

NEWSPACKET

J U L Y - A U G U S T 2 0 2 0

Special
Summer
Issue!



Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) is one of three species of bluebirds found on the North American continent. Although it is not restricted to mountains, the Mountain Bluebird is so named because it will nest at high elevations. In the Summer it ranges north to Alaska, east to Manitoba and south to south-western states. In Winter most will be found from Oregon in the north to Mexico in the south.

In the Vernon area, some trail monitors are fortunate to have a few Mountain Bluebirds on the higher elevation trails.

photograph by Loretta Bemister, NONC member at Adventure Bay

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Birds of the North Okanagan Part 8: 24 Apr. - 28 Jun., 2020

by Chris Siddle

All sightings, unless otherwise noted, were made by the author. Sightings of usual or rare birds require documentation in the form of carefully written physical descriptions of the birds or (preferably) photographs. Send your sightings directly to chris.siddle@gmail.com or enter them in the online program ebird.

MAY was almost twice as wet as normal with high water levels drowning the emergent vegetation of ponds, marshes and lakeshores, no doubt having serious negative effects upon many marsh and waterbirds. June was even wetter with moisture levels reaching month's average by 16 June.

Initials: Claire Christensen (CC); Don Cecile (DC); Glen Goerzen (GG); Gail Loughridge (GL); Laurel MacDonald (LM); Margaret MacKenzie (MM); Pat McAllister (PM); Gareth Pugh (GP); Harold Sellers (HS); Scott Thompson (ST); Jack Van Dyk (JVD). Observations without initials were made by the compiler.

Ducks, Geese and Swans

Single Greater White-fronted Geese were noted at Rawlings Lake 26 April (ST) and near Otter Lake 27 April. Two were at Rawlings Lake 4 May (ST). Finally, two adults were at Swan Lake 14 May. Small numbers of Snow Geese lingered well into May with 12 immatures at Swan Lake 2-4 May and two adult-like birds with an immature at the north end of Otter Lake 5 May. Fourteen were counted at Swan Lake Nature Reserve Park 11 May (ST). Canada Geese were productive at the north end of Otter Lake with 12 adults and 38 goslings counted

11 June. A drake Northern Pintail was at Otter Lake marsh 11 June. Covid closures prevented consistent counts of scoters and other lake ducks from the east side of Kalamalka Lake in April and May. A single Surf Scoter flock of 9 birds was on Swan Lake 16 May. A drake Surf Scoter was on a pond near the n. end of Westside Road 5 June. A Common Merganser female with 9 ducklings was seen on Kalamalka Lake off Kekuli Prov. Park 17 June.

Pheasants, Grouse and Allies

A ridiculously aggressive male Spruce Grouse attacked the boots and pants legs of the observer along the Sovereign Lake cross country ski trails 3 and 4 June. Moving out of the grouse's territory proved effective in ending the attack. A Wild Turkey was spotted above Davisons' Orchard 27 May (GL).

Grebes

Migrant flocks of Red-necked Grebes (17 and 11) were noted on Swan Lake 29 April. Very high water in Rawlings Lake created unfavorable breeding habitat for the lake's Eared Grebes which appeared scattered and in low numbers 26 April. Margaret Mackenzie, with the help of her neighbor AI, has been keeping count of Western Grebes in the mid-section of the North Arm of Okanagan Lake. Courtship was observed 9 May. A high count of 76 grebes was made on 27 May. Forty-four were counted at the colony nesting on the eastern side of the arm, opposite Margaret's cabin, 31 May. On the way across the lake that day she could see another 27 Westerns that may represent a second colony. If so, this could mean at least 79 Westerns populate two colonies. On Swan Lake, Western Grebe numbers peaked at 134 on 16 May. Almost all of these would be migrants. Numbers fell to five birds on 24 May and 9 on 27 June.

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*Birds of the North Okanagan continued***Nightjars and swifts.**

The first Common Nighthawk reported on eBird for the N. Okanagan spring was one over Horner Road, Lumby, 11 June (ST). The highest number of Black Swifts for the reporting period was a flock of about 32 over Rawlings Lake on 7 June. A pair of Common Poorwills nested locally but the nest was destroyed 3 June before it could be photographed (D.C.)

Cranes

Sandhill Cranes seemed scarcer than usual with only one reported on ebird along Stepney Cross Road n. of Armstrong (GP).

Sandpipers and Allies

Three Black-necked Stilts, rare spring transients in the North Okanagan, were at a flooded field north of Otter Lake 14 May. (DC). Two showed at the Swan Lake seepage pond June (JVD). The first Spotted Sandpipers were a little earlier than usual: two at Larkin Cross Road 29 April. Two American Avocets made a brief appearance in a flooded field south of Larkin Cross Road 3-5 May (MM) and one was at the seepage pond, just beyond the edge of Swan Lake N.R.P. A single Long-billed Curlew appeared at the south end of Swan Lake 11 May (ST). A Dunlin in alternate (breeding) plumage brightened the seepage pond along the n. edge of Swan Lake N.R.P. 15-17 May. A single adult Semipalmated Sandpiper was with 3 Least Sandpipers at the seepage pond 17 May. In general, however, it was a very poor spring for Calidris sandpipers. On 6 May Suzy Wright spotted 20 Long-billed Dowitchers in a flooded field off the west end of Larkin Cross Road. The next day 27 were present at the same spot. This is a very

respectable number for the N. Okanagan in spring. Ten dowitchers were present on 12 May and two were at Swan Lake N.R.P. 17 May. Two Wilson's Phalaropes were seen near the Larkin Cross Road Deep Creek bridge while a single was spotted there 16 May (DC). The only Red-necked Phalaropes were two on Coyote Crossing Pond 30 May.

