
North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

NEWSPACKET



Blackchin hummingbird - Photo: Gail Loughridge

September 2008, Volume 35, No. 6

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NORTH OKANAGAN NATURALISTS' CLUB



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September 2008

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NONC usually meets on the first Wednesday of each month from September to May inclusive, starting at 7:30 pm at The Vernon Lodge, 3914 - 32nd Street, Vernon.

Opinions expressed in Newspacket are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club unless so described.

Articles and cover illustrations of natural history, news and events are welcome. Copy should be left with Kay Bartholomew at work (Wayside Press, 3304 - 33rd Street) or at home (2908 - 23rd Street) or sent directly to the editor at regine.pasquier@telus.net.

Deadline for entries is the last Thursday of the month.

Registration at monthly meetings, or send Name(s), Address, Telephone, email and cheque to:
North Okanagan Naturalists' Club
PO Box 473,
Vernon, BC V1T 6M4
Yearly dues: Single \$35
Family \$50

Don't forget to visit our website: www.nonc.ca

Regular Thursday hikes: Meet at 9:30 am in the Priest Valley parking lot. For information call: Pam Jenkins: 545-0490, Margaret Hubble: 542-2712, Bob Hebbert: 542-2302.

Sept. 11: *KVR Trestles* Contact: Jack or Lyn Smith - 542-6520

Special trips

Sunday Sept. 21: *Great Train Robbery & BBQ Event - Cost \$49*
At the KVR Steam Train at Summerland. The Garnett Valley Gang will rob the passengers for local charities. A BBQ Dinner & musical entertainment is included and, of course, the train ride. CALL by SEPT. 7 as reservations are required. Contact: Jack or Lyn Smith - 542-6520

Thursday Oct. 2 - Sunday Oct. 5: *BC Nature FGM in Sorrento*
Watch *BC Nature* magazine for details.

Please check your trip lists and *BC Nature* for equipment needs.
Always advise the leader of intended attendance.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 1st at 7:30 pm.

A Living Memory

A donation to the James Grant Fund is a positive way to commemorate a departed friend or relative. A card will be sent to the family concerned. The gift would be a fitting tribute to anyone who has loved the world of nature. The fund is used for environmental education.

Kindly make cheques payable to:
James Grant Fund, North Okanagan Naturalists' Club,
Box 473, Vernon, BC V1T 6M4

Swan Lake report Aug.24/08 Bill Image

GVS are close to securing an agreement for the permanent access route off the Old Kamloops Road using the road past Stawn's Honey.

GVS should have the detailed layout plan for the Reserve completed and ready for their approval process by the end of the month.

Bill and Lyall completed an inventory of healthy plantings at the site. This information will be the guide for the final new planting to take place next spring.

Thanks to our volunteers, regular watering is being done in all the planting zones and, with the help of Mother Nature, losses have been minimized this year.

In the fall we will need to install mouse guards and cages on all plants that are not so protected.

Ducks Unlimited Canada has completed the design of a large identification sign to be set up on the site visible from the #97 highway. The exact location has yet to be determined.

The design of the bird blind is now moving in to the assembly planning stage and the materials list will be shopped around the major suppliers in the next week or so. Prior to construction a work party will be needed to clear access for delivery of materials and the actual erection of the blind. As much as possible components will be prefabbed off site, as for the bridge last year.

There is a lot of debris in BX creek from the various windstorms and a work party will be organized to clear the creek before winter sets in.

Leading a hike into Kalamalka Lake Park for TIES The International Environmetrics Society**Ray Arlt**

On June 11, Adam Moss and I led 50 people on a 4.9 mile hike through Kalamalka Lake Park starting at the Red Gate on Kidston Road, going easterly on the fire break trail then up onto the Lookout Trail ending at Jade Bay Parking lot where the bus was waiting.

Most of the people were Professors from all parts of the world... a very interesting group. Everyone made it, which was a relief. We were given a gift at the beginning and a very nice thank you card.

