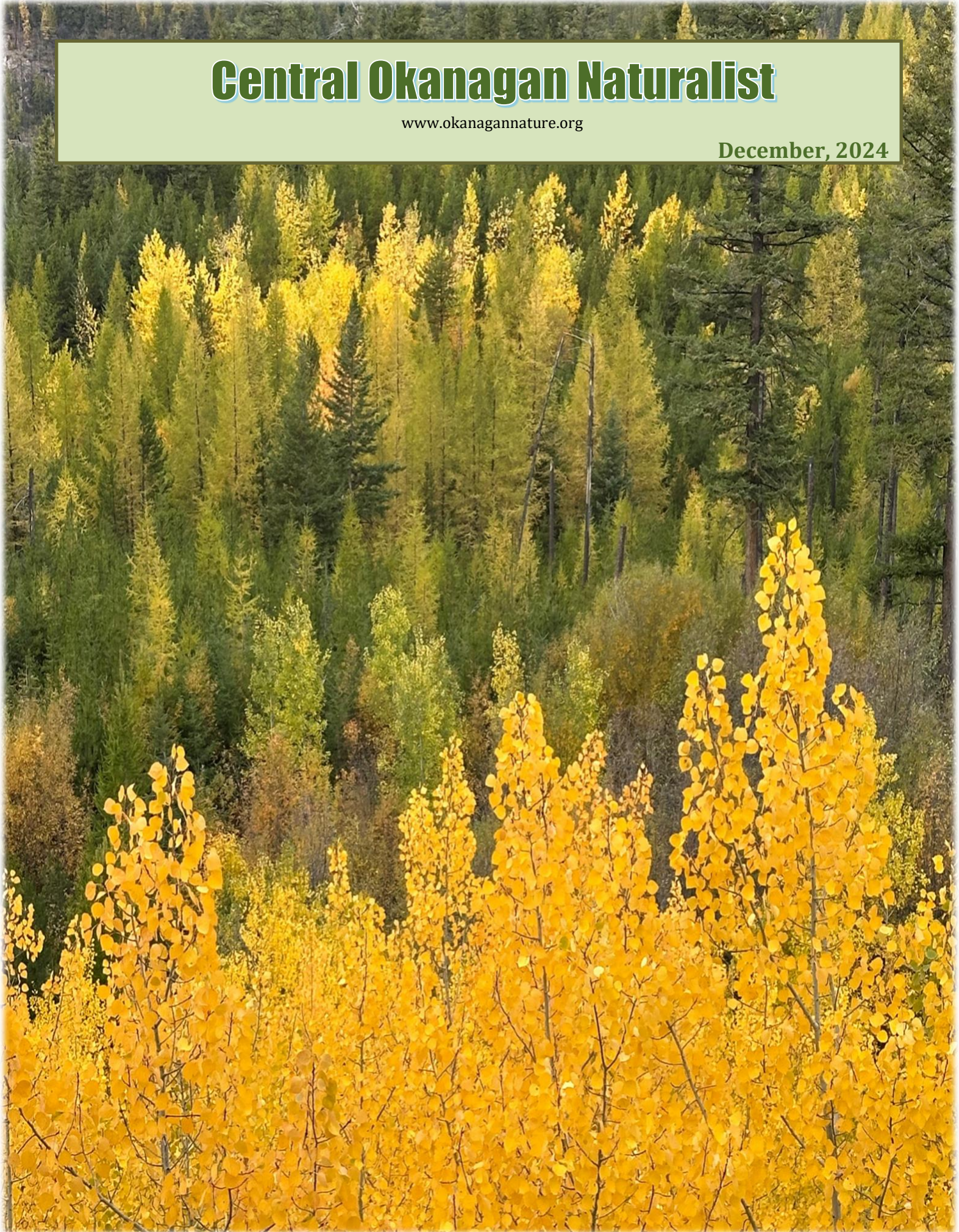


Central Okanagan Naturalist

www.okanagannature.org

December, 2024



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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 December 10, 7:00 p.m., at Evangel Church, 3261 Gordon Drive, Kelowna. Please see our speaker details below.

