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# THE HONKER



Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

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January 2010



**BEAVER (*Castor Canadensis*)** –submitted by Greg Tellier

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## South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

Mailing Address: PO Box 23050, Penticton, BC, V2A 8L7

Website: <http://www.members.tripod.com/~sonc/>

### Mission Statement:

"To provide a dynamic local focus for experiencing the natural world of B.C. and for promoting its conservation"

**Membership:** \$30 Individual \$40 Family (yearly – September to August)

- **Indoor meetings** are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, September to May (except for December) at 7:30 pm in the basement of the Penticton United Church, 696 Main Street (blue church on the corner of Main & Eckhardt). Please bring your own coffee mug ---- New members always welcome,
- **Executive meetings** are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Please contact any Executive member if you wish to add an item to the agenda.
- Our **birding, wildflower, geology, social group** meets every Thursday in the north parking lot of Cherry Lane Mall (north of Warren Ave. and east of Atkinson St.) at 9:00 AM. Be prepared to car pool and offer a donation to the driver (\$3 for local trips and more for longer trips). Trips range from 'car birding' to easy strolls to moderate hikes. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Everyone welcome! For more info, please contact Joyce Hogleund 250-492-0512 or hogleundj@telus.net
- **Field Trips** are generally made in the spring and fall. A list of forthcoming trips will be placed in the Honker. Notify the trip leader of your intention to participate and inquire about trip duration, degree of difficulty and other requirements. Dress for the prevailing weather conditions, wear appropriate footwear, bring lunch and drinking water". Pets are NOT appropriate.
- BC Nature (formerly Federation of BC Naturalists) is our parent society. SONC is affiliated with Nature Canada & Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance (OSCA)

### Executive Officers:

President: Bob Handfield, 250.497.8702  
bobnmarg@telus.net

Vice-President: Vacant

Past President: Vacant

Treasurer: Frank Focken, 250.496.4210  
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Secretary: Marlene Hikichi, 250.494.8731  
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### Directors:

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Lou Poncelet, 250.494.9454 poncehl@telus.net  
Dennis St. John, 250.498.6651 dsjohn@hotmail.com  
JimTurnbull, 250.496.4195 jim.turnbull@telus.net

### Newsletter Submission Dates:

The 15<sup>th</sup> of: January March June  
September and November

We welcome any nature-related articles (about 1/2 page in length), artwork/photos (both cover art & smaller pieces), poems or cartoons.

**Thanks** for your submissions!



**Please recycle** - pass the newsletter on to a friend



### Coordinators / Representatives:

Archivist: Jim Ginns, 250.492.9610 ginnsj@shaw.ca  
Conservation Committee:

Jim Bryan (for contact see Directors)

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Dennis St. John (for contact see Directors)

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South Okanagan Habitat Garden Joyce Hogleund,

Thursday Birding: Joyce Hogleund, 250.492.0512

hogleundj@telus.net

Front Cover: **BEAVER** –submitted by Greg Tellier

The beaver is found throughout BC. A talented architect that builds & customizes each home on lakes, rivers & streams near their main food source of aspen, willow, white birch or poplar trees.

<http://www.bceh.com/wildlife/beaver.htm>

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT - JANUARY 2010**

Happy New Year to all of you- may 2010 see your dreams fulfilled!

It is really hard to believe that it is already three and a half years since I was thrust into the president's position most unexpectedly. It has certainly been an interesting and busy time for me personally and I think for the Club as a whole.

I think the Club has some substantial accomplishments to our credit over the past 3 years and I would like to list those here as a reminder of what we've accomplished, both for new members and for those of us who sometimes forget what we've been doing.

A beautiful Okanagan Lake Waterfront interpretative sign was installed near the Art Gallery, the Okanagan Valley Birding Trail guide was published (together with the other Okanagan Valley Clubs) and a monthly column (Nature Wise) has been published for over a year now in the Penticton Western. All of these have been well received and have helped to substantially increase our profile in the community. Club sales of the Birding Trail guide are well past 950 copies including to birders in England, California, Quebec, Ontario and elsewhere.

We have increased the Ruth St John Memorial bursary from \$250 to \$500 annually and given important financial support to The Land Conservancy, BC Nature, Ducks Unlimited Canada, The South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program, The Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory and SORCO and we helped to sponsor the Summerland marsh interpretative sign. All the while we have maintained a healthy bank account while doing this.

We hosted a very successful BC Nature AGM – I think our meeting made more money than any recent AGM!

