
North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

NEWSPACKET



October 2009, Volume 36, No. 3

President	Pam Jenkins	545-0490
Past President	Ray Arlt	542-2058
Vice-President		
Secretary	Kay Bartholomew	542-3977
Treasurer	George Wilson	558-0374
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	Gail Loughridge	545-7455
	Erin Nelson	545-6878
	Denis Seymour	542-9670
	Lyn Smith	542-6520
	Judy Stockdale	1-250-838-6605
Adopt-A-Road	Ray Arlt	542-2058
Conservation	Bill Image	503-1404
EAC-City of Vernon	Vivian Merchant	549-2913
Education	Wendy Hooke	545-9149
FBCN Delegate	Pam Jenkins	545-0490
	(sub) Peter Blokker	545-8297
LRMP	Erin Nelson	545-6878
Newspacket		
Newspaper Articles:	Ray Arlt;	542-2058
Programs;	Peter Stockdale	1-250-838-6605
Public Relations	Ray Arlt	542-2058
Refreshments	Ann Langer	1-250-547-6153
	Ginny McLean	542-9948
Socials	Kay Bartholomew	542-3977
Telephone List	Robyn Thornton	549-2714
Trips;	Pam Jenkins	545-0490
Tea/Coffee	Adam Moss	558-4775
Ways & Means		
Young Naturalists	Kathy Smith	558-1647
Birding;	Peter Mayfield	549-8478
Bluebird Trails	Margaret Hubble	542-2712
Botany	Margaret Hubble	542-2712
Entomology	Phil Jones	549-1596
Hummingbird Project	Gail Loughridge	545-7455
Land Stewardship	Ann Langer	1-250-547-6153
Bishop Wildbird Sanctuary	Erin Nelson	542-5122
Swan Lake Project	Lyll Webster	275-2661
Website	Keith Bowman	1-250-546-9475

NORTH OKANAGAN NATURALISTS' CLUB



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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 Newspanet 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)

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 \$35.00
Family \$50.00

BIRDING

- Sunday Oct.4th
- Saturday Oct.10th
- Sunday Oct.18th
- Saturday Oct.24th
- Sunday Nov.1st



Meet 9:00 AM – Performing Arts Centre Parking Lot

Cover: 3 great horned owl fledglings from a nest off Buchanan Rd. that came out to play and hunt with the adults every evening during the summer. They tolerated all the neighbourhood attention and we were sorry when they had to leave. *Bill Image*

Next Meeting:

November 4th: Election night. Margaret and Pam will be showing slides of the club trips.

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

SEPTEMBER 2ND "MEETING" AT SWAN LAKE *Bill Image*

At 10.00 on another warm sunny morning a "walk-about" meeting was held at the Swan Lake Nature Reserve. Attending were: Bill Image, Pam Jenkins, Jim Bodkin, Gail Loughridge, Bob & Joyce Hebbert, Margaret Hubble, Greta McDougal, Adam Moss, Jack & Lyn Smith, Robyn Thornton, Ann Davis.

Bill served as representative of the Swan Lake Committee to bring the group up to date with development on the site and point out various features. The walk started just west of the weir into part of the "north west" plantation. This is the driest area of the riparian zone surrounding Swan Lake Creek and features mostly Ponderosa Pines, some of which have been there for over 2 years and others were transplanted from John Baumbrough's farm this spring. In spite of being regularly watered by club volunteers, this area, as with the other plantations, has suffered about 50% attrition in the transplant process and subsequent acclimatization.

On the west boundary of the pine plantings is the old hay barn compound with an overgrown berm on the west side where a coyote has made a den. However today there was no evidence that the den is being used, although tracks found in the snow confirmed that it was used last winter.

The group then walked back past the weir, where Bill described how adding and removing the stop logs controls the level of the lake. The operation of the weir is under the responsibility of the Fisheries but the actual procedure is quite disorganized and the Committee has again recently brought this to the attention of GVS and Ducks Unlimited.

Moving on towards the highway, the farm road is bordered by tall lush growth of cattails, reeds and grasses on one side and the overgrown drainage ditch shaded by a row of cottonwood trees on the other. Most of the blackbirds have left and it was unusually quiet.