WELCOME NEW CONC MEMBERS!

Our club is growing and thriving, and we welcome our newest members. We look forward to meeting you in the natural world.

- Kim Thronson
- Laurie LeBlanc
- Jyleece Panchy
- Glen Wood
- Raynald Losier

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

CONC SPEAKERS, DECEMBER 10 GENERAL MEETING

“Iceland Through Two Pairs of Eyes” A Presentation by Steffany Walker and Bitten Tisdale

Iceland is a very popular place to travel these days, and many TV programs have been devoted to the island's beauty. The Westfjörds of Iceland are less travelled than the rest and are the topic of our presentation.

It is quite by chance that Bitten with her daughter and son-in-law, and Steffany with her sister, travelled along the same roads with different eyes.

During this presentation, members will join them on their different but equally beautiful and interesting journeys as they explored this region.



CONC POTLUCK DINNER

January 14, 2025, 6:00 p.m. Evangel Church, Gordon Drive



Traditionally we have a mid-winter potluck banquet. Originally it was held in February but now it is held in January. In 2025, the second Tuesday in January is January 14 so that is the date. There is a \$5 charge as the church provides round tables (seating six or eight) and tablecloths; this is an additional cost over and above our regular room rental. Banquet organizers provide centrepieces, you provide food for yourself and a few others, and Dr Ian Walker provides a quiz to keep us on our toes. **Tickets will be available through Rick Gee.**

REGULAR COLUMNS

BIRDING REPORT

BY MIKE HOWARD

During the first ten and a half months of 2024 members were able to participate in 96 CONC organised birding excursions. These included:

- 43 Monday outings
- 42 Thursday outings
- 8 Saturday outings including a trip to Douglas Lake (during Sandhill Crane migration)
- The Rick Howie Interior BC Swan and Eagle Annual Count (January)
- The Johns Family Nature Conservancy 2024 Survey (May)
- Contribute to Les Gyug's Okanagan Mountain Park Survey (June)

On these outings we observed 193 avifauna species and submitted eBird checklists bringing our total number of checklists submitted by the "CONC Birding Group" to 536.

2024 outings are possible thanks to all the birding excursion leaders who select a location, lead the excursion, and then report the results of the outing. Our thanks to:

Annette Lachaine	Archie MacDonald	Brenda Colvin	Bruce Kennedy	Carol Sharplin	Deborah White
Don Wilson	Douglas Graham	Faith Furgason	Fran Fisher	Gwynneth Wilson	Ian Walker
Jasmine Korcok	Joyce Fraser	Karen Blumel	Lisa Rae	Margaret Bryan	Markus Weilmeier
Mike Howard	Pam Laing	Rick Gee	Sharon Taylor	Simon Pethick	Steffany Walker
		Vivian Manning	Wendy Wright		

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	Julia Proulx	Karen Blumel	Lisa Rae
		Pam Laing	Vivian Manning		

I have added a few photos of species observed this Fall at the end of this report.

Birding activities planned for the remainder of 2024:

Monday and Thursday outings will continue to mid-December at which time we will turn our focus to Christmas Bird Counts.

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, Vivian Manning, Wayne Wilson from COLT, Mike Howard and riparian rehabilitation planting support from Sabine Gyug, Simon Pethick and Fred Bowes):

On May 30, 2024, CONC signed an agreement with the City of Kelowna to transfer the responsibility of the completion of the installation phase of the project to the City. The agreement calls for the City to complete the installation in accordance with the design submitted by CONC and previously approved by the City. The balance of the CONC project budget was transferred to the City on June 21, 2024. CONC has no further financial obligations. As of the time of reporting, the city had engaged the Geotechnical Engineer and entered into an installation agreement with Cabin Forestry. Finish lumber donated by Downie Timber (A Gorman company) was delivered to the site in October and is being temporarily stored. The location for the structure was finalised in October and testing for the viewing platform support pilings was initiated in November. CONC volunteers have completed the first phase of site riparian rehabilitation zone in the pond foreshore early November.