Gulls and Terns

A survey of Grant Island (Lake Country) in early June revealed that Ring-billed Gulls were no longer nesting and that in their place were 240 pairs of California Gulls, making the island one of only 3-4 California Gull colonies in the province. Forty pairs of gulls appeared to show evidence of Herring Gull genes, ranging from birds that looked like pure Herring Gulls to birds that were very likely descendants of Herring Gull X Glaucous-winged Gull crosses (DC, pers.comm.) The sudden appearance of two hundred Ring-bills loafing at a seepage pond on the n. edge of Swan Lake Nature Refuge Park was a surprise 21 June. Among them was one adult Franklin's Gull. In other gull news, a second-year Mew Gull was loosely associating with two adult Ring-billed Gulls in a flooded field along Deep Creek south of Larkin Cross Road 5 May. An adult Bonaparte's Gull at Otter Lake 11 June was either early for fall or late for spring. Two adult Caspian Terns were at the seepage pond next to Swan Lake Nature Park Reserve 21 June.

Cormorants

A single Double-crested Cormorant at Swan L. 27 April (ST.) An adult was in the flooded marsh, at the n. end of Otter Lake 5 May. Two were present at Otter Lake 10 June (MM; CC) and one 27 June.

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Birds of the North Okanagan continued

Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns

The Vernon Great Blue Heronry was in the news again as Vernon City Council delayed a vote 8 June on whether to remove the restrictive noise covenant for a developer. A polite and silent crowd wearing blue in support of the herons and the covenant may have caused some of the city counsellors to think twice before pushing their usual pro-business agenda.

Hawks, Eagles and Kites

I am concerned about Northern Harriers in the North Okanagan. Virtually no birds wintered which is understandable given the species aversion to snow on the ground, but any spring migration through the N. Okanagan either didn't happen or went unnoticed by contributors to this column. A pair settled around Swan Lake Nature Reserve Park and was noted almost daily through April and May. Given their vocalizations and behavior it was evident that the pair was attempting to breed. This is good. But the absence of other pairs from traditional sites like Otter Lake and Rawlings Lake is disturbing.

The Red-tailed Hawk nest situated high in a pine in BX Dog Park contained at least one downy chick on 12 May. One chick fledged on 11 June and the second chick soon thereafter. On 24 June both were seen hanging in the breeze along the ridge just south of the dog park, occasionally playfully diving upon each other. A Red-tailed Hawk nest on private property near the n. end of Otter Lake Cross Road contained 3 large young 27 May (LM).

Owls

Laurel MacDonald photographed an adult Northern Saw-whet Owl looking out of a cavity in a birch snag on private property near the north end of Otter Lake Cross Road 29 April and 27 May.

Kingfisher

Two Belted Kingfishers began showing interest in a steep cutbank along BX Road late April. The male was seen carrying a fish to this general location 23-28 June. On 5 May a kingfisher was at the cutbank along Larkin Cross Road in another likely nesting spot.



above: A pair of Ospreys were determined to build a nest on a completely unsuitable power pole near the junction of Bailey Road and Highway 6 on 15 June. Not only would the nest material fall off, but a male Osprey from another nest less than 0.5 km kept harassing the male.

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Birds of the North Okanagan continued

Woodpecker

A Downy Woodpecker was excavating a nesting cavity in a dead birch 3 and 4 May along Hitchcock Road. As usual the hole was excavated at the base of a sturdy branch and trunk. Young were in the nest 3 June.

Falcons

An adult Peregrine Falcon was over Gregory Pond 8 May. An immature Peregrine Falcon was seen 17 and 23 May in the same willow e.n.e. of the seepage pond near Swan Lake Nature Reserve Park.

Swallows

Bank Swallows were late arriving compared to spring 2019. The first was a single among bickering Northern Rough-winged Swallows at the traditional swallows excavations along Larkin Cross Road 1 May. On 5 May about 5 paid a short visit to tunnels dug in previous years. On 12 May Bank Swallows were visiting about half a dozen old burrows.

Thrushes and Allies

Lowland sightings of Hermit Thrushes are frustratingly rare. The species breeds commonly in the boreal forest of our surrounding mountains, yet is rarely encountered on migration. One seen at Polson Park 5 May (GG) was a nice "catch".