Just before the road climbs up to beside the highway overpass, a culvert diverts drainage from the Walmart/Rona shopping complex under the farm road into the field to form a new wetland habitat. The constant flow of water keeps an open pond even in the depths of winter, and is much enjoyed by the ducks. This habitat improvement was initiated by the Committee 2 years ago.

After giving a fine view of the reserve and lake to the north, the road descends to follow the rail tracks past the lower meadow hayfields to BX creek. Along the way Margaret helped us to identify various plants and examples of invasive weeds. A small number of vesper sparrows, doves, quail were seen while flocks of unidentified birds rushed from place to place, a heron rose from the creek heading for the lake and a lone red tailed hawk patrolled the skies. Along this route you also get a good appreciation of the new trees planted by club volunteers now growing along Swan Lake Creek.

At BX creek we entered the trail at the old field gate and walked along the trickle of a creek until the resident Great Horned Owl showed himself just east of the bridge. This time the size of the group must have made him more nervous than usual as he took off and hid in the delta willows. At the bridge Bill explained that the Committee was going to discourage people from using the old trail to the "beach" as this would create a distraction for wildlife observation from the blind, and the area should be part of a wildlife refuge in the overall plan.

Crossing to the north side of the creek the group found the narrow trail through the thick willow shoots and reeds to the bird blind, and there enjoyed the beautiful view of the lake and birds while having lunch. At 12.30 everyone made their way home.

FIELD DAY & DINNER; Saturday, May 9th. *Kay Bart*

At 9:00 A.M. groups met out at the Kin Race Track Parking lot. Trip leaders; Ray with the hikers, Peter Blokker with the birders and Margaret Hubble with the Plants. We were lucky to have the permission of Barbara Anderson to use her land below Goose Lake Range. It was unbelievable how the sunflowers covered the range. I have never seen them so thick and heavy.

At noon we met in a treed corner for lunch.

At about 1:15 P.M. out came the 'pencils and paper' for the annual Nature Trail" quiz which had been laid out by Ray and Margaret. It was hard struggling through the very long grass that had been bent over by the recent heavy rain. BUT, what a day! It was great fun.

At 5:00 P.M. some of us met at the Prestige Inn to set-up for dinner. 5:30 P.M. was "Happy Hour" when we could buy our drinks for \$3.00..with George and Jennine minding the Bar.

At 6:00 P.M. our Guest Speaker, Wayne Campbell from Victoria, arrived from Vancouver! It was nice to see him again. At 6:00 P.M. Bob Hebbert, our emcee, called everyone to order and Tim Jackson gave us a little tale from a Robert Bateman book! "Lots" were drawn and dinner began. During dinner Bob kept the members in constant merriment as he recited his many 'stories'!

At 7:00 P.M. the three trip leaders were called up to give reports on their morning activities. This was followed by the Nature Trail results at which Margaret went over the questions and gave the proper answers. Peter Mayfield won the 'Best Poem' prize, and David Pitt-Brooke won the main prize. Good for him! Ann and Kay followed with the second best poems. Well, we tried!

Our guest speaker, Wayne, was introduced by Peter Blokker. His topic was described as "No more myths of fact or fiction". (answers to common questions about birds). Needless to say it was very entertaining as well as informative. Many of us remember his lectures from many years ago.

At 9:30 P.M. we were out of the hall! Thank you to all who gave their time to make this special day as great as it was. The weather surely helped! Thank you to Jo (flowers), Ann (prizes), Joyce (hostess), Bob (emcee), Peter for numerous tasks, Tim, George and Jennine.

2009 BLUEBIRD REPORT *Margaret Hubble*

This 2009 spring and summer season 14 Nestbox trails were monitored by at least 32 people. Another 10 NONC members were available to help with trail monitoring and I'm hoping that next year they will again volunteer and perhaps even take on a trail of their own. We are still looking for willing and able volunteers to take on some Bluebird Trails.

Here are the Nestbox Count Totals from our summer trail monitors. These results are sent to SIBTS (The Southern Interior Bluebird Trails Society).