The Rick Howie Interior BC Swan and Eagle Count 2025:

The Swan and Eagle Count for 2025 will occur on Sunday January 12, 2025. Hopefully past area leaders are interested in participating and we welcome newcomers. If you are interested in participating, please send me an email at birding@okanagannature.org.



Black-capped Chickadee - courtesy Julia Proulx



Western Grebe - courtesy Bruce Kennedy



Juvenile Peregrine Falcon - courtesy Bruce Kennedy



Northern Harrier - courtesy Lisa Rae



Tundra Swans - courtesy Ian Walker



Barred Owl - courtesy Bruce Kennedy



Cooper's Hawk - courtesy Pam Laing



Short-eared Owl - courtesy Bruce Kennedy



Great Blue Heron - courtesy Douglas Graham

BOTANY REPORT

BY PETER COURTNEY

This year's weekly botany outings were completed between May 5 and July 22. A summary of these outings was reported in the September newsletter. The number of species of vascular plants seen over all 13 outings was 386, as compared with 357 in 2023.

Since the end of the scheduled weekly outings and last newsletter report there has been one September 12 outing, to look for mushrooms. We began with a show-and-tell of several mushrooms (see photo below). We examined anatomical features of these samples, such as cap, spore-bearing surface, and stem and we categorized them as gilled mushrooms, boletes, polypores, puffballs, corals, crusts, etc. Then ten of us searched for mushrooms at two locations along Goudie Road in Joe Rich. Mushroom experts Mitch Milgram and Dan Durall helped us identify at least 46 species of mushrooms found that day. Photos of some of the mushrooms and a few plants and birds found at the two sites during the recon and Sept 12, outing can be viewed on [iNaturalist](#).



Ongoing botanical activities, events and information:

On an ongoing basis, you can see plants that people are seeing in our area by checking out iNaturalist projects such as the [Mission Creek Greenway Biodiversity Project](#) and the [Okanagan Biodiversity Project](#). September and October are the prime time of the year for mushrooms, but you can still see a few new mushrooms fruiting ahead of the frost in November.

In 2025 we will again host weekly botany outings during the spring and summer and an outing or two for mushrooms in the fall. 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 homepage and by email to interested members. If you have questions or suggestions regarding the upcoming 2025 season, please forward them to botany@okanagannaturalist.com.

HIKING & CYCLING REPORT

BY ROBBIE BOWERS & GLENDA NEWMAN

Hiking Report

Weekly hikes are continuing through the Fall and early winter on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, depending on the weather, and always in consideration of icy patches or snow!

Ramblers' hikes included trails in Myra-Bellevue Park, Knox Mountain, Trepanier and Gladstone in Peachland, and Lake Country.

Sole Survivors hiked at both Silver Star and Big White mountains, High Rim trail, Predator Ridge and Larch tree hike in Myra-Bellevue Park. John introduced the group to several new hikes: Mt. Conkle in Summerland and Ravine Ridge and BX Falls Trail in the Vernon area.

We've had many beautiful views of the lakes and mountains, trees with their bright autumn colours, as well as interesting mosses, lichens, ponds and old flumes.

Many thanks to all our members who volunteered to lead!

2025 Annual Summer Hiking Trip - Nelson, BC

The dates for our annual hiking trip have been confirmed as July 26th to August 1st (six nights), with accommodations booked at the Dancing Bear Inn. For more information, please contact Glenda Newman (outings@okanagannature.org).

Cycling Report

Dave Newman led our cycling trips from June until mid-October, with routes that included Penticton to Naramata, Penticton to OK Falls, a Kelowna city loop, the KVR Rail trail to YLW airport, the KVR Rail Trail from Oyama to Vernon, Wood Lake and others.



FEATURES

THOMSON MARSH VIEWING PLATFORM – RIPARIAN ZONE PLANTING

BY LISA RAE



Photo Courtesy Bruce Kennedy

Saturday November 16, a hardworking crew of diggers and planters arrived at Thomson Marsh to put in the first round of plants by the (not-yet-built) viewing platform. The native plants selected for the foreshore area are pollinator-friendly, hardy, deer-resistant, and well suited to the soil and marshy qualities by the pond.