Club members have been active volunteers in the drive to establish a National Park in the South Okanagan Similkameen, in the recently formed Friends of the Observatory group as well as in other local conservation efforts. In addition the Club has written a number of letters on various conservation matters and made several presentations on such matters as well.

Unfortunately we have lost some valued members and friends but we have also gained a number of new members.

Finally, but no less important, Club members have been participating in fun events. We've had good turnouts to numerous Club outings, including overnight camping trips, overnight non-camping trips, day hikes, picnics, bird trips and work parties.

All in all, I think we can all be proud of what we've undertaken over the past three years and I would like to thank everyone, and especially the

Board, for being so supportive.

A special thank-you to Lou Poncelet who is retiring from the Board after innumerable years of service.

Beginning at the AGM in February we will have a new President and I trust you will all give Glenda Ross and the Board the same enthusiastic support you have given me. Doreen Olson has offered to join the Board so a really big thank you to Glenda and Doreen for stepping up to the plate.

☞ Bob Handfield – President ☞

## **SONC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & POTLUCK**

Our February meeting will, as usual, also constitute our Annual General Meeting. This will include election of the executive Board, reporting by the outgoing Board on past and on-going activities and a chance for all Club members to express their views on Club projects and what they would like to see happen over the coming months.

Nominations for office will be solicited at this AGM and nominations from the floor are encouraged. We need at least one more director and would like a Vice President. All members are encouraged to put their name forward for one or more positions. If you don't want to stand for election, please consider volunteering for a job. Please discuss with an executive at a meeting or phone between meetings.

In addition to doing the Club business, this is a fun night - with a potluck supper and an informal slide show. We will have both digital and standard slide projectors so bring some of your favourite slides and supper dishes and share them with your fellow naturalists. Please inform Anthea, our speaker coordinator, if you have slides to show, how long you need, and equipment required

Doors open at 5:30 PM and dinner will start at 6 Thursday, Feb 25, 2010 at our usual meeting place in the United Church.

## **MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, NOV. 26/09 PRESIDENT BOB HANDFIELD - CHAIR**

1. Sightings: A brown creeper and downy woodpecker among other birds seen that day.
2. Announcements: a) At the SOSCP meeting Doreen Olson received an award for her environmental involvement.  
b) Bob has finally made contact with Ironman Canada and the cheque for cleanup is in the mail.  
c) December 20 is Christmas bird count day for Penticton. Other count dates are in the Honker.
3. Anthea introduced our speaker Kindrie Grove. She had a beautiful presentation of her art work "A Brush With Wild Life."

4. Conservation Report: Jim Bryan has received a reply from MLA Barisoff's office to his 3 letters concerning off road vehicle licensing. The bill for licensing has passed in the legislature.

a. Jim Bryan has also written a letter to RDOS concerning the proposed rezoning of the Upper Carmi area, a Bighorn Sheep and associated species habitat area.

5. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting Jan. 28, 2010.

✍ Recording Secretary –Marlene Hikichi ✍

### **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT – JANUARY 2010**

A letter was sent to our MP Stockwell Day commending him and the government on its decision to help fund biosphere reserves in Canada for the next five years. Another letter was sent to RDOS objecting to a rezoning application which would affect habitat for mountain sheep in the Upper Carmi area. Please let me know if you would like to see a copy of these letters.

**RDOS RGS (Regional Growth Strategy):** Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen has made some revisions to this document over the summer and held public meetings in Oliver and Penticton December 8 and 9. It was very gratifying to see many SONC members at the Penticton meeting and to hear that several also attended the meeting in Oliver. President Bob Handfield was one of our members who spoke eloquently in favor of adopting the RGS. He also emphasized the importance of ecotourism to our area and its potential for expansion. Obviously these are important reasons for adopting RGS so that habitat for our flora and fauna has some protection.

**Shanker's Bend Dam:** Jim Turnbull reports that he has no new information about this proposed dam at present.

#### **South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP):**

SOSCP held its annual general meeting on November 25 and several members attended. SOSCP consists of about 47 partners, government and non-government organizations that promote conservation. We represent BC Nature and share our knowledge about conservation issues with the other partners. This past year is the first one where we also shared some of SONC's limited financial resources with SOSCP in order to recognize their valuable role and to help maintain momentum. We donated \$250 to SOSCP.

