archie MacDonald, Lisa Rae, Ian Walker, Linda Walker, Steffany Walker, Stu Weir, Deb White, Don Wilson

Species Totals:

Canada Goose	807	Red-tailed Hawk	21	Black-capped Chickadee	67
Trumpeter Swan	cw	Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	cw
Gadwall	65	Rough-legged Hawk	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	4
American Wigeon	52	American Coot	341	Pygmy Nuthatch	57
Mallard	525	California Gull	cw	Golden-crowned Kinglet	2
Green-winged Teal	1	Herring Gull	2	Western Bluebird	3
Greater Scaup	19	Glaucous-winged Gull	3	Townsend's Solitaire	9
Lesser Scaup	1	Rock Pigeon	8	American Robin	11
Common Goldeneye	22	Eurasian Collared-Dove	62	European Starling	362
Barrow's Goldeneye	4	Mourning Dove	100	Bohemian Waxwing	145
Common Merganser	201	Great Horned Owl	1	Fox Sparrow	1
California Quail	577	Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	Dark-eyed Junco	115
grouse sp.	1	Belted Kingfisher	1	White-crowned Sparrow	6
Wild Turkey	75	Downy Woodpecker	1	Song Sparrow	42
Common Loon	2	Hairy Woodpecker	4	Spotted Towhee	1
Pied-billed Grebe	3	Northern Flicker	81	Red-winged Blackbird	5
Horned Grebe	30	Pileated Woodpecker	1	House Finch	311
Red-necked Grebe	23	American Kestrel	1	Cassin's Finch	5
Western Grebe	11	Merlin	6	White-winged Crossbill	1
Great Blue Heron	4	Canada Jay	cw	Pine Siskin	3
Golden Eagle	cw	Steller's Jay	5	American Goldfinch	53
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Black-billed Magpie	155	Evening Grosbeak	1
Cooper's Hawk	3	American Crow	31	House Sparrow	255
Bald Eagle	17	Common Raven	28	Mountain Chickadee	12

Regularly scheduled outings for vascular plants will run from May 3 to July 19, normally on Fridays. This is the period of peak flowering when there's lots to see. Depending on interest, we may do other excursions. For example, in previous years we've searched for Steer's Head blooming in April and looked for rare plants when they were blooming. The new schedule, including outing locations and short lists of species we expect to see, can be found on CONC's webpage at <https://okanagannature.org/our-activities/botany/>

Of interest for this first quarterly period will be early spring flowering plants (see photos below). A few isolated flowers have already been spotted this year. Typically, flowering begins lower in the valley in areas of good sun exposure. [Knox Mountain](#) and roadsides along the lower part of [Beaver Lake Road](#) are good places to look for early spring wildflowers. To see what's flowering in our area check out iNaturalist projects such as the [Mission Creek Greenway Biodiversity Project](#) and the [Okanagan Biodiversity Project](#).

With respect to upcoming events, you might want to register now for Washington's annual weekend botany get-togethers, [Botany Washington](#) (April 26-28) and [Study Weekend](#) (June 14-16). Having attended these in the past I highly recommend them. BC's one comparable event, [Botany BC](#), will be held in Nanaimo May 9-12. Also, watch for events of botanical interest offered during the [Meadowlark Festival](#) May 16-20.

Regarding botany field guides and helpful references, I recommend ***Plants of the Southern Interior of British Columbia***, Lone Pine Press. The best online resource for BC plants is [eFlora](#). 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. 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 encourage members to volunteer to lead botany outings. You don't have to be a botany geek to lead but a familiarity with some of our native plants and a knowledge of the field guide we use would be helpful. In the end, it's a chance to get out and see some beautiful flowering plants and to put names to a few of them. Plant lists will be provided to assist you.

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@okanagannature.org



Pink Twink



Hornseed Buttercup



Small-flowered Blue-eyed Mary



Dangling Suncrest

OUTINGS REPORT

BY ROBBIE BOWERS & GLENDA NEWMAN

Hiking and Snowshoeing (Sole Survivors and Ramblers)

Outings continued through the late fall and early winter on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Fall hikes included East Knox, Okanagan Mountain Park and the annual highlight, Larch trees in Myra Bellevue Provincial Park.

Conditions transitioned to snow during late October. In November, hiking with boot grippers on local trails in Myra Bellevue and Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park were scheduled on Tuesdays and snowshoeing at the Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Club trails and Beaver Lake area on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Weather conditions in late November, December and January were very inconsistent resulting in poor snow conditions so outings were scheduled as weather permitted.



The Weekend Explorers have now completed one year of excursions, including a roadside geological tour, hikes and radioastronomy, in addition to floral and faunal forays. Two excursions were cancelled: one in June for lack of a volunteer to lead, the other in August due to the McDougall Creek Fire.

Because Xmas is such a busy time, our plan never included a December outing; instead, members were encouraged to participate in one of the many Okanagan Christmas Bird Counts. The excursions alternated between Saturdays and Sundays on the last weekend of each month.

In total 45 people participated; some attended regularly, while others appeared only once. Most of the participants were retired, but others were younger people, both students and working adults.