Bobolinks at Chris Marchant's - Robyn Thornton

On June 5th, it was touch and go as to whether this Thursday trip would take place on the scheduled date, as CHBC's Mike Roberts had predicted heavy rain the whole day. However, it was not raining in Lumby when I called Chris at 8:15 a.m., so seventeen of us met as planned at Polson Mall, arranged our car pooling and headed east.

After we had donned our rain jackets and binoculars, Chris led us through his fields towards the pond, where we found Ring-necked, Cinnamon Teal and Blue-winged Teal ducks, as well as two Mallard families, one of whose offspring were older than the other's. En route, we spotted many savannah and song sparrows and baby crows learning to fly! As we headed back to the house, we were rewarded by great views of the bobolinks, the main purpose of the outing. Two males and one female were most obliging, as they sat for as long as we wanted to see them on the fence only 25 feet away. Many thanks to Peter Blokker for bringing his 'scope, through which all of us had clear and close-up sights of these delightful creatures. Some of us even got to see the male and female mating and some took excellent photos of them. Through Peter's 'scope, we also were rewarded with close up views of an American Kestrel enjoying a meal of some small creature on a fence post about 35 feet away.

Back at the house to eat our lunches on the porch, we spotted a Bullock's Oriole, which, Chris ruefully informed us, dive bombs their windows from very early morning with annoying frequency! After lunch, we headed in the other direction from the house, towards the creek and enjoyed other sightings, including willow flycatchers. We finished our outing with a walk along the middle section of the Salmon trail along the creek, where cedar waxwings and others were spotted.

Just as we returned to our cars, some drops of rain started to fall, which increased to the promised heavy rain as we got closer to Vernon. However, by then we were dry in our vehicles and remembering the 34 species that Peter had recorded during a most enjoyable outing. The seventeen lucky participants were: Peter Blokker, Melanie Christien, Ann Davis, Maureen Dunlop, Murray Freeman, Betty Kerr and three friends from Armstrong (Greta Lupick, Phebe Reed and Douglas Fibish), Pam Jenkins, Gretta McDougall, Daphne Manning, Lyn and Jack Smith, Ilse Stengel, Wendy Stevens and myself.

NONC Notes**Kay Bart**

Friday, August 22nd, thirteen members journeyed to Sicamous to attend a special family gathering in memory of our member Bob McVickar. Bob's daughter, Mary-Ellis and family had come down from Edmonton to spend a few days at Bob's property in Sicamous. They had asked Bob's friends to attend an afternoon of friendship and the spreading of Bob's ashes over the grassy land. We had a walk over the property so many of us remember. Pictures were taken and then we were treated to a "Chinese dinner" in Sicamous. Bob was a very valuable member of the Club. He would drive down to Vernon, day after day, from Sicamous to work on the Kaminski property which the Club helped to establish with Nature Trust (Swan Lake, north of our new property). He was a very well-read man, loved the outdoors. He would drive down every weekend to go birding with the "birders." He will be missed.



Bob McVickar - Photo: Bob Hebbert

Ray Arlt keeps me entertained with his "sightings." He saw a bear and two cubs at the snowmobile hut at Silver Star. He has also seen a bull moose and cow. He enjoyed seeing a Hairy woodpecker family in a hole in a light pole at Sovereign Lake Lodge.

There are apparently "tons" of blueberries (huckleberries) up at Silver Star. Perhaps that is the reason we haven't had so many bear problems this summer? I was sorry about the bears' food... if we eat all their food, we can't complain when they come to town to eat ours, can we?

Hummingbird Banding 2008 **Gail Loughridge (Sub-permitted bander)**

Our hummingbird banding group had a wonderful banding season. Our total birds captured was 446, of which 377 were Calliope, 69 were Rufous and 2 were Blackchin. We had 19 recaptures from this year and past years. Our best year yet.

We travelled quite a bit. We were to Mary and Frank Paul's every 2 weeks for 3 months, and Molly and Sandy Boyd's the same. We also went to various other homes in the valley (evenings), including once out to Lumby. I also did a few at my home.

I have sent all our results to Cam Finlay in Victoria and he forwards the results to Arizona to be able to track the hummingbirds, and to the Canadian Wildlife Federation to a central registry for North America. Hopefully, one day someone will capture one of our birds... and we will capture a hummingbird that someone else has banded.