A summary of this year's accomplishments by partners in SOSCP will be written for our next Honker. For me the highlight of the SOSCP meeting was presentation of a conservation award to Doreen Olson for the many things she has done to advance

conservation in the South Okanagan and Similkameen. The following passage is quoted from the 2008-09 Annual Report of SOSCP:

#### **"Doreen Olson**

After a 30 year career with Air Canada, Doreen chose to come to the South Okanagan. Her leadership and entrepreneurial skills and love of the natural world have shaped her 'retirement'. Doreen operated a Bed and Breakfast for bird watchers, gaining accolades from clients and attention from the prestigious Small Planet Guide. She is a respected 15-year member of the South Okanagan Naturalist Club, assisting with many club activities and fundraising events as well as participating in Christmas Bird Counts. Doreen was one of the founding members of the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance (OSCA) and volunteered as Meadowlark Festival Coordinator during its formative years. In 2002 Doreen was honoured with The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for her significant contribution to Canada, her community, and fellow Canadians through volunteer work for the natural environment. Doreen continues to be an active citizen, organizing events, meetings and other activities related to environmental issues and SOSCP recognizes her contribution in raising awareness and understanding of our natural treasures."

**City of Penticton** is setting up a committee to recommend enhancements to portions of the Okanagan Lake waterfront and has called for volunteers. We applied for a member to sit on the committee, and Charmaine has agreed to represent us on the condition that she gets help from other members when needed.

Your Conservation Committee is always open to new members and new ideas. So let us know if you learn of anything we should investigate or act upon.

🌐 Jim Bryan – Conservation Committee Chair 🌐

### **THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS IN BIRD CONSERVATION**

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) is celebrated annually on the second Saturday in May. Partners in Flight (PIF) BC and Yukon encourages you to celebrate IMBD this year. You can participate in (and volunteer for) the Meadowlark Festival (20-24 May 2010). Participate in the Breeding Bird Atlas of BC if you aren't already, as there are many levels of involvement. Work with your partners and offer an IMBD event on May 8<sup>th</sup> that celebrates and raises awareness of migratory birds and their conservation needs. It could be a great kick-off to the Meadowlark Festival! PIF BC and Yukon will be preparing a mini press kit about IMBD and human-related sources of bird mortality and what members of the general

public can do to stem the loss of bird life. Our aim is to distribute this kit to a network of volunteers across British Columbia and Yukon in the hopes that volunteers will pass along this information to local newspapers, radio and even television. If you are interested in receiving a press kit please contact Tanya Luszcz (Tanya.Luszcz@gov.bc.ca).

### THE PLANETS

These articles about the planets aim to answer two basic questions, viz

1) is that bright thing you see in the night sky a planet, and if so, which one? and

2) the converse--are there any planets you can (easily) see tonight?

Usually some detail is added that might be of interest, in particular comments related to the complex pattern of motions that planets exhibit. For example, during this period (February and March) we will see Venus, Mars and Saturn *just* beginning to gather, leading up to a nice clustering in the summer.

Jupiter has pretty well gone (or "Jupiter pau" as they would say here in Hawai'i) after a good run through fall and early winter. In the early part of February it *may* be visible --depending on exactly where you are--low in the western sky as darkness falls. If visible, it will be bright, and a little lower each evening...it's a disappearing act.

Venus, in contrast, is on its way in. During March it will be visible low in the western sky in the early evening, and *very* bright. A little higher each evening...it's an appearing act.

Mars is at opposition on Jan 29, meaning it is opposite the Sun at that time. Think of the three of us being lined up in space then, Sun-Earth-Mars. In that configuration Mars is at its brightest, quite noticeable, and it rises in the east shortly after sunset, crossing the sky all during the night to set in the west around sunrise. Post-opposition, during February and March, it will fade slightly. It will also appear higher in the sky each evening, becoming a more obvious part of the early evening sky in the east and south-east as February moves along.

It is interesting to check on the motion of Mars during this time. Not motion east to west which everything up there does---stars, planets, Sun, Moon, comets--but night-to-night motion relative to the stars in the distance behind it. At present, Mars is "in Cancer", meaning stars of that constellation appear all around it. Faint stars. Night by night Mars will move to the right relative to those stars. Binocs or a spotting scope will show the effect, which will be very obvious over the course of a week. Mars will screech to a halt on Mar 10 between Cancer and Gemini, almost in a line with the two bright stars of Gemini, and then will move off to the left, and into

Cancer again. Moving to the left (relative to the stars behind it) is the normal motion of Mars. Moving to the right happens around the time of opposition, and is referred to as "retrograde motion". It drove the ancient Greek scientists nuts trying to explain it. Copernicus got the answer: Mars moves leftward in its orbit, but when Earth is closest to it (at opposition) and passing it by, Mars appears to move backwards.