Photo Courtesy Bruce Kennedy

By the summer we will see the following plants in leaf and bloom; Pearly Everlasting, Brown-eyed Susan, Paintbrush, Yarrow, Showy Aster, Snowberry and Milkweed. We aim to be planting again around the new platform in the Spring, with other species of bushes and flowering plants. Many thanks to all.



Photo Courtesy Lisa Rae

Work done and Mallard approved!

WINTER BIRDING SURVEYS

SOURCED BY LISA RAE

AUDUBON'S CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2024/25

Source: [Birds Canada](#)

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. It is also 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 125th year, please contact the local compiler(s) below if you would like to participate, and for additional details:

- **Kelowna** – Saturday December 14, email [Chris Charlesworth](#)
- **Lake Country** – Monday December 16, email [Les Gyug](#)
- **Big White** – Thursday December 19, email [Chris Charlesworth](#)
- **Peachland** – email [Leanne McDonald](#)
- **Penticton** – Monday December 15, email [Dick Cannings](#)
- **Vaseux Lake** – Saturday December 21, email [Dick Cannings](#)
- **Vernon** – email [Don Cecile](#)

SWEAGLE COUNT

The annual Sweagle (Swan and Eagle) Count will take place on Sunday January 12. Volunteer surveyors will monitor seven zones in the central portion of Okanagan Lake. If you wish to take part, please email [Mike Howard](#)

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

The Great Backyard Bird Count will take place on **February 14-17, 2025**. 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 National Audubon Society with the 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, and tell them what you see!

Details for participating and submitting your sightings are given on the [bird count website](#)

CHANGES IN BIRD NAMES

BY DOUGLAS GRAHAM

I know it's annoying, but we have to keep up with advances in taxonomic knowledge which require us to change some of "our" bird names. The 65th Supplement to the [AOS Checklist of North American Birds](#) came out in July of this year. Cornell automatically adopts all changes made by the American Ornithological Society so they will all be incorporated eventually into eBird. All the relevant changes have been made in CONC's [Biodiversity Checklist of the Central Okanagan](#), which is the only available up-to-date checklist of birds from the Central Okanagan Regional District. If listing all the bird species, our Checklist website lists the names in alphabetical order but a list in taxonomic order is available on request.

The list below includes the changes in the Supplement that are relevant to us in the Okanagan.

- The scientific name of **Snowy Plover** changes from *Charadrius nivosus* to *Anarhynchus nivalis*. The Snowy Plover (and several other North American plovers, which don't occur here) is genetically different enough from *Charadrius*, the Killdeer genus, to be moved into a different genus.
- **Cattle Egrets** have been recorded in the district but there are no recent records. The English name changes to Western Cattle-Egret and the scientific name changes to *Ardea ibis* from *Bubulcus ibis*. The change results from a split of Cattle Egrets into two species.
- The English name of **Black-crowned Night-Heron** suffers the loss of the hyphen, to become Black-crowned Night Heron. Formerly this species was considered closely related to the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (now Yellow-crowned Night Heron) but now it is clear these two species are quite different. It therefore does not make sense to have a single English name ("night-heron") that implies they are sister species.
- Our locally rare **Barn Owl** is now known as the American Barn Owl and the scientific name changes from *Tyto alba* to *Tyto furcata*. The change results from studies of the genetic relationships between different barn owl species around the world.
- The name of the familiar **House Wren** changes to Northern House Wren but its scientific name remains *Troglodytes aedon*. This change results from six new wren species being split off from the House Wren (they are all southern and tropical wrens, most in the Caribbean).
- The confounding **Hoary Redpoll** is gone — good riddance! This removes an identification headache but also takes away a lifer for many of us! Formerly there were three species of redpolls, the Common Redpoll, the Hoary Redpoll, and the Lesser Redpoll from the Old World. They are now all fused into one species, called simply Redpoll, *Acanthis flammea*. "Hoary Redpolls" are not even treated as a separate infraspecific taxonomic entity. There is simply a recognition that pale individuals of the species can occur, often but not always in more northerly areas. In the future, when seeing such a pale bird, it could simply be noted in the comments field but entered in eBird as a plain old Redpoll.