Here's a quick synopsis:

- **February - Westside Geology** - Ian and John Greenough led this roadside tour of Okanagan prehistory. The itinerary highlighted the volcanic origins of Goats Peak, and the fossil beds exposed close to Highway 97. The event was well attended despite the cold, strong winds and blowing snow.
- **March - Early Blooms on Knox Mountain** - This was primarily a botanical excursion, searching the south-facing slope of Knox for the first blooms. My photographs record 20 species of plants and animals including Sagebrush Buttercups, Geyer's Desert Parsley, Bulbous Woodland Star, and Common Whitlow Grass in bloom.
- **April - Hike to Cosens Bay in Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park** - Both Mule and White-tailed Deer greeted us in the parking lot. Marmots, bumblebees and butterflies were now active, migrant warblers were hiding among the emerging leaves and diverse flowers. The highlight was a lone rattlesnake guarding our trail.
- **May - McDougall Rim Hike** - This is a very steep, energetic uphill trek, rich in spring wildflowers. I have over 50 species of diverse flora and fauna recorded for the day. Huge pink blossoms of Bitterroot lined the trail. The highlight: two patches of a rare Okanagan endemic, the Okanagan Fameflower in full bloom.
- **June - no leader, so no trip**
- **July - Fish Food** - We met at the dog park on the south side of Mission Creek, and explored the life in the creek's pools and riffles. The mayflies, stoneflies, and other larval insects we found are a critical food source for the resident fish population. While there, we startled a Wandering Garter Snake. It promptly hid, *underwater!* (beneath a cobble submersed in the stream).
- **August - cancelled (fire)**
- **September - Radioastronomy in the Okanagan** - Marjorie Gonzalez organized our trip to the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory at White Lake in South Okanagan. In a sense, these astronomers are listening to the universe via electromagnetic waves gathered by their telescopic arrays. Some of these arrays resemble huge versions of the satellite dishes residing on people's homes. Other arrays look more like complex networks of wires suspended above an open field.
- **October - Leaves & Lichens of the UBC Okanagan Campus** - We shuffled among the colourful palette of the campus' fallen leaves. Many of these are not native to the Okanagan but are prominent species comprising Kelowna's urban forest. Included were several oak species, and perhaps a half dozen different species of maples. Two species of Chinese "living fossils", *Ginkgo* and *Metasequoia*, are planted on campus. Although no longer

considered native, these two tree species formerly occurred here, just a few million years in our past.

- **November - Oh, Christmas Trees!** - The unseasonably mild, and dry weather allowed us to navigate McCulloch Road from Scenic Canyon east to Kelowna Nordic's trails. Apart from Whitebark Pine (only known from the peak of Terrace Mtn), we found every species of conifer native to the Central Okanagan: pines, cedar, spruce, larch, fir, yew, and junipers.... Archie MacDonald worked for years in forestry and shared his expertise on the ecology and management of these trees, one of the cornerstones of BC's economy.
- **December - no excursion - too many other activities.**
- **January - Winter Waterfowl** - We slowly meandered down Brandt's Creek from Manhattan Drive to Rotary Marsh, and south along Kelowna's waterfront as far as "The Sails". This is one of the most productive areas for local winter birding, and we recorded 16 species.

Future - We will carry the same pattern on into the future, and eagerly await volunteer leaders and innovative ideas for new excursions.

Note: if you lead one trip, you are committing to one trip only. You aren't expected to become a regular leader or participant.

Photos courtesy of Ian Walker



Northern Pacific Rattlesnake at Cosens Bay
(29 April 2023)



Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory
(24 Sept 2023)



Okanagan Fameflower on McDougall Rim
(28 May 2023)

FEATURES



OPINION:

THE TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS AND CARBON PRICING

BY RICK GEE

In the Gee family history, there are several mentions of criminal or antisocial activity on the part of my ancestors. These crimes include selling ale at a cut-rate price, keeping a dunghill too close to the public highway (a six-pence fine), and (on September 13, 1617) keeping too many geese on the village common (a two-pence fine).

The last is an example of the tragedy of the commons. "**The tragedy of the commons** is a metaphoric label for a concept that is widely discussed in economics, ecology and other sciences. According to the concept, should a number of people enjoy unfettered access to a finite, valuable resource such as a pasture, they will tend to over-use it and may end up destroying its value altogether. To exercise voluntary restraint is not a rational choice for individuals – if they did, the other users would merely supplant them – yet the predictable result is a tragedy for all." (Wikipedia)

There are many finite resources in the world today, including pastures such as the Lundbom Commonage near Merritt and the Commonage Road near Vernon (both areas used for cattle grazing) but I would like to focus on another finite resource, the atmosphere, a resource into which we continually emit carbon, as carbon dioxide or as methane. This carbon is resulting in the climate change we see around us.

Some CONC members use electric vehicles. Some use electricity to heat their homes. In BC we are fortunate that much of our electricity is hydroelectricity and its production does not result in carbon emissions. But many of us drive gasoline-powered vehicles, carbon emitters; we heat our homes and water with natural gas, again emitting carbon.

Many CONC members are also starting to talk about taking pleasure trips to far-flung areas of the world. The air and ship travel involved in these trips also emits carbon.

If you are emitting carbon, I encourage you to please consider using carbon offsets.

“Carbon offsetting is a trading mechanism that allows entities such as governments, individuals, or businesses to compensate for (*i.e.* “offset”) their greenhouse gas emissions by supporting projects that reduce, avoid, or remove emissions elsewhere.” (Wikipedia) Essentially, you determine your carbon emissions from your activity and pay someone else to do something to offset your emissions. “Do something to offset your emissions” may involve planting trees, preserving peat bogs, preserving old-growth forest, or, controversially, liquifying CO₂ emissions and pumping them underground.

Carbon offsets are based on the idea that paying to pollute will encourage people to pollute less. Most economists agree carbon pricing is the way to go. Unfortunately, some political parties in Canada see carbon pricing as just another tax and they see taxes as bad. Please don’t support such parties.