New World Sparrows

Clay-coloured Sparrows arrived slightly earlier than usual and at first were seemingly restricted to the higher areas of the Goose Lake and Bella Vista

ranges (GL; MM; PM). As June advanced singing Clay-coloureds became evident in slightly more developed areas lower in the valley like along the Grey Canal Trail n. of Blue Jay Drive. The annual late April appearance of flocks of migrant White-crowned Sparrows seemed especially noticeable this year, perhaps because due to covid restrictions people were home to notice the birds in their yards. Also the birds seemed slightly delayed by a day or two in arriving in numbers in the N. Okanagan, and so were especially concentrated during the final days of April. Several sightings of Golden-crowned Sparrows, usually as singles, with the White-crowns, occurred in early May. Lark Sparrows are local breeders favouring wilder grasslands above the valley floor. Spring arrivals were found above Davison Orchard (private access) by Gail Loughridge earliest May and along the Anderson Bluebird trail by Rick Bonar 5 May. Other locations where Lark Sparrows were seen, at least sporadically, included the south end of Goose Lake and along the Grey Canal Trail south of Blue Jay Drive (HS; JVD).

Yellow-breasted Chat

A Yellow-breasted Chat, a casual spring visitor to the N. Okanagan, could be heard singing on private property off Kalamalka Lakeshore Road about 1.8 km s. of the Kalamalka Lake Lookout 10 and 15 June.

Blackbirds and Allies

Yellow-headed Blackbirds appear to be suffering nesting disruption due to high water levels flooding bulrush habitat. The large colony at Rawlings Lake appeared dispersed 7 June, with their historically

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Birds of the North Okanagan continued

favoured large patches of bulrush and cattail drowned. Up to 5 male Bobolinks were displaying in a hayfield south of Highway 6 about 0.4 km east of the Lumby junction of Creighton Valley Road and Highway 6 30 May and 5 June (ST). This tiny colony can be detected most springs from the highway if the birder has a scope.

Scott Thompson noted an early Bullock's Oriole in his Lumby yard 30 April.

New World Warblers

First Common Yellowthroat of the season recorded 27 April at Swan L. (ST). The second one wasn't recorded until 11 days later. This is often the case with migrant warblers. The first individuals are isolated sightings well ahead of "the pack". The peak for migrant male Common Yellowthroats appeared to be around 17 May. An adult male American Redstart appeared with other migrant warblers in the willows that line the creek in Swan Lake Nature Reserve Park 17 May (ST). Formerly a local summer resident in lowland riparian habitat throughout the Okanagan Valley, the redstart has become a rarely sighted migrant, though still present in the moist, more heavily wooded areas north of

Lumby. Hundreds of migrant Yellow-rumped Warblers (Audubon's) migrating through the lowlands on 29 April were counted as small flocks flew through a gap in the bushes along Deep Creek off Larkin Cross Road 29 April.

Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Allies.

The cold rain of 22 May likely contributed to Scott Thompson having 5 Black-headed Grosbeaks at his Lumby feeder. Lazuli Buntings continue to be common in their preferred brushy habitat. On 9 June seven males were seen and/or heard along the north 2 kms of the Turtle Mountain- Blue Jay Drive Grey Canal Trail. Along the Blackcomb-Rugg Grey Canal Trail up to 6 males were recorded within one km. 🌍

below: House Wren, photographed by Jack VanDyk



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NECTAR AND POLLEN POWER

by Margaret MacKenzie

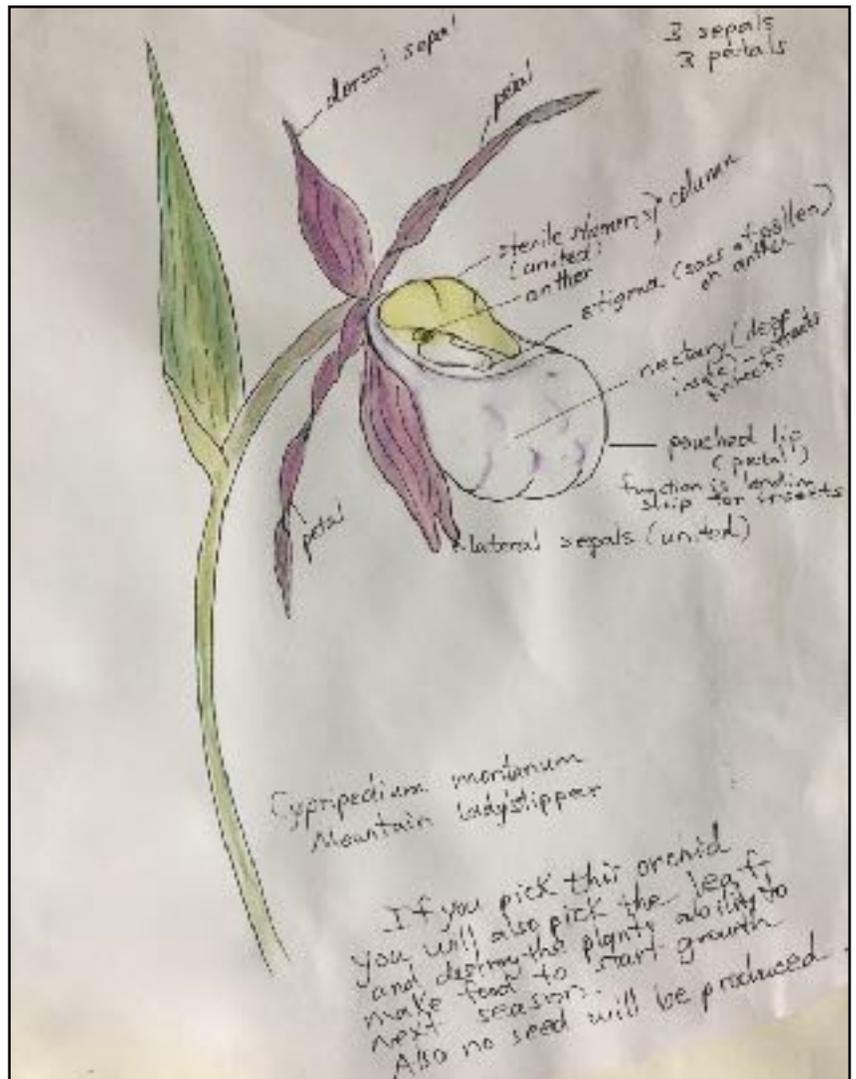
THE riparian environment behind my old cabin on Okanagan Lake once supported large numbers of Mountain Ladyslippers (*Cypripedium montanum*). Over the past 30 years with cabins, people and cattle, I now have found only 2 spots with these orchids, and each spot has 3 plants growing! This little aside is just a reminder that picking orchids (or trampling them in the case of cattle!) means no orchids.....