Western Bluebird:	nested in 36 boxes	laid 248 eggs	198 hatched	192 fledged
Mountain Bluebird:	nested in 15 boxes	laid 78 eggs	53 hatched	46 fledged
Tree Swallow :	nested in 78 boxes	laid 404 eggs	345 hatched	331 fledged
Violet-Green Swallow:	nested in 9 boxes	laid 17 eggs	15 hatched	15 fledged
House Wren:	nested in 27 boxes	laid 136 eggs	118 hatched	113 fledged

From these totals it isn't hard to see that the survival rate isn't 100%. Both species of Bluebirds have a difficult time raising successful broods of young. This is possibly due to their early arrival in spring with cold weather and a poor food supply.

The best areas for Western Bluebirds is the Commonage. Ray Arlt's Bluebird trail from Rose's Pond to Predator Ridge had 10 Western Bluebirds nesting with 69 fledgings! Other Western Bluebird trails in the Commonage also did well. The fact that so many Western Bluebirds are nesting in this area indicates that the area should have a priority for being protected from future development.

The total BC Western Bluebird Count results in 2008 were 739 Western Bluebirds fledged. We can work to increase our totals over the next few years by increasing the numbers of trails, pairing more boxes on the trails, and making attempts to deal with the predation of eggs and young from nestboxes.

A new trail on the top of Middleton Mountain surprised me by having Tree Swallows nest and so next year we will pair each of the boxes and hope for some Bluebirds. A few reports indicated that snakes had been at work in some of the boxes with whole clutches of eggs disappearing. Also in 2 instances on one trail the box door was opened and eggs and nest were gone. This is a mystery as it is on private property where other humans wouldn't be found.

We had a problem with ant predation in one Western Bluebird nestbox. After an initial cold start where the Bluebird pair took a long time to build and lay their eggs the female finally began to sit on 6 eggs. Ants invaded about this time and the female had to leave the nest. The ants were dealt with a week later (human intervention!) and the female resumed sitting on the eggs. However, only one egg hatched. The parents spoiled this little nestling and he soon grew big and fat with all the food they fed him. When he fledged the 3 of them left the area presumably fed up with the whole experience.

Monitoring the nestboxes weekly is extremely important. Although there are all kinds of natural cavities for birds to nest in which are never monitored, still, the act of setting out a nestbox carries with it a responsibility to monitor and maintain it. We need to keep the boxes in good repair as cracks in the wood or leaky roofs can cause the death of young birds in cold wet conditions. Ants and wasps can force parents to abandon their eggs or young hatchlings and other predators can get into the boxes as well. We all feel bad when we do find a predated box either with eggs suddenly missing, or dead young in the box.

Monitoring also lets us keep on top of House Sparrow invasions. A Bluebird Trail with nestboxes full of House Sparrows should be dismantled.

The Trail Monitors had a difficult summer to do their weekly checks. The many weeks of hot and smoky days made it downright unpleasant at times. I'd like to thank everyone for persevering and doing such a great job week after week. Monitoring a Bluebird Trail does have it's rewards and to quote Sherry Linn, the President of the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society to whom we send our Bluebird Total Count:

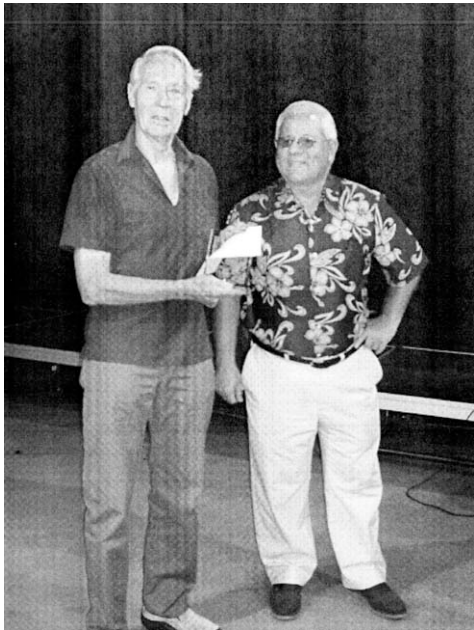
"This is one of the most simple and rewarding conservation initiatives you can undertake and it is sure to open your hearts and minds to the plight of all cavity nesting bird species as well as to the overall state of the environment in your corner of the world."

The Young Naturalist group had a couple of wonderful outings this past summer. The group continues to grow and numbers about fifteen children and the same number of adults at each outing.