When Jen and I drove to Newfoundland and Labrador last year (almost 30,000 kilometres in all), carbonfootprint.com suggested we emitted four tonnes of carbon emissions, instead of the one tonne we would normally have emitted. Heating our home and water with natural gas uses about 20 GJ per year; this emits just over one tonne of carbon emissions. Electricity for our home totals about 3600 KWH per year and, in some other provinces, would produce just over one tonne of carbon emissions.

From those activities we produced approximately five tonnes of carbon emissions; carbonfootprint.com suggested a price of \$24 per tonne, so I paid them \$120.

What would you need to do to offset a flight from Kelowna to Sydney, Australia? The website less.ca calculates the carbon emissions at just under five tonnes per person. Less.ca focuses mainly on air travel; carbonfootprint.com offers calculations for vehicles and houses as well as for flights. Carbonfootprint.com suggests the Kelowna to Sydney emissions are just under four tonnes per person.

Let’s assume you have decided to purchase carbon offsets to deal with your carbon emissions. Where do you purchase carbon offsets? Many places are available; some have recently been panned as fraudulent or ineffective. Here are a couple that appear to be legitimate:

- carbonfootprint.com, which I have mentioned above
- tentree.ca, a site which plants trees for you and offers a monthly plan.

However, my preference for carbon offsets would be to support the Guardian Watchmen program of the Coastal First Nations of BC. First Nations groups hire employees to do conservation work in the Great Bear Rainforest and on Haida Gwaii. They also save old-growth forests from logging. Their rate is \$25 per tonne. Contact Coastal First Nations, info@coastalfirstnations.ca, and Laura will get back to you, requesting your mailing address and the tonnes you'd like to purchase; she will send you an invoice with payment details. For more information about the Guardian Watchman, please listen to this CBC Radio Storylines presentation: [Protecting the Great Bear Rainforest](#)

I would note that I have contacted several politicians (including BC's premier and Canada's prime minister) about their use of carbon offsets. I have yet to receive a reply. Here's your chance to be better than a politician!

LEARNING ABOUT EAGLES AT PETER GREER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY PAM LAING



Photos Courtesy Pam Laing

An exciting and forward-thinking project is underway at Peter Greer Elementary School in Lake Country. The school has a large population of Indigenous, Inuit and Métis students. The school mascots are eagles. As a response to the calls for change issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the school's imagery of eagles is being rethought. My small part in the project has been to talk about the natural history of both Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles, to give the children some background and photographic imagery to incorporate into their further studies.

In all I spent four sessions with the four Grade 4/5 split classes of students. We have looked at the physiology of eagles, their dietary preferences, and their behaviour. We have marvelled at their majesty and their remarkable ability to withstand cold weather. We have also talked about the annual January Eagle Count, part of the Rick Howie Interior B.C. Swan and Eagle Count that has now been taking place for 30 years. The students wanted to know why we do this Count and how the compiled data will be used.

Along with the natural history component of the project, there are concrete plans to increase the students' cultural awareness of the significance of eagles to Canada's First Nations and to celebrate Indigenous knowledge and values concerning eagles. I feel honoured to be part of the project and have enjoyed it immensely. And as a bonus, we may even have some eager eagle counters in years to come.



A VERY ODD MUSHROOM SEASON

BY MITCH MILGRAM

2023 was a very unusual mushroom season here in the Shuswap. The summer and fall were hot and dry, and most mushrooms failed to fruit as hoped for in September and October. With some rain in November, a few late-season fungi began appearing but then came the colder weather and snow, and I packed away my mushroom notes and gear. And then it got milder and rained, and for the most part stayed mild. Some park trails in Salmon Arm, particularly Parkhill Trails and Coyote Park Trails, being at lower elevations and closer to the moderating effects of Shuswap Lake, remained snow-free. I made records and collections into December, surpassing my previous latest season collection of December 1, back in 2021. I thought that date was remarkable at the

time, but to my amazement, this fall I was able to continue observing and collecting well beyond that late date.

I made collections of fresh specimens in the first week of December, then mid-month, then right up to Christmas. After each outing I'd pack away my gear thinking, surely this is the end. But no, I collected right up to January 5, 2024, recording at least 20-30 fruiting fungi on each outing. This is exceptional for this area of the BC interior.

Some fungi weren't a surprise to see, such as the hardy perennial Red Belted Conk (*Fomitopsis mouncaea*), or the leathery Birch Maze Gill (*Lenzites betulina*) growing on downed logs. Even the colourful jelly fungi, Witch's Butter (*Dacrymyces chrysospermus*), or the Winter Oyster (*Sarcomyxa serotina*) are known to last late into the season. But what has amazed me is seeing more fragile and fleshy fungi, in good shape, fruiting throughout this period, withstanding freezing evenings, then continuing to fruit and shed spores during the day. Gilled mushrooms such as the Poison Pie relative, *Hebeloma mesophaeum*, the Conifer Tuft (*Hypholoma capnoides*), the Fat Jack (*Suillus caeruleus*), the Waxy Gill (*Hygrophorus agathosmoides*) and the Blewit (*Lepista nuda*) continued to appear.

New snow came on January 6, 2024, and soon afterwards the temperatures plunged. The mushroom season finally came to an end, and I packed away my gear for the last time. Each previous year I've been envious of the mushroom enthusiasts in the Lower Mainland and on the Island, collecting often late into December and then in full swing again in February. This year I was happy to have a similar experience.