While I was down on my knees in the woods marvelling at my small find, a bumble bee suddenly disappeared inside the lip of the orchid flower. You could hear its wild angry buzzing: it was clearly rattled and panicky. Well, perhaps this was just my own human feelings expressing what was happening, not the bee's mood at all! Possibly the 'angry' buzzing was just the rapid beating of its wings in such a way as to help it climb out of the slipper pouch. And the loudness of the buzzing was amplified because the sound was concentrated in a small contained space.

Looking inside the orchid, I watched as the bee tried again and again to climb out of the Ladyslipper trap. It kept sliding back down inside the slipper pouch, but finally was able to crawl up the back part of the pouch and bend itself around the anther sacs and then with great relief, (my feelings again), it buzzed happily away!

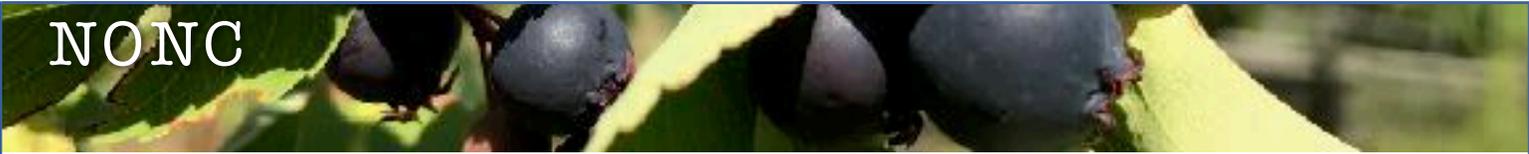
However, the orchid plays a sneaky trick, first enticing the bee to its large pouch lip, and then

leading the bee, via colourful dots and lines, to its nectary inside the slipper. On entering the front part of the slipper pouch, the bee touches the stigma first, and the pollen masses brought in from another lady slipper are deposited. On its way out the bee is forced to go out the back door, so to speak, and in doing so rubs against the anthers causing the pollen to adhere to its body in sticky packages that rub off on the stigma of the next ladyslipper flower. This ensures cross-fertilization!



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Nectar and Pollen Power continued

Not long after this encounter, I again heard an angry buzzing and looking around I watched another bumblebee, again trapped in a pouched flower, struggling to get out! This flower was the Common Touch-me-not or Jewel-weed (*Impatiens noli-tangere*). The whole little flower shook violently as the bee fought to get out!

Now, I know bees are clever, so why do they keep going back to these pouched plants after having such

frights? Well, it's just like kids and candy. The smell of the nectar inside the pouches gets them every time! They just can't help fall for the same line time after time, in order to get at that tasty nectar.

And, that's Nectar and Pollen Power for you!

*revised from an article I wrote in Newspacket Sept. 2004 🌍



The range of mountain lady's slipper extends from southern Alaska through British Columbia and Alberta into the Rocky Mountains of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. It extends south through the Pacific Northwest states of Washington and Oregon into northern California. Populations east of the Cascade Mountains are much more abundant than those on the Westside. Populations west of the Cascades have decreased since pioneer settlement. (credit: US Forest Service website)

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I found this poem today in an old child's animal story book from 1947. And being that scientists have found that the White-throated Sparrow has changed its tune, I thought this is an interesting bit of trivia. Unfortunately, no author was mentioned. I did change the town name given in the poem as 'Vernon' was more appropriate. — Gail Loughridge

The news story that Gail refers to was carried on CBC. Click on this link to read and listen.

White-throated sparrows change their tune from 3 notes to 2

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/white-throated-sparrows-change-their-tune-1.5636004?fbclid=IwAR2MPo43M5NdQeGtRHqw04mciPMY6oYemwdgWp7xmdazkKX47Wx4PZM8S0I>

THE SONG OF THE WHITE THROATS

A white-throated sparrow is singing.
 Can you tell me the words of his song?
 The people in Canada hear him
 And tell us he sings all day long:
 All fishermen, too, love to listen
 To the white-throat's sweet little refrain.
 They say he is their good luck omen
 And these are the words of his strain:
 "Good luck, fishermen, fishermen, fishermen."
 And in Vernon lived a farmer named Peabody
 Who called sparrows his favourite bird.
 He said when the white-throats were singing
 That these were the words that he heard:
 "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody."
 But tonight I hear white-throats singing
 Right under my garden wall
 And I know the words they are saying,
 Their sweet little voices call,
 "Good night---happy dreams, happy dreams,
 happy dreams."