The June outing for the YNC was a treat as we were visitors to the Stockdale Farm just outside of Enderby. With a little sun, some rain showers and even some lightning the kids were able to watch sheep dogs in action, meet some baby lambs, chicks and mice (!) along with the Stockdale's watch dogs. We also did a hike through the Stockdale farm where the young naturalists were able to practice some of the survival skills that the kids had learned at their Search and Rescue 'Hug a Tree' workshop they had done on June 3. We were able to peruse some of the amazing gardens and interesting tree orchards the Stockdale's maintain, including strawberries, native plants, herbs, a nut orchard and a sea buckthorn orchard. Overall a very interesting, productive and busy outing!

In July, we had a scavenger hunt and hike at BX Falls. The weather was beautiful and everyone had a great time identifying a variety of wild plants; the stinging nettles and wild ginger were particular hits. Ray Arlt's knowledge was particularly appreciated! We ended with a picnic and a refreshing dip at the fall.



In September, we have a presentation led by the Department of Fisheries at Kingfisher Interpretative Centre near Enderby. They have promised us a great afternoon, with fish viewing, lots of learning about fishy matters, and a tour of the native kekuli on the site.

A CELEBRATION *Kay Bartholomew*

Saturday, May 30th, was SENS third Green Enviro-Fair, held at the Vernon Rec. Centre.

This was the kick-off for Environment Week. Groups were asked to provide displays that promote sustainability. We put in our Swan Lake Project. The City and NORD presented various awards. We had received a notice advising us of seven special awards being given. We decided to enter Malcolm Martin's name for the 'invasive plants control' award. Kay and Vivian Merchant spent several hours looking up information in our records and 'google'. We wrote three and one half pages about Malcolm's work and were very impressed with what we found. Eventually we were notified that Malcolm would be receiving the award but they wanted a picture of him. We had hoped to keep this as a surprise but this was not possible as Ray was sent over to take the photo. During all these antics we were notified the Club was also receiving an award re water and wetland conservation for our Swan Lake Project. To this day we don't know who nominated us, but, of course, we

were very pleased.

About ten members attended the Awards Ceremonies. We had hoped for a better attendance! Afterwards Kay had arranged a small 'celebration' for the Swan Lake project members and some of Malcolm's friends. During this affair we presented Bill Image with a Gift Certificate for an Allan Brooks painting for all his work at Swan Lake and a parting gift, as he will eventually be moving to the coast.

Also, at the celebration, Norbert Maertens presented Malcolm with a large bouquet of what looked like 'purple loosestrife' wrapped in a black and white striped shawl, marked "PLO"...do you get the reference? Norbert's sense of humour was greatly appreciated.

It was a successful day. We appreciate all the work these individuals have done for our Club. It was great to see Carol Martin out to our events again.

BC NATURE FALL GENERAL MEETING SEPT.10 – 13. *Pamela Jenkins*

I arrived in the Pender Harbour area just after noon. Checked into my accommodation at the Pender Harbour Resort and had no scheduled activities until 5:00 pm. I drove a bit further north, past the Iris Griffith Interpretative Centre

parking area and took the road East towards Egmont. There is a parking lot on the highway for the trail to Skookumchuk Narrows, over 4 kilometres by a trail, through the lush coastal forest. It seemed to take forever to get there, although it was less than an hour to reach a further point where kayaks were stacked against a rack in the trees, and the tide rips over the rocks. I hurried back to the junction and then walked out to a viewpoint. There were several other people there. I assumed they must be BC Nature people, but when I asked they were from many places. The evening speaker was a Dr. Michael Jackson who was very excited about the Centre, for which he was partly responsible. It had been ecologically constructed with solar panels to create energy. He was also excited about a newly discovered stickleback species.

Early morning birding on Friday was led by a birder from Oyster Bay. He took us to the Kleindale beaver marshes, where I saw a hairy woodpecker through a telescope and also saw yellow warblers, a stellar jay, robins and various flycatchers. The host took us back to his place with a magnificent deck and garden overlooking the Bay. His wife had made muffins and provided us with a lovely breakfast.