Birch Maze Gill, *Lenzites betulina*



Blewit-*Lepista*



Witch's Butter *Dacrymyces chrysospermus*



Poison Pie group

There's a widespread belief that mushrooms, after a summer rain, will spring up overnight. It's true that some mushrooms will develop quickly in a matter of days. Think of the 'Shaggy Mane' (*Coprinus comatus*), liquefying into an inky slime in a matter of hours. However, more often, mushrooms develop more slowly, sometimes taking weeks. What we're witnessing when we see a troop of mushrooms in our lawn that weren't there the day before are dehydrated and dormant mushrooms which have suddenly rehydrated and revived. *Marasimus oreades*, the 'Fairy Ring Mushroom,' also called 'Scotch Bonnet', is one common example of a mushroom able to revive after drought conditions.

Mushrooms are adaptable. Almost every niche in nature has a plant or animal that has adapted to it, and so too with fungi. Here are some other interesting examples that you're likely to encounter in our region.

Some mushrooms have adapted to even hotter and drier conditions than the above-mentioned Fairy Ring Mushroom, even desert conditions. This involves one of two adaptations. In one, there's a modification to their cap. Here, the cap doesn't fully open, and thus the gills, which are the spore-bearing structures, are contained in a moister, protective environment. These are called 'secotioid fungi,' and an example of this is the 'Desert Shaggy Mane' (*Podaxis pistillaris*). In a second adaptation, the mushrooms develop a tough protective shell-like rind which encloses and protects the spore-bearing mass. Members of the puffballs and truffle families will do this. These types of mushrooms are called 'Gasteroide fungi,' and an example of this that you might unexpectedly find while hiking the arid BC interior regions around Kamloops or Osoyoos is *Battarrea phalloides*, the 'Scaley Stalked Puffball'.

Though not restricted to desert conditions, but found in a variety of habitats, the Truffle family of mushrooms have adapted and live their entire lives underground. (Truffles are called hypogeous fungi.) These dense, convoluted fungi have abandoned the development of caps and gills, and developing underground as they do, are not able to disperse their spores in the normal fashion through wind and disturbances. Instead, they rely upon their strong aromas (some truffles being highly prized by gourmets) to attract various animals which consume them and spread their spores. Though we can find truffles in our local temperate forests, their habit of underground development allows them to live in true desert conditions.

Though most mushrooms are cold-sensitive and will decompose quickly once bitten by a frost, there's a host of hardy fungi with the ability to withstand repeated freezing and continue to grow once they thaw. Common in our area are the 'Late Fall Oyster' mushroom (*Sarcomyxa serotina*), and the 'Winter Chanterelle' (*Craterellus tubaeformis*), both of which you can find well into November. Even more hardy is *Flammulina velupites*, the 'Velvet Foot,' that can be found in the dead of winter when the ground is deeply buried in snow. I've found them in December and January, appearing on stumps when there are a few days of milder weather and above-freezing temperatures during the day. And then there's the 'Snowbank Mushrooms', a loose collection of species that have the same ability to withstand freezing temperatures. Appearing in the spring in alpine settings, these fungi will appear at the edge of and even within retreating snow drifts.

These preceding examples of mushroom's ability to adapt to a variety of situations is a reflection of perhaps their greatest asset, the ability to assume various roles and form complex symbiotic relationships. There are basically three roles that mushrooms have developed.

Some are parasitic, attacking and breaking down plant matter. Other parasitic fungi occasionally attack insects, such as the very expensive and medicinally sought-after Cordyceps mushrooms. Still others will attack other mushrooms, such as the sought-after Lobster mushroom (*Hypomyces lactiflorum*), where this crust fungi attacks the unpalatable *Russula brevipes* and in so doing transforms it into an appealing edible.

More often, fungi are saprophytic, meaning that they are the great recyclers of nature, breaking down dead and dying plants. Most of the commercial mushrooms we'll see in the supermarket are saprobes, raised in rich compost, like the common white button mushroom (*Agaricus bisporus*), or on wood waste or logs, such as the popular Shitake mushrooms. But perhaps the most interesting and important adaptation fungi have developed is their mutualistic relationship with a large variety of plants, from common grasses to lofty trees.

These mutualistic and symbiotic relationships between fungi and plants are called mycorrhizal relationships. They can take a variety of forms as the fungi's mycelium (the root-like, underground, main body of the fungi) forms a partnership with the roots of various plants. While providing additional water and nutrients to the partner plant, the fungi in return receive the sugars and nutrients they're unable to produce themselves. There are a variety of types of mycorrhiza relationships, the three main ones being arbuscular, ectomycorrhizal, and ericoid, differing in how the fungi and associate plants rootlets interconnect, the various plants involved, and their geographic location.

Another symbiotic adaptation some fungi have made is the creation of lichens. Lichens are a mutualistic relationship between a fungus and a green alga or cyanobacteria, where the fungus provides the body and structure, and the alga or cyanobacteria provides the sugars through photosynthesis that the fungus is unable to produce itself.

In adapting to a number of different roles and a vast variety of situations, fungi form an essential, widespread part of the natural world around us.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEWS



First, the coolest find ever.... [The BirdNote Daily](#). Podcasts on bird topics of every feather.

[Here's the best good news for January 2024....](#) Coastal carnivores in the Southern Great Bear Rainforest region are now protected from commercial trophy hunting, with the purchase of these rights by the [Raincoast Conservation Foundation](#). An area equal to 87.5% of the total area of the region is now free from commercial trophy hunting. This was accomplished by over 700 contributions from around the world and fundraising of 1.92 million dollars.

[Cork is the new plastic](#). Great news for a more sustainable and greener future.