What's in a name?

**SASKATOON, as in
 Saskatoon berry;
 from the native word
 misâskwatômina.**

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Hummingbirds

Two years ago our hummingbird volunteers participated in collecting urine samples at our three banding sites for part of this study. It is very scientific, but I thought maybe one of the articles would be of interest. Pictured here is one of the urine collection bottles. — Gail Loughridge, Hummingbird Banding Coordinator

Feisty, and Fierce but under Threat: Rufous Hummingbird survival depends on collaborations across Canadian, USA and Mexican borders

Christine Bishop PhD, christine.bishop@canada.ca
Environment and Climate Change Canada, Wildlife
Research Division, Science and Technology Branch
and Susan Bonfield, PhD sbonfield@gmail.com

ALL hummingbirds are metabolic marvels, but Rufous Hummingbirds take it to an extreme. The species has the longest migration of any hummingbird in the world. Relative to its body length, this bird- equal in weight to just a nickel-- migrates farther than any bird species. It is the only hummingbird documented to have made the journey to the Old World; there is a record from Russia.

Rufous Hummingbirds migrate from western Mexico and the US Gulf of Mexico coastlines, along the Pacific coast to as far north as Alaska. Along their 4000 km migration, they fly through low valley and coastal habitats in their spring migration to take advantage of early spring flowers and sapsucker wells. Their breeding grounds extend from Oregon to Alaska, with the largest portion of the global breeding range of the Rufous Hummingbird in British Columbia, Canada. On their return migration, they depend on summer blossoms in Rocky Mountain meadows and forests. On this long and

precarious journey, Rufous Hummingbirds arrive at each stopover and nesting site to sip flower nectar, catch insects, and use torpor to withstand cold weather. In western Mexico, they select the frequent openings in pine-oak forests at multiple altitudes. The incredibly variable geography used throughout their life cycle exposes the Rufous Hummingbird to many threats.

Feisty, aggressive, even belligerent, the Rufous Hummingbird is a fierce defender of the flowering plants on which it feeds. But changes in the timing of flowering, the density and the diversity of flowers and the quality and quantity of nectar and insects are all susceptible to effects of climate change, forest fire frequency and intensity, invasive species, and the use of pesticides its range. Joint USA and Canadian North American Breeding Bird Surveys since 1966 show Rufous Hummingbird populations have experienced a 60% decrease. And although there are multiple stressors that can affect this species, the exact cause(s) of the decline are still the subject of research.

Research and conservation action for Rufous Hummingbirds is a multi-national collaboration. The Western Hummingbird Partnership (WHP) was created to address concerns about hummingbird populations, including the Rufous Hummingbird. The partnership is a coalition of researchers, educators, organizations, and agencies in Canada, the U.S.A, and Mexico. With participants located along the flyways of the Rufous Hummingbird and other western hummingbird species, the group is focusing on filling the gaps in knowledge of their population demography, response to habitat restoration, and the effects of anthropogenic threats. They have supported studies of habitat use by hummingbirds in Oregon, methods to examine the presence of

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Hummingbirds continued

pesticides in hummingbirds, and the impacts of fire on floral nectar resources. A review of fire, restoration, and hummingbirds was recently published by the US Forest Service with support from WHP. WHP projects also raise awareness of hummingbirds and their conservation in communities from Mexico to Canada. Education materials, hummingbird festivals, and workshops are essential to motivating simple actions that protect all species, from planting native flowers to preventing collisions with windows. Everyone can join their work by becoming part of the WHP's Hummingbird Highway, ensuring safe passage for this migratory dynamo. Learn more at www.westernhummingbird.org

Hundreds of hummingbird banders throughout Canada, USA, and Mexico help to track the site fidelity and migration routes of Rufous Hummingbirds and collect urine and fecal samples for pesticide, stable isotope, and genomic analyses.

Rufous Hummingbirds winter usually follow a southern route through the high altitude meadows of the Rocky Mountains to the pine-oak and cloud forests of Mexico and Central America. In the past 30 years,

some Rufous Hummingbirds have also started to winter in southern USA. Mexico's mountain ranges and coastal plains define not only the country, but also a separation of the sexes when it comes to Rufous Hummingbirds. Once on the wintering grounds, it seems that males and females go their own way. Females that nest farther west in the U.S. and Canada are more likely to be found at higher elevations in central and southern Mexico. Females nesting to the east seek lower elevations along Mexico's coasts. Males avoid Mexico's mountain chains and are generally found along the coasts. Where they breed does not influence their selection of wintering sites. The samples for the Moran et al. 2013 study were collected by hummingbird banders.

Migration through lowland valleys brings Rufous Hummingbirds in contact with many potential stressors including agricultural areas where they can

accumulate insecticides which have been measured in their urine from sites near to blueberry fields.