The first morning lecture was given by a Dr. John Field who spoke of establishing a Provincial park in the Caren Range. After a coffee break, Dr. Michelle Evelyn talked about the biological history of turtles, then told us a lot about painted turtles.

The third speaker was Dr. Dolph Schluter from UBC, expanding on Darwin's Origin of Species ideas, by the introduction of gene theory, and suggesting how new definitions have evolved.

He explained more about the new stickleback species.

After lunch I joined the group going to Francis Point and traveled with some Vancouver delegate friends made at a previous meeting. A Parks person joined us with a stuffed marbled murrelet, a sea bird that has rarely been seen because it is very shy, but is also part of the reason for the establishment of this park, because it is ideal habitat for them. We did see a pair of these rare birds swimming in the bay. I hiked along the cliffs, and turned back when called by the others.

I chose not to go to the evening BBQ, but ate my own food in my seaside cottage. Later I made the 1/2 hour drive back to the Centre, where I first joined a group walking around the re-established wetlands and marsh. The area had become a market garden until it was purchased to become the Interpretative Centre. Now it is being restored to its original state.

After the walk we changed with the other group and went inside to learn more about the way the solar panels generate enough power to keep the place self sustaining for all but a very few winter months.

The early morning birding on Saturday, behind the Centre to a wetland near Ruby Lake and below a power line, was disappointing in that we only saw one bird, a rosy crowned kinglet, although we did hear some chirping and twittering. On Saturday morning I went to the director's meeting held in a large marquee at the lower level by the Iris Griffith Centre. The Young Naturalists with a new coordinator met upstairs. The lower level was used to display silent auction items. Many things were discussed and the issue of insurance for club trips came up. We could now be able to sign something for a whole year, and have visitors sign and join for a day if they would like to participate in any of our activities. Directors were treated to an interesting lunch with sandwiches, various wraps, fruit and cakes and tarts. The General meeting in the fall is a time to hear about other clubs' activities. We also learned of a new strategic plan for BC Nature over the next 5 years, about the loss of Park Interpretation programs. Important Bird Areas, and the Breeding Bird Atlas. I drove back to the Pender Harbour Resort cottage to change for the evening banquet, which was held at Madeira Park.

After eating and award presentations, the evening speaker was Briony Penn, whose talk was about the Value of Nature, and how we can now attach monetary value to Nature Conservation. An example she gave was that of preserving existing wetlands, instead of spending large sums of money to create new ones to absorb some of our toxicants.

There were some Sunday morning trips, but I decided to travel back to Burnaby for the afternoon.

SWAN LAKE NATURE RESERVE

Bill Image

Thanks to all those who have entered observations in the bird blind log. Keep it up, and don't be dismayed if you find the page with your sightings missing one day as we will be removing pages from time to time to enter the data into permanent records.

Thanks to Lyall for re-cutting the trail along BX creek so that we can all enjoy the walk to the bridge and on to the blind. Please note that we would like everyone to just use the cut trail and leave the delta and "beach" area undisturbed. Additional fence posts, flagging tape and a sign have been installed to advise everyone at the old fence line just past the bridge. The best views of the lake and wildlife are now at the blind - where we also offer the least disturbance.

City contractors will soon be starting work on a back-channel and pond leading off the south side of BX creek and into the field. This is part of the larger upstream BX creek enhancement project announced in January, and the work on



the reserve is expected to be completed by the end of October. Once this is done, NONC and GVS will finalize the formal BX trail and hopefully get this started as well.

We are preparing all the young trees and shrubs for another winter, and the Committee would like to thank the watering teams who have looked after the hundreds of plantings that are now visibly changing the landscape along Swan Lake Creek. The watering volunteers are: Kay Bart and Ray Art, Ed and Barb Miyasaki, Adam Moss, Peter Blokker and Andy & Marilyn Buehler with assistance from Bob Hebbert, Jack & Lyn Smith, Fred & Ina Wisse, Erin Nelson and Denis Seymour.

The Committee would like a volunteer to take on the responsibility for the bird boxes on the reserve. The existing ones should be cleaned out, numbered and then monitored next year so that we can keep proper records. Noted this summer was the first nest in our new trees – a marsh wren used one of our willows to raise its family! See photo.