Of interest also is that the AOS Committee considered but did NOT accept other changes that might have been relevant to us. It would not however be surprising to see these come back some day:

- separation of the two subspecies of **Green-winged Teal** into separate species; both have been recorded in the RDCO as well as "hybrids" between them
- separation of the **Herring Gull** into two or three species
- change in generic name of the **Evening Grosbeak** (to *Hesperiphona*)

BC Nature Spring Conference and AGM

The Nicola Naturalists' Society is Hosting the [BCNature Spring Conference](#) and AGM in Merritt, BC May 22-25, 2025. Only an hour away, this Conference will not disappoint. This is an opportunity to know more about conservation and nature in this great area, go on some informative outings and hear knowledgeable speakers. Details are not online yet but MARK YOUR CALENDARS for these dates.

The BCNature Education Committee requires a new member. If you are interested, please contact the [BCNature Office](#) for more details.

KELOWNA PARKS/ADOPT-A-STREAM FALL CLEANUP OCTOBER 18, 2024,**BY ROBBIE BOWERS**

Mike Howard led a team of seven at Thomson Marsh and Robbie Bowers led a group of eleven members at Bulman Rd/UBCO overpass Rail Trail. Numerous garbage bags and several miscellaneous large objects including a bicycle were collected by both groups. A big thank you to all our volunteers for a very successful day!

**MENTOR OPPORTUNITIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITH KELOWNA STUDENTS****BY DOUGLAS GRAHAM**

The [Fresh Outlook Foundation](#) (FOF) is an Okanagan-based NGO whose passion is “inspiring community conversation for sustainable change”. They are leading many innovative efforts such as the Building SustainAble Communities conference, CommUnity Innovation Lab, Fresh Dialogues, REEL CHANGE SustainAbility Film Fest, ECO-BLAST Kids’ Camp & Concert, Breakfast of Champions, Women 4 SustainAbility, and Talking DIRTY x 10,000. Check out their impressive [website](#).

One of their programs which has been running with success for several years in the Vernon area is the Climate Action Ripple Effect (CARE). The program brings together teachers and students who are tasked with kick-starting student climate action in the community. A key element of the program is mentors from the community who volunteer to work with students on their projects. In 2024, 15 teachers, 340 students, and 60 mentors collaborated to create 115 projects in different areas of environmental and climate change intervention. Several persons from our sister group, NONC, were among the mentors.

In 2025, CARE is expanding to the Kelowna area and hopes to engage teachers, students, and mentors to again collaborate, on projects in six different areas:

- Nature & Biodiversity
- Agriculture & Food
- Energy & Buildings
- Waste Prevention
- Eco-Friendly Transportation
- Human Health & Culture

FOF has asked CONC if some of our members would like to be mentors. The program this year in Kelowna will primarily be with middle school students but also with some high school students. This would involve a small number of hours spread over about two months in the spring of 2025. I have volunteered myself and hopefully a few other CONC members will consider doing the same.

For further information, check out FOF’s website or contact me for further information such as the mentor handbook. See also the short [CARE handout](#)

BRENDA THOMSON MEMORIAL BURSARY

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

Students in their grade 12 graduating year at affiliated schools are eligible to apply for a COBSS award. These schools are as follows: Aberdeen Hall Preparatory School, Central Programs & Services, École de L'anse-au-Sable, eSchool 23, George Elliot Secondary, School, Heritage Christian School, Immaculata Regional High School, Kelowna Christian School, Kelowna Secondary School, Mount Boucherie Secondary School, Okanagan Christian School, Okanagan Mission Secondary School and Rutland Senior Secondary School.

This year, the Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary recipient is Lucas Slang, who has received \$1500 toward his post-secondary studies. Lucas' letter of thanks to CONC is below.


Dear Mr. Graham,

I am writing to thank you for rewarding me with the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club/Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary. I was very humbled to hear that I was awarded this very generous award as I crossed the stage at my recent graduation.

