

NEWSPACKET

January 2024

Journal of the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club



Steller's Jay
photographed
by Jack VanDyk

NONC

North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC)

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LIFE MEMBERS

Ray Arlt*
Kay Bartholomew*
Joan Heriot*
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Malcolm Martin*
Frank* & Mary* Paul

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PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Contact the following if you have questions.

BC Nature	Pam Jenkins 250-545-0490
Bluebird Trails	Margaret Mackenzie 250-542-2712
Botany	Margaret Mackenzie 250-542-2712
Christmas Bird Count	Don Cecile
Conservation	Harold Sellers 250-307-3543
Cools Pond	Rod Drennan 250-545-4999
Hummingbird Banding	Gail Loughridge 250-545-7455
Nature Walks	Ruth Drennan 250-545-4999 & Judy Stockdale
Newsletter	Harold Sellers 250-307-3543
Speakers	Bruce Tattersall 778-874-4614
Swan Lake	Robert Hettler, Margaret MacKenzie, Chris Siddle, Marnie Williamson
Swan & Eagle Count	Norbert Maertens 250-503-8790 Rod Drennan 250-545-4999
Trips	contact the club
Website & Social Media	Harold Sellers 250-307-3543

Annual Membership Dues:

Couple/Family	\$50
Single	\$35

see none.ca

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2023 Christmas Bird Count for the Vernon Area

Sunday, December 17
74th Annual Count

by Don Cecile, Vernon Count Coordinator

HELLO everyone and thank you for your participation on the Vernon CBC. It was a wonderful day to be outdoors. Although bird volume was down, diversity was up!

Vernon CBC has recorded an average of 86 species since 1950. It has not broke the 100 species mark in 20 years but this year achieved the highest total since 1993!

This year's participants racked up 103 species on count day with an additional 3 species during count week (cw)!

Third highest total in 74 years! 1993 had 107 and the record still stands at 109 from 1990.

Observers numbered 45 in the field with 7 feeder watchers reporting.

One new species for the count, which was also a new species for the North Okanagan, was the Great Black-backed Gull, relocated from Penticton just in time for the Vernon count!

Biggest misses: Wood Duck, Varied Thrush, Gray Jay, Evening Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, Harris's Sparrow.

winter rarities (found on less than 10% of counts) are in bold-face

Total Observers: 52

Total Species: 106

173 different species have been counted over the 74 counts in the North Okanagan

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>
Snow Goose	14
Cackling Goose	4
Canada Goose	1,740
Trumpeter Swan	33
Northern Shoveler	34
Gadwall	12
American Wigeon	7
Mallard	3,508
Northern Pintail	1
Green-winged Teal	13
Redhead	2
Ring-necked Duck	12
Greater Scaup	31
Lesser Scaup	11
White-winged Scoter	1
Long-tailed Duck	1
Bufflehead	24
Common Goldeneye	32
Barrow's Goldeneye	13
Hooded Merganser	66
Common Merganser	814
Red-breasted Merganser	1
California Quail	571
Ring-necked Pheasant	47
Ruffed Grouse	7
Wild Turkey	25
Pacific Loon	1
Common Loon	12
Pied-billed Grebe	16
Horned Grebe	95
Red-necked Grebe	236
Western Grebe	25
Great Blue Heron	14
Golden Eagle	1
Northern Harrier	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4
Cooper's Hawk	10

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CBC 2023 continued

Bald Eagle	50	White-breasted Nuthatch	6
Red-tailed Hawk	79	Pygmy Nuthatch	66
Rough-legged Hawk	2	Brown Creeper	2
Virginia Rail	1	Canyon Wren	cw
American Coot	1,263	Pacific/Winter Wren	1
Killdeer	1	Marsh Wren	5
Wilson's Snipe	cw	American Dipper	1
Short-billed Gull	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	7
Ring-billed Gull	68	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
California Gull	134	Townsend's Solitaire	15
Herring Gull	205	American Robin	12
Thayer's/Iceland Gull	3	European Starling	955
Glaucous-winged Gull	64	Bohemian Waxwing	393
Great Black-backed Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	1
Rock Pigeon	500	American Tree Sparrow	5
Eurasian-collared Dove	262	Dark-eyed Junco	329
Mourning Dove	361	White-crowned Sparrow	66
Great Horned Owl	5	Golden-crowned Sparrow	1
Barred Owl	1	White-throated Sparrow	3
Short-eared Owl	4	Song Sparrow	55
Belted Kingfisher	4	Spotted Towhee	2
Downy Woodpecker	9	Red-winged Blackbird	1,443
Hairy Woodpecker	3	Yellow-headed Blackbird	1
Northern Flicker	138	Rusty Blackbird	cw
Pileated Woodpecker	2	Brewer's Blackbird	150
American Kestrel	3	Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Merlin	9	House Finch	387
Peregrine Falcon	1	Red Crossbill	12
Northern Shrike	4	Common Redpoll	2
Steller's Jay	21	Pine Siskin	18
Black-billed Magpie	281	American Goldfinch	159
Clark's Nutcracker	2	House Sparrow	682
American Crow	193		
Common Raven	113		
Black-capped Chickadee	393		
Mountain Chickadee	28		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	58		

Don Cecile received the Bird of the Day award for the Great Black-backed Gull and Scott Thomson won the Runner-up Bird of the Day for the Brown-headed Cowbirds. 🌿

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Suet Feeders

by Margaret MacKenzie.