Rufous Hummingbirds have high site fidelity to nesting areas and often reuse the same nests over several years. They nest in forest openings, edges, second growth conifer and mixed conifer-hardwood forests including coastal temperate rainforest. The female alone builds the

nest and raises the chicks. She feeds them nectar and, primarily, soft-bodied insects especially diptera (flies). 🌍

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Moose Strategies*by Rick Bonar*

IVE been fortunate to work with moose several times in my career. In the mid-1980s I radio-collared a dozen cow moose along the proposed route of the Coquihalla Highway between Kamloops and Merritt, to see how often large animals were likely to cross. I also had collars on black bears and mule deer. The research showed that there were lots of crossings and provided the reason for building wildlife fencing and animal crossings along the new highway. Here's two stories from the research.

Cow moose try to avoid predators when they are about to give birth. We located each cow moose daily as her time approached. The pattern was clear. After using an area for several days with not much movement we would detect a sudden long movement. This was our signal that the cow had travelled to an isolated place to have her calf or calves (twins are fairly common in moose). We wanted to confirm that a live birth had occurred, so we immediately walked in on the cow to see if we could locate a calf. As you can imagine this wasn't without risk. Some of the mother moose didn't appreciate a couple of humans getting so close at such a critical time. Moose love to give birth in very thick cover (doghair pine was a favourite), so our strategy used her strategy against her. One of us would distract mom while the other looked for (but didn't touch) the newborn calf. Although it sounds dangerous it was easy to dodge an irate mama moose in the thick cover and the cows wouldn't leave their calf to chase us. Some of the cows simply left the area, likely hoping we wouldn't find the calf lying still on the ground. They returned quickly when we

left. Only one of the study animals didn't have a calf over two years of study, and several had twins.

Moose give birth around the last week in May and their "lost in space" strategy is quite flexible. In addition to thick pine they also used thick willows, islands and peninsulas in lakes and along rivers, and higher elevation areas where the snow hadn't melted yet. I was lucky enough to see, from a helicopter, a moose give birth onto about 2 m of snow in the sub-alpine north of Revelstoke. There's yet another strategy – have your calf very close to humans where predators are less likely to be. I've seen cow moose give birth beside logging equipment that was idle overnight and in a front yard with a picket fence.

Moose calves are very mobile very quickly, and the mother usually leads them to areas with more food (and more predators) within about a week after birth. By that time the calves can outrun most predators, and they also have a mother who will aggressively defend them. Nevertheless, predators sometimes kill high proportions of the annual calf cohort.



Cow Moose Giving Birth on a Lawn in Anchorage, Alaska. Photo by Levi Perry

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Moose continued

Did you know that moose are superbly adapted to handle very cold weather? Many years ago, tame moose were hooked up to metabolic rate equipment at the University of Alberta. The moose had no need to even consider a higher metabolic rate to keep warm until the temperature dropped to -30° C. On the other end of the temperature scale moose are susceptible to heat stress. When the air temperature exceeded about +30° C my collared moose had to find ways to keep cool in the summer heat. Mostly they found a patch of dense shade with wet ground and bedded down during the heat of the day, and it was common to see them using the same favoured spots repeatedly. On one hot afternoon I discovered another strategy while locating a moose with a Cessna 172 fixed-wing airplane. We circled over the lakeshore where the signal was coming from but initially couldn't see the moose. Of course, I was

looking on the land and the moose was in plain sight lying down in the lake with only it's head above water. Moose have also been observed soaking in sprinklers and lying down in swimming pools. Anything to cool down! 🌍



Cow Moose Cooling Down in a Kiddie Pool. Photo by Bob Hallinen



Red-necked Grebe
photographed by Claire Christensen

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Hummingbird Moths and Bee Flies

by Margaret MacKenzie

ON our bluebird trail at Lone Pine Ranch, Claire and I walk through wildflower meadows that attract many bugs, bees and other insects. Several times we have seen something looking like a tiny Hummingbird hovering over a flower before zooming away. Finally, one of these Clearwing Hummingbird Moths landed and stayed long enough for us to take photos [photo below]. There it hovered over the flower, its long curved proboscis deep inside a Yellow Stream Violet, sipping nectar.



Hummingbird moths belong to the Sphinx Moth family and although most Sphinx moths fly at night, hummingbird moths are daytime fliers. Their wings are clear, with a black or brown border, and nearly invisible when they fly. Males have a flared "tail," like that of a hummingbird and they are about 1 1/2 inches long, half the size of a Calliope Hummingbird. This species we saw is called a Snowberry Clearwing (*Hemaris diffinis*), and feeds on nectar. The caterpillars of this species feed on the

leaves of Snowberry, honeysuckles, and other members of the rose family.



The Bee Fly [above & below] called *Bombylius major* is in the Bombyllidae Family, and not a moth at all, but it has a similarity to Clearwing Moths in that it is fuzzy and cute, and you find them hovering over flowers sipping nectar. I recently took photos of *Bombylius major* that I found in Kalamalka Park



feeding on dandelions. There were many of them all along a wide trail and their resemblance to small
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Hummingbird Moths and Bee Flies continued

bumblebees makes one wary they may sting. This close mimicry of bumblebees is how their name was derived. Both Hummingbird Moths and Bee flies are important pollinators.

Comments and photos by Claude Rioux:

Has anyone noticed how few butterflies and bees we've seen this year? Usually, the Mock-orange Trees would have many visitors flitting around them and enjoying their nectar and the Linden Tree in my yard would have been covered with butterflies and bees while it was in bloom. Not so this year. I have a feeling that the cold, wet spring we had took a toll on many insects. This isn't the case with mosquitoes which have flourished and emerged hungry.

