

## Blokker, Peter (1933 – 2018)



The athlete, naturalist and keen birder, Peter Blokker, left us suddenly while on a trip to his native Holland in January, 2018. He planned to continue on to the World Masters' Speed Skating Championships in Italy later in the month. At the age of 84, Peter still cycled between 20 to 40 kilometers a week. It is reported that he ruled the Speed Skating Master's category for his age division. He set at least 10 Canadian long track records and held the Canadian short track

record for the 70 to 74 age class.

Peter and his wife Gerda moved to Vernon in 1992 after his retirement from a 35 year career with the Ministry of Highways. He worked and lived in places like Quesnel, Stewart and Prince George. While in Prince George, Peter took up an interest in speed skating. He started the Vortex Speed Skating Club in Vernon at the Priest Valley Arena, and continued his interest in the Club particularly the development of young skaters.

Those who enjoy cross country skiing would often see Peter at Sovereign Lake Nordic Centre where he pursued this winter sport with the same passion that he pursued all of his other leisure activities.

Peter joined the Naturalists' Club soon after moving to Vernon and became a top birder in the region. He coordinated the Christmas Bird Count each December in the North Okanagan. Just before his death, the 2017 results were published in the local newspaper. At the monthly membership meetings Peter conducted the 'nature observations' section of the meeting and commented thoughtfully and knowledgeably on the species of birds and animals observed by members and guests.

It seemed fitting that Peter's family donated his large and varied collection of hard cover books on birds to the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club. These were sold or otherwise disposed of to those who appreciate our feathered friends as much as Peter Blokker did.

Peter's sudden death in his native Holland so far from his family and friends in Vernon has been difficult to absorb, and his loss to nature and physical sport will be keenly felt by many who knew him.

Rod Drennan