I would like to thank all our hosts. They all welcomed us everytime and we were asked to come back anytime. I would also like to thank all the citizen scientist banders, recorders and trap operators. You all did a great job and the whole project couldn't have been done without you. What a great team you all are!

Dick Cannings

Dick Cannings will be speaking on "An Enchantment of Birds" as a fundraiser for the Armstrong-Spallumcheen Environmental Trust (ASET).

ASET is a non-profit group that raises funds for a yearly bursary for students who have demonstrated an interest in environmental issues through their programme of studies or activities within our community and who are furthering their studies in an environment-based programme.

Location: Centennial Hall and Auditorium,
3120 Pleasant Valley Road Armstrong
(on the edge of the IPE Fairgrounds)

Time: October 7th at 7:00 pm

Tickets: \$15 per person - available at the door or
from Ann Davis (250-542-8278)

BC Nature Spring Conference & AGM May 29 - June 1, 2008**Pamela Jenkins**

The events took place at, or started from the Penticton Lakeside Resort and were hosted by the South Okanagan Naturalists Club (SONC). The theme was "A Century of Change." I arrived in Penticton late afternoon on Thursday, phoned the person offering me a billet arranged by BC Nature and SONC, then I went to see where the events would be. Later I had a meal at Gordon Howat's and we drove down to the registration and refreshments. Much to my surprise there were several others from NONC. There was a late owl prowl, but that would have meant a late night. I preferred to get up promptly for the early morning birding. On Friday morning I chose to go along the esplanade, first walking through the lakeside Japanese gardens. Interesting sightings were a bright yellow bullocks oriole, a kingfisher and a black headed grosbeak, besides the usual birds and ducks. Back at the resort, we had breakfast snacks before morning speakers. I'd already heard Harold Baumborough's, "After the Fire" talk, so I chose to hear Chris Bull on "Healing the Okanagan - Canada's 3rd most Endangered River".

Chris had spent a lifetime in the natural resource management and as a fisheries biologist had spent most of the last five years on river restoration. Years ago that straight stretch of water between Okanagan and Skaha Lakes used to be a meandering water course creating wonderful wetlands. Because of flooding, this water course has been changed and wetlands lost. We are now realizing the value of wetland areas, so we are trying to recreate some wetlands.

Next I heard Dennis St. John's talk on " Butterflies and People," and the value of the proposed South Okanagan National Park, which is meeting a lot of opposition from ranchers and residents.

After a coffee break, we heard a local historian, Randy Manuel, who had been born into a Penticton pioneer family. Much of the talk was about the Indian Reservation and the destruction of the wetlands around the Okanagan River. Man has controlled nature quite successfully. There are no longer floods, but there are many other losses.

In the afternoon, I joined the group going to Vaseaux Lake led by Carl MacNaughton who is Okanagan Land Manager for Nature Trust. He also has roots in the area. We followed a steep valley up from mid lake, where a fire had spread rapidly through the tree tops to a wide area above the valley. The fire had been triggered by an electrical spark from the power lines, when more power had surged through the lines when it was needed in Kelowna at the time of the fires in 2003. We looked at wild flowers and invasive plants and regeneration after the fire. On our Spring trip to Vaseaux Lake we had not known of this fire ravaged gully, or the nearby pictographs we went to look at, on another cliff face. Looking at the trip possibilities, after hearing the talks, I would have chosen to go on a Locatee Lands Walk with Richard Armstrong of the E'nowkin Cultural Centre, to explore rare and endangered Okanagan riparian Black Cottonwood habitat for birds, butterflies and wild flowers. Richard is a First Nations traditional knowledge keeper, and this area is normally closed to the public. Perhaps the fact that insect repellent was recommended was the deterrent.

Eva Durance played piano at a Friday evening wine and cheese social, before Dick Canning talked about his book "An Enchantment of Birds."

On Saturday morning, I chose to go early morning birding with a group to Shingle Creek, off the Green Mountain Road, the route to Apex. On this trip we saw 5 baby coyotes, but I was only able to get two in my telephoto picture.