HUMMING BIRD PROJECT – SEASON SUMMARY

Gail Loughridge

The Hummingbird Banding Project this year was certainly different from past years. A lot of difference things happened and the numbers of birds captured was down from previous years.

We started the season as usual at the beginning of May going to both the Boyd's and Paul's. However, we were unable to continue at the Boyd's. At the Paul's we were asked not to band female Calliope's for the first month, as they are very fragile. They are our smallest hummingbird and carrying eggs.

We hosted the Hummingbird Workshop here in Vernon on June 5-6-& 7th. And it was a very successful Workshop. We had excellent attendance and were lucky to get the Tekmar Audio Room for our workshops. Many club members and non-club members hosted out of town participates for which everyone was very appreciative. We went to a variety of sites to band but unfortunately, the hummingbirds did not cooperate very well, and we had very small numbers at all our sites. However, I like to think everyone went home enthused.

We continued banding through the middle of July at various sites around the valley. But had to stop on the last weekend in July, as we could not go to the Paul's because of the Terrace Mountain Fire.

However, we did band 158 Calliope, 56 Rufuos and 1 Blackchin. We had 22 recaptured birds from previous years including one at the Paul's we captured in May that I had banded in May of 2004. That was exciting. We captured 237 hummingbirds in all. We saw many more birds than we banded, probably about 1,000. As safety and health precautions were of the utmost concern, we let more go free before we had bands on them.

I would like to thank all of my banding volunteers, all the host sites and billeting sites for their extraordinary effort for this year. Without every one of you we could not have pulled this enormous project off.

We are finished for this year but look forward to next year and hope that many more of you will join us in this worthwhile and fun activity.

TRIP TO MARGARET'S CABIN SEPT.18TH *Pamela Jenkins*

Margaret Hubble had kindly invited us out to her cabin one Thursday and seven of us finally got there. Her Okanagan Lake cabin is on Indian reserve land off Westside Road.

She first led us on a slow meandering walk past other cottages in a Northerly direction. We peeked at a yellow warbler's nest near the cabin, saw blackheaded grosbeaks, robins and warblers flitting in and out of the bushes. We also saw a dusky flycatcher.

Little buttercups, with tiny yellow flower head heads and water-cress grew around a creek that crosses in a pipe under the road. Further on we crossed through a gap in a hedge noticing lots of poison ivy carefully avoiding the three leaves.

Next we came to an open beach with no cottages allowing us to stand near the water under a pine tree. Some tracks led back from the lake where we found another nest in the foliage, which was well hidden and difficult to see or photograph. Another v shaped nest in a fork in some branches could have been an oriole's nest.

Back at the cabin we ate our lunches outside by the lake. Although some had brought swim togs, it was cloudy and no one chose to try the water. Margaret had more nests to show us. There were newly hatched babies in the yellow warbler's nest. Nearby a catbird was guarding her nest with blue eggs. Another nest was too high for us to peek inside or take a picture. A robin was making a great fuss, so we crept away. Margaret knew of another robin's nest with babies that were being fed.

Not far away there was a lakeside property with a very lovely garden and humming bird feeders. We were delighted to see calliope humming birds, and lastly a rufous humming bird came to feed. Back at the cabin. a sapsucker was pecking away on a branch.

On the trip were: Murray Freeman, Wendy Hooke, Margaret Hubble., Pamela Jenkins, Greta MacDougal, Robyn Thornton, Lyn Smith,

MABEL LAKE and SHUSWAP FALLS *Lyn Smith*

On Saturday August 22nd ten Noncers set out for a day of fun at Mabel Lake. It was another sunny summer Okanagan day.

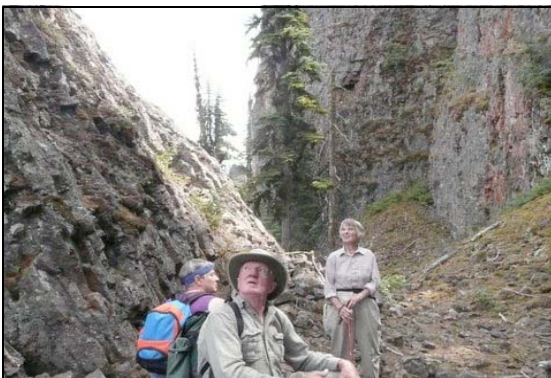
Attending were Ginny and Don McLean, Pam Jenkins, Robyn Thornton, Betty Kerr, Betty's neighbour Nelson, Ann Langer, Daphne Manning, Gail Loughridge, and myself Lyn Smith.