At one point, I raised my camera to take a picture only to discover that a butterfly was clinging to the side of it and would not leave until the end of our lunch. This gave us all a good opportunity to have a good look at it. 🌍



The attached images were taken on walks this past week in the Commonage and on Vernon Hill. We can see that beetles are also good pollinators with the hairs along their bodies capturing pollen to spread to other plants. One bee we spotted was clinging to a Showy Daisy and did not budge no matter how close to it we were.



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Ecological Reserves*by Harold Sellers***What are Ecological Reserves?**

Ecological reserves are areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. Scientific research and educational purposes are the principal uses of ecological reserves. Ecological reserves are established for the:

- preservation of representative examples of British Columbia's ecosystems;
- protection of rare and endangered plants and animals in their natural habitat;
- preservation of unique, rare or outstanding botanical, zoological or geological phenomena;
- perpetuation of important genetic resources; and
- scientific research and educational uses associated with the natural environment.

Some of the ERs in the North Okanagan and surrounding area are Campbell-Brown, Cougar Canyon, Mara Meadows, Vance Creek, Buck Hills Road and Lily Pad Lake.

ERs that I know are lacking wardens are Mount Griffin and Upper Shuswap River. Perhaps you are interested in becoming a warden!

https://ecoreserves.bc.ca/portfolio_item/043-mount-griffin/

and

https://ecoreserves.bc.ca/portfolio_item/061upper-shushwap-river/

How did they originate?

On May 4, 1971, British Columbia's first 29 reserves received protective status by Order-in-Council, a conservation landmark for the province.

Their Role

Ecological reserves contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. Appropriate research and educational functions are the primary uses of ecological reserves. They are not created for outdoor recreation and should not be confused with parks or other recreational areas. Most ecological reserves, however, are open to the public for non-consumptive, observational uses.

Managing and Protecting Ecological Reserves

Ministry of Environment is responsible for the management and protection of ecological reserves. Activities such as tree cutting, hunting, fishing, mining, domestic grazing, camping, lighting of fires and removing materials, plants or animals, and the use of motorized vehicles are prohibited in ecological reserves. Most ecological reserves are open to the public for nondestructive observational uses such as nature appreciation, wildlife viewing, bird watching and photography. Visitors are asked to co-operate in caring for these areas. Some sites, such as seabird nesting colonies, are so sensitive that access is only allowed under ministerial order.

Ministry of Environment staff are assisted in the protection and management of ecological reserves by volunteer wardens.

Volunteer Ecological Reserve Wardens

Visit the Friends of Ecological Reserves to familiarize yourself with ERs that either need a warden or might be of interest. (Even in areas that have wardens, additional wardens help to increase attention to these ecologically special places).

<http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/>

NONC

Editorial

Enjoy Nature, But Also Work to Protect it

Author Larry Pynn

[This editorial appeared in the Summer 2020 issue of the BC Nature magazine. Here at NONC, we would welcome your comments and thoughts.]

AFTER four decades as a news reporter at the Vancouver Sun, most of that time covering the environment, I accepted an early-retirement offer in August 2018 and moved to Maple Bay in the Cowichan Valley of Vancouver Island. The goal: relax and commune with nature in the local mountains, bays, and inlets. I certainly had no expectation of involving myself in municipal politics — but when you care about the environment, you have no choice but to defend it.

Soon after I arrived, I noticed clear-cuts appearing on the near horizon.

I asked around and my neighbours didn't know who owned the land. I did some further investigation and discovered that the Municipality of North Cowichan owns 5,000 hectares of forestlands — the Municipal Forest Reserve, unique in Canada.

I also learned that the reserve exists to profit from logging, and that management is guided by a forestry committee dominated by forest industry interests — and that the general public has zero opportunity to review and comment on logging plans.

That's the way it's always been. And that's plain wrong.

I wrote an op-ed piece for The Times Colonist and hooked up with other citizens who were equally concerned about the logging. Momentum grew.

Hundreds of concerned citizens packed a council meeting and the watchdog group, wheredowestand.ca, filled the 700-seat Cowichan Performing Arts Centre.

I created a website, sixmountains.ca, where I have put my journalism skills to good use writing regular stories on the Municipal Forest Reserve and why it should be saved from logging. I have learned a lot along the way. A recent post featured an interview with Andy MacKinnon, co-author of the iconic *Plants of Coastal British Columbia*. He told me that the forest reserve falls within the coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone — the rarest such landscape in the province and desperate for better protection.

We've made a lot of progress to date: for now, council has placed a moratorium on new logging in the forest reserve pending two separate consultation processes — with the general public and local First Nations. We remain vigilant to ensure that a pro-logging-bias does not creep into the process.

The bottom line: wherever you live, it is important for people who love nature to fight for it. Accept what the wild gives but also give something back. We can all contribute in our own way — but know we must contribute, or risk losing what we so dearly love. ♦

*Larry Pynn is the recipient of eight Jack Webster Awards, a member of the Explorers Club and the author of two non-fiction books, *The Forgotten Trail* and *Last Stands*.*

"You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them." — Wangari Maathai

NONC

Reaching Younger Generations for Nature

Earlier this year several members of the NONC Executive reached out to our adult children, who range in age from 32 to 40. This makes them all Millennials (see below). They live in Burnaby, Vernon, Revelstoke, Calgary and Canmore. We asked them questions about what would encourage them to join a society such a NONC, how to engage younger generations, what matters to them, etc.