Saturn will be at opposition on Mar 21. It will be brightest then, making it similar to the brightest stars. Now, pre-opposition, it doesn't rise until late in the evening, 10:00 or 11:00, but earlier each evening. By late March it will be coming up in the east as the sky darkens. Being a distant planet the change in brightness as we swing closer will not be noticeable, and its retrograde motion quite subtle. The closer planets, by comparison, seem to gallop across huge swaths of sky when they are at opposition, so stick with Mars to see that kind of thing.

★ Dr. Chris Purton ★



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### ARE YOU A HANDY NATURE LOVER WHO LIKES TO BUILD THINGS?

Bats of the Okanagan need you! The "Build a Bat Box" events at the Meadowlark Festival (May 20-24, 2010) need a new leader. There are one to two events that need hosting, depending on your availability. You don't need to be a bat expert. You simply need to have a vested interest in conserving our bats and have some basic building skills. The previous event leader is available to sit down with you and pass on his knowledge and ideas. He also has tools available for use for these events. If you are interested, please contact Tanya.Luszcz@gov.bc.ca

Here is the workshop advertisement from last

year: "Do bugs drive you crazy? Bring your family and build a bat house that you can take home and install on your property. The South Okanagan supports the greatest diversity of bats in all of Canada, with a known total of 14 species. Learn more about these amazing creatures in a presentation by local bat biologist Aaron Reid. He will discuss the function and benefits of bat houses, as well as where to locate them so bats will be more likely to move in."

### RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER ET AL.

When the Thursday (1/21/2010) morning the birding group was in lower Naramata and extreme NE Penticton, a Red-breasted Sapsucker was spotted by Marlene Hikichi. It was about 10 m up a live Douglas-fir at 920 Ellis Street. The bird was heard tapping before it was seen; it was searching under loose bark flakes and not drilling sap wells.

It was watched via spotting scope and binocs with much discussion for ~10 minutes before it drifted off. The solid red over the head did not extend down the breast as far as in illustrations in the field guides. This sighting was the first time most members of the group had seen a Red-breasted Sapsucker. The bird was seen on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> by a number of birders including Russell and Dick Cannings, Laure Neish, Doug Brown, and Bob McKay.

Our checklist shows it to be RARE in the Okanagan Valley and then only in Jan – Feb or Aug – Sept. The Birds of British Columbia (Campbell et al. vol. 2, 1990) under Noteworthy Records includes only two winter occurrences from the Interior : "Naramata, 12 Jan 1974 " and "Summerland, 13 to 20 Dec 1968." Since then, Tom and Robyn Lowery saw one in the Ornamental Gardens of the Research Station on the Christmas Bird Count (16 Dec 2001). And a few years later in the winter, Mits and Marlene Hikichi spotted one at the junction of Sage Mesa Drive and Hwy 97.

Earlier on Thursday a Golden-crowned Kinglet was in the shrubbery just west of the Manitou Park washrooms. And along the Kettle Valley RR north of Sutherland Road (Penticton) the group surprised and was surprised by a huge flock of 5 Spotted Towhees!

Jim Ginns

### MEMBERSHIPS!

Membership year runs from Oct 1 to Sept. 30. Memberships entitle you to all Club functions, the Honker and the quarterly magazine, B.C.Nature

Please submit your fees at the next meeting or mail to SONC, PO Box 23050, Penticton, BC, V2A 8L7... Want to receive your copy of the HONKER on line? email glendaross@shaw.ca.

### WHAT'S IN A WOODPILE

You may have noticed two small woodpiles in the Summerland Ornamental Garden's Butterfly Garden and wondered why they were there. Depending on their species, butterflies may hibernate in any stage of their life cycle and require a "safe" place to do so. Some, like the Mourning Cloak, overwinter as adults. Many of these apparently choose brush piles for shelter and when we burn the pile in fall or winter...poof! goes the insect.

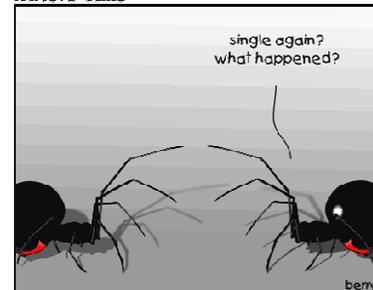
Many other creatures seek shelter in woodpiles as we've found when bringing wood into the house to feed the woodstove. While warming his toes the other evening, Jim spotted what he first thought was a wasp. It turned out to be a Scorpion Fly. Many Moths and Spiders work their way out from under bark and travel toward window light. Pill bugs (woodlice) and Earwigs occasionally perambulate across the floor. Just today I found a Leaf-legged bug which I ushered outdoors. Stinkbugs and Lacewings have also been "visiting".