We set out from the Priest Valley parking lot at 9:30 A.M, met Ann Langer in Lumby, then carried on to Shuswap Falls where we stopped for a little sightseeing, a little birding [birds were scarce] and photo ops. We arrived at Mabel Lake shortly after 11 A.M.

As it was a bit early for lunch those of us who were hungry had a quick snack before we explored a nature trail there. Our walk took about an hour. Daphne stayed behind at the beach to soak up the atmosphere and savour her many memories there. We saw lots of Queen's Cup [past blooming] on the trail and we watched and listened for birds. Again not very many, but there was lots of talking as some of us had not been together for awhile. Nelson identified many of the trees for us - mainly White Pine and Red Cedar.

After enjoying our lunches most of us changed into swim suits and had a wonderful swim in the lake - some of us went in a couple of times - the water was gorgeous, though the lake was quite low. We very much enjoyed just relaxing and visiting on the beach as well. We departed around 2:30 P.M and enjoyed the drive back through that beautiful countryside.

Birds that were spotted or heard included Robins, Raven, Kestrel, Red Eyed Vireo, Redbreasted Nuthatch, Osprey, Pileated Woodpecker, and 6 Semi-palmated Plovers. How about it Noncers-shall we go again next year?



JULY HIKES

Pamela Jenkins

On Wednesday **July 15**, Ray Arlt led us on a trip up the Aberdeen Trail starting from the Sovereign Lake area to the top of Silver Star. A mother grouse followed by her babies crossed our path among the flowers. We had seen a similar grouse with babies this time last year. There were lots of lupins, some past their best, occasional red paintbrush, yarrow, pussy toes, veronica, stonecrop, arnica, buckwheat, foamflower, and a gooseberry bush to name a few. Eating our lunch among the sandwort that are small white flowers on slender stalks, we sat near the old fire lookout, which has been renovated and is now locked.

Walking through the meadows back to the Aberdeen trail we also saw

were elderberry bushes, western anemone in flower (not in tow head baby seed form), fireweed, and some yellow hawkweed.

There is one old original trail from times past and some snowshoe trails, which have been established more recently. On this trip were: Ray, Murray, Bob and Joyce, Wendy, Merry and Pam

A week later on **July 23**, John McDougall led us to the Aberdeen plateau, where he had been helping establish some snowshoe trails for next winter.

This area is in the woods beyond Bluenose. There were a few meadows and open spots, but all the views were obscured by the haze and smoke from the Terrace Mountain forest fire.

Lunch was eaten on the shores of a small pond that had some yellow waterlilies and various reeds along its shores. A mother golden eye duck trailed by her young family went up and down the lake opposite us. A few spots of rain cooled and cleared the air. We followed neat meandering trails through a replanted area and ended up on a lower track that led back to the up route, making a loop walk.

We were: John and Greta, Bob and Joyce, Margaret, Fred and Ina, Robyn, Merry, Murray, and Pam

The forest was tinder dry, temperatures high and lightning storms predicted so a scheduled hike to Yeoward to see wonderful alpine flowers was cancelled on the July 30, as several people felt it more prudent not to go.

OKANAGAN VALLEY BIRDING BOOKLET SALES UPDATE *Ray Arlt*

To date we have distributed approximately 220 booklets to eight (8) local vendors. When these sales are finalized we will have received over \$700.00.

The vendors are: Allan Brooks Nature Centre, Bookland, City Info Centre, Coles, Science Centre, Swan Lake Fruit Stand, K&K Book Store and the Vernon Museum.

Wildbird Tours

We have received a brochure about these tours for bird watchers. These are lead by three chaps with a goal to provide the experience of a lifetime – everytime! Their small groups means they can cater to all – from the casual birdwatcher to the serious twitcher!

Their address is:

1388 Marina Way, nanoose Bay, BC, V9P 9B8. Phone:

250-468-1728

www.wildbirdtours.ca