We think you'll find the following interesting and the Executive would like to hear comments from you, young people in your lives or both!

— compiled and with comments from Harold Sellers

What We Heard from Younger People

Without attributing the following to a particular person, here are some comments:

- your language is outdated; I don't hear many people referring to "joining" "clubs" or "societies" anymore
 - people "follow" causes, "rep" (represent) movements, "back" new ventures
 - people still value knowing how their participation is making a difference
 - people still involve themselves, but the methods have changed
 - people will make financial contributions, look at kick-starter, go-fund-me
 - people like to get perks for getting behind something early: elite access to events, first in line for tickets, recognition on social media
 - our generation leans more towards giving campaigns as opposed to subscription fees
 - there are people and causes that I've chosen to follow, to support financially and to get updates
- from in return, but I don't "do" memberships, clubs or societies (to use those old terms)
 - most Millennials are on Instagram; Millennials and Gen Xers do use Facebook somewhat but Gen Z barely does at all
 - to engage people online you need a really simple and user-friendly website and a solid social media presence that directs people to the website; it's all about the number of clicks you have to do on a website in order to get to what you want, less being better
 - for me Instagram and Reddit are how I learn what is happening in my community, don't use Facebook or Twitter, no newspapers, no radio or TV
 - Reddit for me, as a city dweller, is good for the community forums which are topic-based
 - not owning a car, I look for local and transit-accessible events
 - weekends only, work leaves me with no motivation to go out to an event on a weekday evening unless I really think I must
 - yes, I would consider joining a club; \$50 is very reasonable
 - I don't expect a lot for that fee; newsletter, reports, advocacy would be bonuses
 - expect group outings, occasional meetings, online presence
 - if I saw your page on Instagram I would certainly follow it (is there one?)
 - if people would come out to an activity or two, I would expect they would be comfortable joining and paying a fee
 - have a social media presence with the awesome pictures your members take
 - I don't have Facebook, but I use Instagram
 - auto-link Facebook and Instagram
 - capacity is a common issue for people my age; I don't often feel that I have the free time

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NONC

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- while interested, I'd have a hard time committing to being an active member
- maybe drop-in programming where people pay a small fee to attend a talk or nature walk, and include kid-focused programs
- "our" generation expects a return for their membership and I found the most beneficial experiences were through workshops involving wisdom/mentorship from the community the organization supported
- extremely busy with full time work, kids' sports, kids school commitments and husband who works shift work, so evening meetings would not be attended regularly
- today couples are having children later in life
- with a young family, meetings would require a babysitter
- not interested in meetings with no practical applications or outcomes (i.e. not interested in socializing meetings)
- interested in local community involvement where one could make a difference, such as in stewardship or restoration projects
- would attend outdoor education events – such as bird or plant identification, introduction to local ecosystems, restoration of local habitats
- prefer active involvement, such as a community restoration project that was geared to get families/children involved
- communication via monthly email newsletter and website is good, other organizations use Twitter as well
- NONC seems to be more a 'reactive' rather than a 'proactive' organization

Social Generations

Boomers, born 1946-1964, now aged mid 50s to mid 70s

Gen X, born 1965-1980, now aged 40 to mid 50s
 Millennials, born 1981-1996, now aged mid 20s to 40
 Gen Z, born 1997 to mid-2000s, now aged teens to mid 20s

NONC and Member Ages

Obviously most NONC members are Boomers and older. We would like to attract more Boomers, but I we especially need to reach the Gen Xers and Millennials. As far as reaching Gen Z, perhaps that a goal that could be given to Millennials, if we had any!

Some Things to Think About

If we say we want to attract more people, why do we want to do so? If they joined us, what could they contribute and how would that benefit us and them?

- more members at club meetings seems good
- we get to know more like-minded folks
- more people informed and engaged would strengthen our advocacy work
- if more people came out to walks and outings, that's good but what number is too much?
- more people would require more events
- what's our role in managing the numbers of people in a nature reserve, on a trail, in a park, in the woods, or taking pictures of birds and animals?
- if we took in more money, what do we need it for?
- the more we do, the more people we need to manage and oversee; takes more time on the part of more people
- go into everything with our eyes wide open
- if we don't do more to attract the younger generations, what is our future and what does that mean for nature and conservation?

We look forward to hearing comments from NONC members. Email them to your editor. 🌐

NONC

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Copy for publication should be sent to Harold Sellers, Editor, by e-mail hikerharold@gmail.com.



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North Okanagan
Naturalists Club

MONTHLY MEETINGS

currently suspended

On the first Wednesday of the month (September through May), we hold a meeting for members and visitors at the Schubert Centre (starting in May). Start time, 7:00 pm. Guest speakers, club news, refreshments.

NONC MEMBERSHIP

Clip or copy this form to begin or renew a membership with the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club. The form is also available on our website. Annual dues are \$35 for an individual and \$50 for a couple or family. Every member should also complete a Waiver form, available at our website membership page.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____