[The North Atlantic Right Whale population is at 350 individuals](#). What are the implications for the resulting inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity?

[Sea Otters are making a comeback on the B.C. coast](#), and the entire underwater ecosystem is changing for the better.

[Why do flying insects \(like moths\) gather at artificial light?](#) It turns out that it's not because they're attracted to it...

[Shade coffee farms can be a refuge for plant and animal biodiversity.](#)

[Solar energy sites have been replanted with native grasses and wildflowers](#), consequently restoring insect habitat. The results are amazingly positive.

[Thousands of crows flock to Burnaby each night to roost.](#) Worth a trip?

Jen sends along a link to an open-source book from BCIT. [Buds, Branches and Bark: A Guide to Winter ID in the Pacific Northwest](#) is a comprehensive guide that features photos and descriptions of shrubs and trees, as well as tips on how to become more observant in the forest.

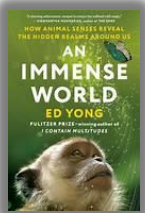
[The endangered Northern Myotis bat uses the bark of old-growth trees](#) to roost and raise their pups. With the steady erosion of these forests, coupled with the deadly white-nose disease, the bat populations are consequently shrinking. Can the creation of fake old-growth trees help?

[The wandering albatross thrives in the circumpolar band of ocean north of Antarctica](#), nesting and brooding on the Southern Ocean's island. While foraging for food, a parent can travel as much as 10,000 km. How do they navigate? They listen....

[Superb fairywrens](#) (*Malurus cyaneus*), sing to their young before hatching. Well of course. Don't we all?

[African elephant populations appear to be stabilizing.](#) But the efforts never end.

[As many as 1 billion birds in the US die in building collisions each year.](#) An architect is working on a remedy...



What we're reading:

[An Immense World by Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer, Ed Yong](#), explores the many astonishing ways in which animals experience their world. Yong investigates the diverse and sometimes bizarre senses of creatures, from scallops with hundreds of eyes to star-nosed moles that feel with their noses. He explains how animals perceive their slice of the world, and how limited our human perspective of it is. He also describes how human-caused environmental pollution and natural cycle disruption can affect their sensory worlds, often with devastating consequences.

Current research and expert interviews combine with Yong's clarity, humour, and empathy to allow us to appreciate the immense variety and complexity of animal perception and to rethink our relationship with the natural world. It's a fascinating and enlightening read.

CONC LIBRARY DISBANDED

BY JEN MATTHEWS



Due to a lack of use and the age of the collection, the CONC Library is being disbanded. The books will be put out at the Spring meetings for members to take home by donation.

You are welcome to bring your naturalist books to add to this sale, with proceeds going to the club. After a period, any unwanted items will be taken to the library book sale.

Editorial Note: We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Jen and to our former librarians for their management of the library these past years. Your work has been greatly appreciated!

A big thank you to those of you who added your name to our monthly lists to bring goodies to the meetings. Anyone who signs up will get a reminder by phone or email, but if your plans change, just let us know.



Offers to help put the kitchen back in order after the meeting, or putting the coffee supplies away are always appreciated! It has also been a big help with many of you bringing your mugs to the meetings.

If you would like to be part of this small committee let me know. It is great to have the added flexibility when we have more helpers.

PROVISION DATA SYSTEMS – THANK YOU!



The Club would like to thank Provision Data Systems Inc. for their continued support in providing our web hosting and linking multiple domain names to our site without charge.

CONC AGM REPORTS AND PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS FOLLOW BELOW



CONC 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

REPORTS & PHOTO CONTEST

- [2024 AGM Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Finance Report](#)
- [Membership Director Report](#)
- [Birding Director Report](#)
- [Botany Director Report](#)
- [BC Nature Director Report](#)
- [Outreach & Communications Director Report](#)
- [Photo Contest Winners](#)

1. **Meeting Call to Order:** Rick Gee, Past President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Rick Gee volunteered to Chair the AGM and Louise Nelson agreed to serve as Secretary. All in favour.
2. **Determination of Quorum:** A total of 39 CONC members in good standing were in attendance which meets the requirements of the Bylaws for 20% of the membership, but never less than 30 persons. No Motion was required.
3. **Adoption and Approval of the AGM Agenda:** The agenda as circulated was amended as follows: Adjournment was moved to Item 16. After a short refreshment break, Club Activities during 2023 were presented by Rick Gee and Announcement of Photo Contest Winners by Ian Walker. Adoption of the amended agenda was moved by Rick Gee. Seconded by Margaret Bryan. All in favour.
4. **Adoption and Approval of Previous Minutes** from 14 February 2023 (circulated by e-mail). Their adoption and approval were moved by Rick Gee. Seconded by Sheila MacKenzie Brown. All in favour.
5. **Approval of new Bylaws:** There were no questions submitted by the membership in response to the proposed new bylaws circulated by email nor from the members present at the AGM. Approval was moved by Rick Gee. Seconded by Pam Laing. All in favour.
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Attachments were circulated with the AGM agenda. The following reports were distributed to the membership prior to the AGM:
 - 1) Profit & Loss Budget Jan-Dec 2023
 - 2) Profit & Loss Budget Overview 2024
 - 3) Balance Sheet as of Dec 31, 2023

The treasurer's report was reviewed by our former treasurer, Jag Goel.

In summary:

- 1) Total Asset balance is \$74,698.42
- 2) The Profit/Loss for 2023 was -\$1429.00
- 3) The budget for 2024 projects a deficit of \$2990.00, leading to a recommendation to increase membership fees. See the next item.