As mentioned I have just graduated from OKM high school where I attended for the past 6 years. I am an avid outdoorsman and I like to spend time fishing, hiking and camping with my family. I am lucky enough to have been accepted at Selkirk College in Castlegar into the Recreational, fish and wildlife program this September. I will be attending Selkirk College for the next two years leading me on my journey to become a conservation officer. I have always had a deep passion for the outdoors and wildlife. I knew growing up I wanted a job that was outdoors in nature and meeting conservation officers in passing has intrigued me and led me on the path I am headed. I want to help people respect the outdoors by teaching them about nature and our land.

I am so grateful to be receiving this bursary as it will help so much towards my college expenses and let me focus on my classes. I would again like to thank you, Mr. Graham and the Central Okanagan Naturalist Club/ Brenda Thomson Memorial Bursary for choosing me for this special Bursary. It truly means so much to me.
Thank you!

Sincerely,


Lucas Slang

2024-2025 CONC PHOTO CONTEST



As has become recent practice, CONC will host the 2024-2025 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 2024 or 2025
- be emailed to concphtocontest@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 concphtocontest@gmail.com no later than 10:00 am, January 14, 2025.

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.

OPINION — CARBON PRICING, REVISITED

BY RICK GEE



In a previous article in this newsletter, I argued in favour of carbon pricing and purchasing carbon offsets. As winter nears and many people head south to a warmer area (although I can't understand that. Snow is wonderful!) perhaps we should consider the carbon costs of such travel.

If you wish to determine the carbon footprint for yourself, consider the [Carbon Calculator](#). For example, Kelowna to Johannesburg SA, via Vancouver and London produces approximately 7 tonnes of CO₂, which you can offset by planting trees, preventing trees from being cut, preventing grasslands from being ploughed, supporting [First Nations Coastal Guardians](#), or even by [growing kelp](#).

While you can deal with carbon offsets on your own, companies and institutions are also dealing with it. For example, the [University of Toronto](#) strongly encourages you to reconsider the need for travel. If the travel is deemed necessary, "the carbon offset fee is \$0.0055/km per person for air travel in economy class." This was based on a price of \$30 per tonne, but that rate is increasing annually so too the offset increases. If you search for organizations with similar policies, you will find they vary, from [McKinsey](#) a consulting firm, to [Microsoft](#) to a variety of educational institutions, including, for example, [UBC](#).

The David Suzuki Foundation has much to say about carbon pricing. I ran across an article entitled "How to Talk About Carbon Pricing" in the Foundation's Summer newsletter, but strangely that article is not available on the Foundation's website. Instead, I found [Carbon Pricing Explained](#). That article contains some interesting statements, based on the Canadian price for carbon, rather than the BC price, but the statements still generally apply.

- Carbon pricing isn't the only way to combat accelerating climate change, but it's one of the most effective and least expensive in a market system.
- The cost of the carbon price encourages households, businesses and industry to shift to cleaner technologies and increases demand for energy-efficient products, innovation and investment in green solutions such as solar and wind power.
- Consumers pay the price on fossil fuel purchases based on the amount of greenhouse gases created when the fuel is burned. For example, the price on a litre of diesel is higher than on gasoline because diesel produces more carbon.
- Large industrial polluters follow separate pricing systems, which vary by province. They help drive down emissions while keeping companies globally competitive.
- The system for large industrial emitters is designed to protect the competitiveness of Canadian companies and to ensure that firms can meet growing demand for products that have a lower climate footprint.
- The federal fuel charge doesn't apply to gasoline or diesel fuels used by farmers for agricultural purposes. There is little effect on farmer's costs. Farmers get 80 per cent of the levy back for fuel used to heat greenhouses. Fuel used to heat buildings or dry grain is taxed.
- Most people in Canada get money back.

I know that affordability was one of the main discussion points in the recent BC election and it will be one of the main discussion points in the upcoming federal election. I understand that affordability is a problem for many, but if we are unable to live in many areas of the country because climate change makes them uninhabitable or if there is a much higher risk of disaster where we try to live, that is a bigger problem than affordability. It's a case of short-term pain for long-term gain.