There were other Saturday morning trips which I'm sure other NONCers enjoyed. I attended the Director's meeting. BC Nature had to move to another building. They are now in the Heritage Building on Mt. Seymour Road in Deep Cove, North Vancouver. Bev Ramey and Maria Hamann spent a lot of time and energy on that move.



Baby coyotes - Photo: Pam Jenkins

Last year BC Nature experienced their first deficit for a long time, because of the move, fewer grants and bequeaths and less sources of income. Therefore our fees will have to increase by \$2.00 for each member and \$5.00 for individual/solitary members, not what anyone wanted, but it has to be.

There were no organized trips in the afternoon. Everyone was encouraged to attend the AGM. All the resolutions passed with some clarification. Summarised briefly as follows:

1. that BC Nature establish a Natural Values Commission with powers similar to the ALR.
2. that BC Nature try to prevent urban sprawl and resorts when new developments are proposed.
3. that BC Nature reject outright the proposal to build a ski/golf resort north of Squamish.
4. that BC Nature make a statement about economic growth and support a steady state economy.
5. that BC Nature oppose any dumping in Howe Sound.
6. that BC Nature and First Nations instigate a National Park study.

Of course there were a lot more details and discussion about each of these issues.

The Saturday evening banquet was excellent, followed by guest speaker, Chris Burton, a research scientist at the White Lake Observatory. His talk "You are a Node of the Universe" explained how in the end, we are all everything and nothing.

On Sunday morning I'd thought I'd go on Dennis St. John's butterfly trip, but it was pouring rain, so the trip didn't happen. Instead I joined Anthea Bryan and another guy from the Island to drive up to Max lake, where Jim was setting up a microscope so we could observe pond life. We first drove beyond the end of the lake to a place where Jim and Anthea knew of some rare yellow lady's slipper in bloom. I stood under my umbrella to take pictures. We also looked at birds, mostly red winged blackbirds. Back at Jim's station we looked through the microscope at various wriggly things. He told us what they were. Then he used a tape and we walked on a trail through the rushes. He called out a virginia rail. I was amazed to see the bird crawling out of the rushes. At another wet place he called out a sora rail.



Brave naturalists under the rain - Photo: Pam Jenkins

Anthea drove the other guy back to his family. I ended up having lunch with Jim and Anthea at their place next to another part of the Indian Reserve high on the hillside. The rain stopped, so we were able to go for a lovely walk around the hillside with lovely views of Penticton and Skaha Lake, before I drove home.

PHOTO GALLERY

Do you have a special photo
- flora, fauna and
natural sites only -

taken in the Okanagan that you would like
to share on the NONC website?

Please submit your photo (jpeg) and a brief
description to photos@nonc.ca

Newspacket needs a new Editor...

Anyone interested?

Let us know

Call Régine: 250-558-0445

or Kay: 250-542-3977 (eves)

NONC Summer Camp - Creston area, August 7-14 2008**Pamela Jenkins**

At least 14 people had indicated interest in a summer camp. In the end we were only six.

On Thursday August 7, Robyn and I drove to Creston via Grand Forks and the Kootenay Pass. We set up our tents at Scotties RV and Campground below the Columbia brewery, where they make Kokanee beer. Ron and Evelin had booked into the Valley View Motel to which John and Gretta later transferred, from their motel with a pool.

For our first outing, we drove to the Creston Wildlife Centre. There is a parking spot on the road and a wooden walkway across the marshes. Near the building a telescope was focused on an osprey nest.

Robyn had done all the preparation for this trip and had arranged a guided canoe trip later. We walked on some of the dykes and ended up at an old four storey lookout tower. We had seen cedar waxwings, eastern kingbirds, and song sparrows. We had time to eat our lunches back at the centre before the canoe trip.

We were given life jackets and paddles before the six of us piled into one canoe. The guide sat at the back and steered the boat through a narrow channel among the reeds. Some of the water was covered with yellow water lilies, some duck weed and various reeds. We saw several types of grebes, various ducks, blue herons, and red winged blackbirds. Craig, our guide, fished some black bullhead catfish in a clear tub to show us before releasing them. There were also painted turtles.