Motion to accept the financial reports and the budget for 2023: Moved by Roy Sinden. Seconded by Kirsti Jarrett. All in favour.

7. **Approval of a fee increase:** The document justifying the need for a fee increase was circulated with the agenda and further explained by the Treasurer. Proposed new annual membership fees (starting September 2024) are:
 - 1) Individual: \$45
 - 2) Family: \$60
 - 3) Student \$15Fee for printed copies of newsletters: \$20

Approval of the fee increase was moved by Craig Lewis. Seconded by: Bitten Tisdale. All in favour.

8. **Dissolution of CONC Library:** Due to the lack of use of the library resources and the considerable effort required to maintain and display them, the Board has endorsed a proposal by the Librarian Jen Matthews to dissolve the library. Books are being sold to members by donation. Any books not sold will be donated to the Public Library Book Sale. Members thanked Jen and other library volunteers.
9. **Report from the Nominating Committee** (headed by Kirsti Jarrett & Laura Weir) The following nominations have been received:

- President: No candidate
- Vice-President: No candidate
- Secretary: Vivian Manning and Louise Nelson (shared responsibility)
- Treasurer: Roy Sinden
- Membership Director: Tessa Tesluk
- Past President: Douglas Graham (he transitions to this role on the Board, but this is still subject to approval by the Members)
- BC Nature Director: Fran Fisher
- Birding Director: Mike Howard
- Botany Director: Peter Courtney
- Conservation Director: No candidate
- Outdoor Excursions Director: Glenda Newman & Robbie Bowers (shared responsibility)
- Programs Director: No candidate
- Outreach and Communications Director: Marjorie Gonzalez
- Director at large: Rick Gee

10. First Call for nominations from the floor. No nominations were received from the floor.

11. Directors' Reports (Part 1): The following directors presented brief reports (their written reports will appear separately in the newsletter):

- a) **President**, Douglas Graham (presented in his absence by the Chair, Rick Gee)
- b) **Membership Director**, Karen Pedersen

12. Second call for nominations from the floor. No nominations were received from the floor.

13. Directors' Reports (Part II): The following directors presented brief reports (their written reports will appear separately in the newsletter):

- a) **BC Nature Director**, Fran Fisher
- b) **Birding Director**, Mike Howard
- c) **Botany Director**, Peter Courtney was absent; presented by Rick Gee
- d) **Outdoor Excursions Director**, Robbie Bowers and Glenda Newman
- e) **Outreach and Communications Director**, Marjorie Gonzalez was absent; presented by Rick Gee

14. Third Call for nominations from the floor. No nominations were received from the floor.

15. Election of officers. Motion: To approve the nominations as presented. Moved by: Laura Weir. Seconded by: Harvey Abraham. All in favour.

16. Adjournment: Moved by Pam Laing. All in favour.

Post AGM events:

- **Presentation on Club Activities during 2023 (Rick Gee)**
- **Announcement of Photo Contest Winners by Ian Walker.** The full results of the photo contest will also be separately presented in the newsletter.

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

1. [Profit & Loss Budget Performance for 2023](#)
2. [Annual Report Profit and Loss](#)
3. [Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2023](#)
4. [Proposed Budget for 2024](#)
5. [Fee Increase](#)

MEMBERSHIP REPORT**BY KAREN PEDERSEN, DIRECTOR**

The CONC's current Membership numbers are below this same time last year:

February 2024

90 single

46 Family

136 Memberships = 182 individual
Members**February 2023**

95 single

52 Family

147 Memberships = 200 individual
Members

We have had both "new and renewed" interest with 13 persons joining for the first time and three returning after some years away.

We continue to work at getting exposure for our Club:

- This past year apart from our usual participation in both the Canada Day Celebrations and the Kikinee Festival we also had a booth at the RDCO Regional Parks Expo in Lake Country.
- Also, with thanks to our Outreach Director Marjorie we now have a Facebook page. Although we can't post all of our activities, she does ensure that our Weekend Excursions are promoted. I understand that we get lots of likes and have close to 60 followers.

In past years the CONC has gone through a growth spurt between March and June as new and old come out to enjoy the warmer weather outings. Hopefully this will be the case again this year.

BIRDING REPORT**BY MIKE HOWARD, DIRECTOR**

In 2023, 3 members were able to participate in 89 CONC organised birding excursions. These included:

- 38 Monday outings
- 41 Thursday outings
- Seven Saturday outings including a trip to Douglas Lake (during Sandhill Crane migration) and the Creston Birding Festival
- Swan and Eagle Annual "Sweagle" Count (January 2024)
- Johns Family Nature Conservancy Annual Critter Count (May 2023)
- Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park Annual Critter Count (June 2023– Organised by Les Gyug)

We have submitted 352 complete eBird checklists to the "CONC Birding Group" account. We observed 185 species on these outings.

2023/2024 outings have been possible thanks to all the birding excursion leaders who selected a location, led the excursion, and then reported the results of the outing. Our thanks to 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, Mike Howard, Pam Laing, Rick Gee, Simon Pethick, Steffany Walker 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.

On our May 8, 2023, Birding Excursion to the Rose Valley Reservoir (organised by Archie MacDonald), Vivian Manning captured the following photos of the **first** recorded Hybrid Calliope x Rufous Hummingbird in the Central Okanagan. A detailed report of this rare British Columbia observation will be provided separately in a future Newsletter.



Planning for 2024 Birding Activities

Monday and Thursday outings for 2024 have been scheduled. In addition to our regular birding excursion leaders, we welcome Margaret Bryan back as well as new leaders Faith Furgason, Carol Sharplin, Sharon Taylor, and Wendy Wright. Saturday excursions have yet to be planned.