!REMINDER! The editors have introduced a new newsletter column and are inviting all travelling CONC members to submit contributions. Many of our CONC members travel well beyond the Central Okanagan exploring and enjoying many natural areas coast to coast in Canada and beyond, either birding, botanizing, hiking, or however nature may be speaking to them. We'd love to share your insights and recommendations with other CONC members who may travel to nearby areas and would love to explore. If you have nature travels to share that other members might find interesting, please send your destination info (along with any pictures) to editor@okanagannature.org for publishing in the next newsletter. It doesn't need to be long, elaborate, or even include a lot of photos, just enough information that another member travelling in the same area in the future might consider visiting the area. We are thinking of gathering these submissions into a "blog" for a more permanent reference for future members. Let us know what you think!

Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary – Saskatchewan - Vivian Manning



In early October, I visited the **Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary** with an Avocet Tours birding group. Although I've been in Saskatchewan numerous times, I had no idea of the existence of this birding location, even though it has been recognized as an important bird migratory stopover for 120 years and is the first bird sanctuary established in North America! From the [Government of Canada website](#):

"... Located within the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area, 165 kilometres southeast of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, this sanctuary now covers 4736 hectares of the northern section of this large lake as well as parts of the surrounding land.

The northern portion of this sanctuary is a major feeding and resting area for many species of birds. Spectacular numbers of ducks, geese and Sandhill Cranes use this area during spring and fall migrations. This section of the lake also provides some breeding and moulting habitat for both dabbling ducks... and diving ducks It is a particularly crucial area during periods of drought.

In the fall, this migratory bird sanctuary is an important roosting area for large flocks of ducks, snow geese, Ross's Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and, to a lesser extent, Canada Geese. The endangered Whooping Crane has also been sighted here on several occasions during the spring and fall migrations." (Author's note: a map of the area can be found at the link above, and Google Maps location here: [Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary](#).)

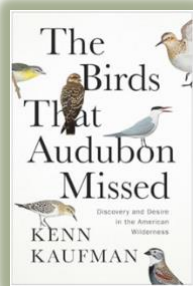


The Sanctuary may be accessed both by vehicle and on foot (we did both), through well-established roads and trails. The Sanctuary's trails, observation towers, and washrooms are open during daylight hours. The administrative building and interpretive pavilion are open daily from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Larger groups must call ahead, but individual and small group visits are drop-ins. It's quite a drive from either Saskatoon or Regina, but you never know what you might see along the way – Pronghorn Antelope have been seen in the area, but we weren't that lucky. Our only non-bird viewing was a very energetic Coyote.

The time spent in the Sanctuary was well worth it, even though the day of our visit was cold and blustery. We observed 51 species, including Tundra Swan, Northern Pintail, American White Pelican, Rusty Blackbird, Lapland Longspur, Horned Lark, Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted), Pectoral Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Snow Goose, and Greater White-fronted Goose. Many of these sightings were firsts for me, so it was an exciting day! The complete e-Bird checklist can be seen here: [Last Mountain Lake \(NWA\) e-Bird Checklist](#).



If you're travelling through southern Saskatchewan, especially during migration, this is a very worthwhile stop.



Title: The Birds that Audubon Missed

Author: Kenn Kaufman

Today, when we go birding, we go with many tools. Binoculars (some of which will identify the bird you are looking at), spotting scopes (for the birds that are further away), cameras (some of which can detect birds and focus on their eyes), field guides (some paper and some electronic), eBird (for recording what we see), and Merlin (an app that identifies birds by their songs).

But what was birding like in North America in the late 1700s and early 1800s? Kenn Kaufman answers this question via an in-depth look at John James Audubon and his contemporaries.

They had no binoculars (modern binoculars were invented in 1854), no spotting scopes, no cameras (the first camera was invented in 1816 and was too heavy and too slow for field use), no field guides (there were books about birds, but they were large and heavy), and no eBird or Merlin. The only way to see birds was with your eyes and the only way to see a bird up close was to shoot it and study the corpse.