A FEW weeks ago put up two suet feeders in the backyard. Some of the birds in the neighborhood are very attracted to it and now spend a good deal of time digging into the suet.

Suet definitely aids in providing quick energy to birds that are hungry, as it is high in digestive fat and provides quick energy and calories to help birds maintain body heat in the cold. 🌿

*Photos, top right clockwise to below:
Red-breasted Nuthatch, Song Sparrow,
Mountain Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker*



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Practicing Species Identification

Using a digital picture frame to improve your memories of nature...and more

by Harold & Linda Sellers

In our home we have used a digital photo frame for the past two years to entertain us, but also to practice the names of species of birds and plants.

The photo at right shows our Aura picture frame that we normally keep on our dining room table.

The Aura digital picture frames can hold thousands of digital images, which switch randomly. As we have our meals we watch pictures of local scenery, photographs of our family **and** pictures of birds, plants, mushrooms, shrubs, etc., scroll by. On many photos I have placed the species name or a short description of what the image is of.

As the pictures change every 15 seconds (in our case), Linda and I are able to rehearse the species names and recall trips and outings we've enjoyed. We tend to forget the names of birds or plants when it's not the season for them, so, for example, as spring approaches, we can brush up on the names of wild flowers as we see them on the frame.

The way it works is that you send photos from a smart phone to the WiFi-connected frame. Your friends and loved ones can also send pictures to your



Aura Frame by using the free Aura app on their smart phone. It's all wireless; the only cable is the power cord to a wall outlet.

There are several models of the Aura Frame, ranging from \$180 Cdn to \$400. Google for the Canadian sales site or look for them on Amazon.

It works with Apple (iOS14+) and Android (5.0+). Slide timing is adjustable. When the room is dark (e.g. at night), the frame automatically goes to sleep, to wake up again when there is light in the room.

We love our Aura Picture Frame! 🌿

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Downy Woodpeckers

by Margaret MacKenzie

I HAVE been watching a pair of Downy Woodpeckers take turns coming to the suet feeder (see article on page 5). When something scares them, I've noticed they quickly fly to the Saskatoon bush a few feet away. They then flatten themselves upright against an upturned branch of the



Above: Downy at suet feeder



Left: Pressing against branch when a predator is nearby

Below: Relaxed once the predator is gone



tree on the opposite side of where the danger might be. They freeze there for several minutes before deciding if the coast is clear before they return to the suet.

Checking out Downy Woodpecker behaviours in "Birds of the World" (Cornel Lab app), I've found out that this behaviour is their usual strategy to evade predators such as Kestrels and other smaller hawks.' 🌿

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JANUARY CALENDAR

MONTHLY MEETINGS

NONC monthly meetings are held in the Emerald Room at The Schubert Centre for Seniors, 30th Ave., in downtown Vernon. No entry fee. Members and non-members welcome. Coffee and cookies served!

Next meeting : WED., January 3rd, 7:00 pm.

Our guest speaker will be author Merle Kindred on her book, 'Guyana: A Memoir of Purpose and Adventure'.

SATURDAY NATURE WALKS

Join us Saturdays at 9:00 am (8:00 in August). Visitors welcome. Dress for the weather. We do a lot of birdwatching, so bring binoculars if you have them. See list below.







DR 1 & 2 are generally suitable for almost anyone, of any age. However, if you have issues of mobility and/or stamina, you should speak to the leader before attempting.

DR 1 Easy — Suitable for most people. Mostly paved or good-surface path, fairly level with some gentle climbs.

DR 2 Moderate — Suitable for most walkers and hikers with no mobility or endurance issues. May have longer distance with steeper hills and switchbacks, some uneven and rough path.

January 6th - 9am DR1

Join the Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a Nature Walk along the Rail Trail starting at the parking lot where West Kal Rd and Kickwillie loop Rd meet. Walk south towards Kekuli Bay and Back. Bring or

JANUARY 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 	4	5	6 
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 
14 	15	16	17	18	19	20 
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 
28	29	30	31			

wear ice Grippers if snow or ice on trails. Contact Rod at rdrennan@shaw.ca

January 13th - 9am DR1

Join the Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a walk along Kin Beach and into Marshall Fields. Turn off Okanagan Landing Rd to Lakeshore Rd and park on the left in the new parking lot just before Marshall Rd. We will walk along the lake shore to Tronson Rd and back to Vernon Creek and into Marshall Field winding way back to Marshall Rd. Bring or wear ice Grippers if snow or ice on trails. Contact Marnie at mpw66@telus.net

Jan. 20 & 27 - Watch for an e-mail

SWAN & EAGLE COUNT

Sunday, January 14

The annual count of Swans and Eagles will take place on this date.

Now known as the Rick Howie British Columbia Interior Swan and Eagle Count, the coordination is done by the Kamloops Naturalists' Club.

Rod Drennan and Norbert Maertens coordinate the count in the North Okanagan. Contact Rod at <readwell@shaw.ca>.