The annual Swan and Eagle Count (renamed in memory of its founder Rick Howie) was conducted on January 14, 2024. For the Kelowna Area, we contributed a count of 45 adult Bald Eagles, 10 immature Bald Eagles, 11 adult Trumpeter Swans, six immature Trumpeter Swans and four adult Tundra Swans. No Golden Eagles were observed in our study area this year.

Thomson Marsh Viewing Platform Project progress to date:

With thanks to the efforts of the CONC TMVP Project Team (Archie MacDonald, Bruce Kennedy, Douglas Graham, Les Gyug, Lisa Rae, Roy Sinden, Wayne Wilson from COLT and Mike Howard):

- ✓ The site was selected, and the design was completed.
- ✓ Archaeological survey and site rehabilitation plan completed.
- ✓ Permits are now in place.

The project team continues to work with the City to move forward with the project.

In 2023: 13 excursions were conducted during the peak flowering period from May 5 to July 22. The average number of species seen during regular outings was 61 and the total number of species recorded was 357.

The number of participants varied between four and 14 with an average of nine. All of the outings were led by the botany director with the assistance of Ian Walker and mushroom experts Dan Durall and Mitch Milgram – thank you Ian, Dan and Mitch.

Every year we visit various locations in the Okanagan Valley to look for wildflowers and other vascular plants. We do this during the May to July period because that's the peak flowering period. We also look for mushrooms during this time as well as during the peak fall fruiting period.

Unlike the birders, we spend most of our time looking down rather than up and walking is leisurely. Our walks are for all levels of learners wanting to know the names of things and a bit about the plants.

In 2024: We'll be doing the same routine as in the past, Fridays from May 3 to July 19. In May we'll begin by visiting places in the valley such as Beaver Lake Road, Knox Mountain, and Scenic Canyon. Later as it gets warmer at higher elevations, we'll visit sites on Highway 33 and Glenrosa Ave. In late July we'll check out Big White Mountain for subalpine flowers.

The 2024 schedule is posted on the CONC web page together with short lists of plants we expect to see at the various locations. The scheduled outings are also identified on the CONC calendar with information on where and when to meet.



Email event notifications will be sent out to members who have indicated an interest in botany when they sign up for their membership.

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

Botanizing, 2023
Photo courtesy Peter Courtney

BC NATURE AGM AND CONFERENCE: MAY 2024**BY FRAN FISHER, DIRECTOR**

YES, there have been changes at the BC Nature office this year with the retirement of our long-time office manager Betty Davidson. A powerhouse for BC Nature and is sadly missed and we wish her the very best for the future. We welcome our new office manager, Mish Stone, and continue to thank and rely on the many employed team members who work through our office.

CURRENTLY, we have over 50 clubs with the organization enjoying 60 years of record keeping on all things within our natural realm with a new committee being added to address climate change.

IF YOU ARE PLANNING or need a reason to visit Vancouver Island, specifically the Parksville or Qualicum Beach area, the Arrowsmith Naturalists are hosting the BC Nature AGM from May 9-12, 2024. You can

find information on the BC Nature website. This is a UNESCO MOUNT ARROWSMITH BIOSPHERE RESERVE and the theme for the event is Taking Action for Nature. It looks to be highly informative and fun.

Lastly, THANK YOU for allowing me to be your BC Nature Representative for the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club.

OUTDOOR OUTINGS REPORT BY ROBBIE BOWERS & GLENDA NEWMAN, CO-DIRECTORS

Numerous weekly outings were scheduled throughout 2023 including Hiking, Biking and Snowshoeing.

- **Hiking:** Excursions by Ramblers were scheduled on Tuesday (level 1) and Thursday (level 2) and Sole Survivors on Wednesday (level 3). A variety of locations near Kelowna included Rose Valley, Wilden, Scenic Canyon, Okanagan Mountain Park and Myra-Bellevue. Trips to Enderby Bluffs, Three Blind Mice (Penticton) and Eagle Bluff (Okanagan Falls) were also enjoyed.
- **Biking:** Several cycling trips were scheduled on Fridays in May, June and early July. Destinations included Wood Lake loop, Rail Trail/Quail Ridge Oyama to Vernon along the Kalamalka Lake Rail Trail. These usually included a coffee or lunch stop as well!
- **Snowshoeing:** Hiking with snow grippers was scheduled each Tuesday to local destinations including Mission Creek, Myra-Bellevue, Scenic Canyon and Sutherland Hills. Hikes requiring snowshoes were scheduled on Wednesday (Sole Survivors) and Thursday (Ramblers) to Kelowna Nordic Ski & Snowshoe Club or Beaver Lake. Snow conditions for the 2022/2023 season were excellent from early November through late March.
- **Annual Summer Camp - Lake Louise:** Twenty-two members had an amazing 5 days of hiking with mainly clear skies, very little smoke and one afternoon of rain. Hikes included Agnes Lake and beyond (Big and Little Beehive), Sentinel Pass, Eiffel Lake, the Plain of 6 Glaciers, Helen Lake, The Ink Pots and Fairview Lookout and beyond.
- The 2024 Summer Camp is scheduled for July 22 - 27 at Jasper National Park.
- **Weekend Explorers: Birds, Bugs, Boulders and Botany:** A new Outing activity was introduced this year scheduled on weekends to facilitate participation by families, students and working adults. Ian Walker led these with destinations including Mission Creek, Knox Mountain Park, UBC Okanagan Campus and Cosens Bay in Kalamalka Provincial Park.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

BY MARJORIE GONZALEZ, DIRECTOR



Outreach events

We participated in 3 community events in 2023: RDCO Regional Parks Expo (May 26-27), Canada Day (July 1) and Kikinee Festival (Sept 9). A big thanks to all volunteers who helped with setup, takedown, talking to the public, etc. We could not participate in these public events without volunteers from our members.