As a result, many birds were misidentified (Sandhill Cranes were thought to be the young of Whooping Cranes, male and female Red-winged Blackbirds were thought to be different species) or missed because no one saw them skulking in the bushes or high in the trees.

Many strange ideas were floating around. Where did birds go in the winter? (Perhaps they hibernated in the mud. Perhaps they hitched a ride on larger birds to go elsewhere.) Why were some species seen only for a few weeks in the spring and in the fall? Why were some species seen in the spring or the fall, but not both? Where did birds go when they were not in your neighbourhood?

In this book, Kaufman addresses what it would have been like to bird in the late 1700s and early 1800s. He discusses the tools, the beliefs, and the techniques that confused contemporary birders and eventually led to modern birding. He also discusses Audubon's veracity (or lack thereof) and his willingness to stretch the truth.

Kaufman mentions many birders whose names you may have heard: Wilson, Townsend, Baird, Brewer, etc. Enjoy learning about those birders; their names will soon be vanishing, a change that Kaufmann also discusses.

All in all, I found this to be an interesting book, particularly for those who are interested in birds. Available through the Okanagan Regional Library.



WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEWS

CONC EDITORS

- Did you know three of our birders Mike Howard, Steffany Walker, and Rick Gee are now YouTube influencers? Tourism Kelowna has posted a new [YouTube video featuring each of them describing their love of Kelowna Birding](#).
- [How a pile of dirt in Invermere became a Bank Swallow nesting haven](#). Bank swallows are a species at risk, facing near extinction in Canada with an estimated 93-98 per cent population loss over a recent 40-year period. This inadvertent habitat rescue has become a stupendous success.
- Thanks to Jen for this link!
- [A new conservation area has been created](#); the Nighthawk Hill Grasslands (27 acres) in the Similkameen Valley near Keremeos
- And more good news...[over 1,800 hectares of critical habitat in Northern British Columbia](#) has also been protected forever.
- A window into the confusing world of conservation legislation and jurisdictions, and how they are not in sync with one another, nor the realities of the 1950 species and ecological communities considered at risk of extinction. <https://thenarwhal.ca/bc-at-risk-species-forestry/>
- [Climate change is happening too fast](#) for migrating birds... .
- [If you enjoy seeing birds doing extraordinary things](#), here's a link for you
- [Do you submit your nature observations to iNaturalist](#)? This exceptional citizen-science data bank has reached the notable mark in B.C. of having reached 1,000,000 observations of over 13,000 species. While

... serving as an important record-keeping and monitoring tool, this site has also enabled the discovery of many new species.

- [How the Heiltsuk of British Columbia are using a mix of traditional principles and modern implementation](#) to protect salmon and bears in their territory.
- What if we each [created a park in our own backyard](#)
- Did you know that [hikers cause wildlife to panic even more than the sounds of off-road vehicles](#)? A Wyoming experiment reveals the way sounds of outdoor recreation affect wildlife, and the potential benefits of traveling quietly.
- One of the most innovative and encouraging ideas to come along ... [non-profits, trusts and cities are re-wilding manicured golfing spaces into naturalized parks](#) where wildlife, plants and people flourish.
 - Thanks, Jen, for this one!



Curious chicken meets bashful owl on Canada Day – photo courtesy Fran Fisher

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

Board 2024-25

President	Vacant	president@okanagannature.org
Vice-president	Vacant	
Secretary	Louise Nelson & Vivian Manning	secretary@okanagannature.org
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Outreach and Communications	Marjorie Gonzalez	outreach@okanagannature.org
Director at Large	Rick Gee	
Program Director	Sheila MacKenzie Brown	programs@okanagannature.org

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: Karen Pedersen 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

- Send submissions to editor@okanagannature.org
- Next deadline date for submissions is February 15, 2025
- Email distribution: Karen Pedersen membership@okanagannature.org

ACTIVITIES:

All activities are seasonal. We have also launched Weekend Explorers outings on the last weekend of each month – [check Calendar for details](#). Non-members are very welcome to join one or two CONC outings. All outing details are on our website calendar. If in doubt check with the activity contact or contact any Board Member.

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