After the canoe ride, Robyn and I drove north to Duck Lake and onto a dyke separating the rough lake from a calmer bird nesting area. Here we saw more American white pelicans, grebes and a bald eagle.



Photo: Pam Jenkins

Saturday was John and Gretta's move day, so they did not come on the walk around the dykes, north of the highway. We passed a lovely derelict old cabin with moss covered roof. It was very hot. The dykes wandered back and forth across the wetlands. There was a new one storey lookout tower, before we continued back under the road to where our cars were parked. The Dewdney and Trans Canada trails pass through this area.

On Sunday we chose to hike the Balancing Rock Trail on Creston Mountain to the West of, and overlooking the wetlands. It took us about 40 mins to hike up to a plank bench at a first viewpoint overlooking the wetlands in an open meadow area. The trail guide had suggested a shorter time. We continued on to the Balancing Rock and took photos. The trail continued up a little way then went into a treed valley crossing a bog. Enormous skunk cabbage leaves lined Ralph's bridge, a long wooden walkway constructed through the wet area, with a route out to the Summit Creek campground, no longer in use on the highway. The trail had not been used recently, so when we explored a bit on our return, we did not try to follow it. After the jungle like area, the trail climbed up steeply to another rocky outlook point, where we stopped for lunch and pictures. The group decided not to go to the Creston Mountain summit. It was another 3 kilometres of steep forested trail and we would not have seen much more. On the return trip, just below this lookout point Gretta had noticed Indian pipe. We stopped to look and found other nearby patches, some with pink tinged heads, before it bends over.

The next day, we hiked the Lady's Slipper trail on the North East side of the valley. We left highway 3A north of Creston on the Lakeview Arrow Creek Road, ending up fairly high on Goat Mountain Forest Service gravel road. We signed the trail register at the start of the trail and continued steeply up, reaching wonderful huckleberry patches. We passed a large glacial erratic boulder deposited years ago, before we reached a lovely viewpoint looking West over Duck Lake, and we could also see the South end of Kootenay Lake and the Kootenay River below. There were more steep patches before reaching the summit cairns of Goat Mountain, also called Arrow Mountain, and more huckleberry patches.



Bear Grass - Photo: Pam Jenkins

Robyn's trail guide suggested we follow the track east and a bit lower to a lookout spot over the Goat River. Walking to the viewpoint we met some people on 4 track vehicles out picking the huckleberries. They must have used a different access route. Our lunch spot near the huckleberry patches was overlooking the Goat River Valley and Mt. Thomson with communication towers on top. That could have been another trip, but the guide book suggested the access was very demanding.

The following day Tuesday was our last hike together, as people had made other plans. John drove us all except Ron, who went off to play golf with friends, to the top of the Kootenay Pass, Stag Leap Park. We hiked the North side of Bridal Lake and followed a trail up Cornice Ridge, which was not clearly marked. I knew we'd missed it when the trail started to descend again towards the

lake. Our rewards were the views and the wonderful displays of Bear Grass, which does not grow much further north. We have tow head baby or Western Anemone, but Bear Grass is in the lily family. The trail led up to a snow monitoring/avalanche structure, although we left our packs at a level spot below it. We continued on to the summit cairn, where we had views all around.

That evening we had our farewell banquet at the Break in Time restaurant, where they served excellent ethnic and interesting food. We thanked Robyn for her preparations and decided that next year we could try to have more discussions about how to organize such an outing. John, Gretta, Ron and Evelin were leaving the next morning.

On Wednesday morning, Robyn and I went over to the brewery to have pictures taken with the sasquatch as we'd seen other tourists do. We ended up on a tour of the plant. Then we went to an interesting new winery called the Skimmerton winery, where we had lunch, before finding the Goat River Canyon, then driving south through areas where the Bountiful Community is located. Driving back to camp after a souvenir/gift stop at an Indian museum/gift shop, we stopped to cool off at some sandy beaches along the Goat River.