We are hoping to expand our visibility to the public in 2024, so please contact the Outreach and Communications Director if there is a community event you think that CONC should participate in!

Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary

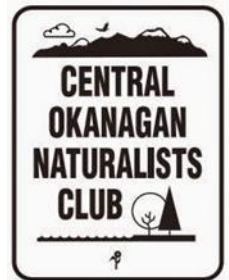
The 2023 recipient of the bursary was Ashley Ciardullo from Rutland Senior Secondary. She is now an undergraduate at the University of Victoria.

Facebook page

Our new Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/okanagannature>) went live in early 2023. We started with around 20 followers, and we are now up to 60 followers. Members of the public have mentioned to us that they found out about the club through the Facebook page, so it seems to be helping to spread the word about the club.

New CONC Logo

We have undertaken the big task of getting a new logo for the club! The current logo has served us well for over 30 years (it was developed by Bob Vickers in 1990). However, the current version is low resolution and does not work well in digital documents and online.



To give members a chance to propose new logos, we requested ideas, concepts, or sketches from all members as part of a Logo Contest. We received 15 submissions, and we want to give thanks to everyone who participated! After careful reviews and discussions, we picked two submissions as logo candidates.

In addition, the CONC Board decided that the third logo candidate will be a refreshed and high-resolution version of our current logo.

We have now hired a graphic artist to enhance all three logo candidates and produce high-resolution versions: two logo candidates from member submissions, and one refreshed version of our current logo.

Once the three logo candidates are ready, they will be sent to all members, and everyone will have a chance to vote to pick the winner. When the new logo is chosen, the person who submitted the idea that most contributed to the final design will be the winner of the contest. We will get in touch with that person to let them know (unless the new logo is the refreshed version of our current logo, of course!).

We expect that the three logo candidates will be ready for a vote within the next couple of months.

Stay tuned for the vote!

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS FOLLOW BELOW!



FLORA

1st Place – Ian Walker
“Larch in Autumn Light”
(Myra Canyon - 6 Oct 2023)

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

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



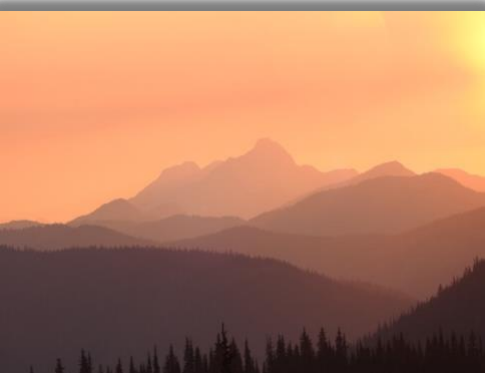
FAUNA

1st Place – Pam Laing
“Feeding Frenzy”
(Dee Lake - 11 July 2023)



PEOPLE IN NATURE

1st Place – Pam Laing
“Paddleboarder and Parade”
(Kalamalka Lake, 18 May 2023)



LANDSCAPE

1st Place – Linda Walker
“Spectacular Landscape Sunset in BC Provincial Park”
(Manning Provincial Park, BC - 14 Aug 2023)

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 - 2023-24		
President	Vacant	president@okanagannature.org
Vice-president	Vacant	
Secretary	Louise Nelson & Vivian Manning	secretary@okanagannature.org
Treasurer	Roy Sinden	treasurer@okanagannature.org
Past President	Douglas Graham	pastpresident@okanagannature.org
Directors - 2023-2024		
BC Nature	Fran Fisher	bcnature@okanagannature.org
Birding	Mike Howard	birding@okanagannature.org
Botany	Peter Courtney	botany@okanagannature.org
Outings	Robbie Bowers & Glenda Newman	outings@okanagannature.org
Membership	Tessa Tesluk	membership@okanagannature.org
Outreach and Communications	Marjorie Gonzalez	outreach@okanagannature.org
Director at Large	Rick Gee	
Resource Persons		
Host Committee	Bev Thomas	cymru@telus.net
Newsletter	Lisa Rae & Vivian Manning	editor@okanagannature.org
Website: www.okanagannature.org	Rick Gee	admin@okanagannature.org

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

- 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. Please bring your own cup.

MEMBERSHIP: Tessa Tesluk membership@okanagannature.org

- **ANNUAL DUES: Single \$45, Family \$60, Students \$15.** Includes the quarterly newsletter. (**Additional \$20 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
- **MEMORIAL MEMBERS:** Arthur Hughes-Games, Brenda Thomson, Muriel Westwood, Harry Almond, Cec Dillabough

NEWSLETTER: Editors - Lisa Rae & Vivian Manning

- Next deadline date for submissions is May 15, 2024
- Send submissions to editor@okanagannature.org
- Email distribution: Tessa Tesluk 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

- **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

- **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)

- **Tuesday: Ramblers** contact Robert Lake: (250) 215-3211
- **Wednesday: Sole Survivors** contact Robbie Bowers & Glenda Newman outings@okanagannature.org
- **Thursday: Ramblers Plus** contact Robert Lake (250) 215-3211

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

*No winter lasts forever, no Spring skips its turn.
-Hal Borland*



Milkweed, Photo courtesy Steffany Walker