On Thursday we drove home. We went to the Creston Museum. It turned out to be a very special day for them: they were celebrating Anne of Green Gables. Many people were in costume and they had costumes for people to use if they chose. In the school house, a school ma'am was instructing arithmetic and spelling. Anne and Gilbert were both in class. In the dispensary a nurse was making mustard, flour and hot water poultices for chest and cold problems, apparently very effective. There were old cars, a trapper's cabin, a model train display, all made more interesting by our enthusiastic guide.

Next stop was the old store at Sirdah, which was purchased by one family in 1964. It has not changed much since then, and hadn't changed then from when it was built in 1908. We ate our lunch among the mosquitoes at the North end of Duck Lake. Got to the ferry in time, but there was too much traffic ahead of us, so we had a 50 minute wait. We reached Ainsworth about 4.30pm. I find those waters very therapeutic, so we had to stop and soak. Robyn drove us to Nakusp for a late supper at the historic Leland Hotel on the Lake. We just caught the last Needles ferry and got home before midnight after a great holiday.

On the trip: John and Gretta McDougall, Ron Perrier and Evelin Kryvor, Robyn Thornton, Pamela Jenkins.

RESEARCH REVIEW 14**Malcolm Martin**

As the impact of climatic alteration varies geographically this study was devised to examine changes reported for different regions of the Pacific Northwest (including BC) over the last century. Three zones were used to divide the area – maritime, central, and Rockies. Trends during the 20th Century showed that increases in temperature and precipitation exceeded global averages with the largest warming rate being in the maritime zone in winter, and the smallest increase in the Rockies during autumn.

For precipitation, the largest increase was in the dry areas of north-east Washington and south-central BC over the spring season. Significantly higher precipitation was evident also during summer in both central and Rockies zones.

The warming observed in winter and spring were attributed partly to climatic variations over the Pacific Ocean with the build up of greenhouse gases probably also playing an important role. These trends were considered to have had profound impacts already on streamflow and on certain plant species in the region. (*Trends in Temperature and Precipitation in the Pacific Northwest During the Twentieth Century : P.W Mote*)

How this plays out on individual species is receiving closer investigation by other researchers. In order to examine the record through the 20th Century one study was made correlating climatic data with growth by Lodgepole Pine at different elevations in the North Cascades of Washington, just below the International border. Choice of this location gave access to daily weather information from two nearby climate stations as well as snowpack data, to which was added larger scale information on the El Nino/Southern Oscillation and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (a sort of larg-tern El Nino influence).

Trees were cored and rings measured to the nearest 0.01 mm to give a detailed and close correlation to the year to year weather as well as to longer trends. As the study above showed, temperature and precipitation in the Pacific Northwest have increased more than global averages, a trend likely to continue in the future. Summers will probably continue warmer and drier, winters warmer and wetter than at present, a lower snowpack because more falls as rain, and a longer growing period. Strangely these factors lead to different effects according to elevation.

Growth by Lodgepole Pine at middle and low elevations was found to be reduced by high growing-season temperatures and and low precipitation, so warmer and drier summers will deplete winter rainfall faster and cause tree stress. Growth at high elevations on the other hand were found to be limited by low temperatures and deep spring snowpack. Deep snow insulates soil and keeps it below the threshold for growth, so warmer temperatures will reduce snow depth faster, raise soil temperatures causing a longer growing season. In these simple explanations can be seen how trees adjust to changing conditions by a rise or fall of regional tree lines. (*Growth-climate relations of Lodgepole Pine in the North Cascades National Park, Washington, M.J. Case and D.L. Peterson*)

Young Naturalists' Club**Régine Pasquier**

The YNC-North Okanagan continued to meet twice a month all summer long. Although the attendance varied a lot (from 12 members to 1), it is always a very rewarding experience. We went to Kingfisher for the release of the salmon fry, we visited the Seymours' farm, we observed wild flowers and invasive weeds, we had a treasure hunt and a pond study...

Our new leader, Kathy Smith, joined us for some of these outings. We are happy to welcome her!

Izabella, Lydia and Sarah show the seeds they have collected from a Goat's Beard head. They stuck them on tapes and counted them. One head gave 36 seeds.

Photo: Régine Pasquier