Mice use woodpiles as we've found when the bottom is reached and fluffy nests are uncovered. Pack rats seem to prefer buildings but will use a woodpile, especially a big one, in a pinch. No wonder Great Horned Owls hang around. A Red squirrel is overwintering in a stack of birdhouses beside the woodpile and complains when nearby logs are moved. Occasionally we find a woodpile in shambles and know some dog has been "hunting".

Moral to story – if you want a haven for creatures, pile up wood....but don't burn it!

Anne Ginns

nature calls



THANK YOU to Berry Wijdeven

### JANUARY 6, 2010 ARTICLE FOR LISA SCOTT.

#### Followup: Houndstongue and Nontarget Biocontrol Research Underway

Does nontarget attack by a biological insect necessarily pose a threat to native plant populations? A study from UBC Okanagan and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is being conducted by PhD student Haley Catton, professor Dr. Bob Lalonde and researcher Dr. Rose De Clerck-Floate to investigate this important question.

Classical weed biological control (or biocontrol) involves the release of host-specific foreign organisms, typically insects, to control invasive plants, and can be a very effective alternative to expensive and/or environmentally damaging chemical and mechanical control methods. While the potential benefits of weed biocontrol are high, the method, like all forms of pest control, includes an element of risk. This risk is mainly in the form of potential nontarget attack, meaning feeding or reproduction by released agents on other plant species, almost always those that are closely related to the target weed. Finding a 'perfect' or 'zero risk' host-specific biocontrol insect is not always realistic, so if biocontrol is to be used, a full understanding of its risks and benefits is necessary to make informed management decisions.

Nontarget attack may vary in severity and ultimately be less harmful than the economic and ecological damage the invasive plant would inflict if left uncontrolled (i.e. if we 'do nothing'). Damage to individual nontarget plants does not necessarily mean that their populations as a whole will suffer. The population-level significance of nontarget attack may depend on many factors, such as the timing, location, and severity of feeding, and the abundance, spatial distribution, timing and life cycles of nontarget plants. More research on the effects of biocontrol agents on nontarget plant population dynamics is needed for a clearer understanding of this problem.

The European root-feeding weevil, *Mogulones crucifer* (formerly called *M. cruciger*), was first released in Canada in 1997, and has been a remarkably effective agent for controlling houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*, in the borage family) on BC rangelands. Thorough pre-release testing indicated that *M. crucifer* can develop on several species within the borage family but strongly prefers houndstongue as its host plant. The insect was consequently granted regulatory approval for its release in Canada based on this preference. However, *M. crucifer* has subsequently been observed feeding and developing on native borges, including blue stickseed (*Hackelia micrantha*), in western Canada.

#### **The Study:**

**Objectives.** My field study uses the houndstongue-*M. crucifer*-*Hackelia micrantha* system to directly address questions regarding nontarget attack: 1) Does nontarget attack affect a naturally-occurring native plant at the population level in the field? 2) What are situations of high risk for nontarget attack? 3) What level of nontarget attack is acceptable to maintain healthy *Hackelia micrantha* plant populations?

**Approach & Methods.** A field experiment is

being conducted in 2009-2011 on a ranch in southern Alberta mimicking a 'worst case scenario' for nontarget attack. In spring 2009, high numbers of *M. crucifer* were released onto sites with nontarget plants (*Hackelia micrantha*) associated with houndstongue in high or very low densities. The response of the insect and plant populations to these scenarios is being monitored and compared across treatments. The information gathered will be used to build a model that will be able to help predict situations of high risk of nontarget attack, and when nontarget plant populations such as *H. micrantha* are at risk of declining. Preliminary results are expected after the 2010 field season.

**Significance.** Demand for risk-free agents is often unrealistic and may threaten the future of biocontrol use. This project surpasses the present standard of simply monitoring nontarget attack on individual plants by studying the ecological basis for biocontrol insect effects on nontarget plant populations. Modeling these interactions will allow us to both address theoretical ecological questions and generate practical procedures anticipated to have direct implications on the field of biocontrol.

Haley Catton

Invitation from Steve Matthews, Head, Fish and Wildlife Section of Ministry of Environment, Penticton, to club members to attend a meeting with the Fish and Wildlife Section staff on Wednesday April 7, 2010 from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm at the Elks Hall in Keremeos. The agenda will include presentations from Fish and Wildlife Section staff on priority initiatives, followed by a discussion period during which each of the clubs identify and discuss key issues, or ask questions on all aspects of fish, wildlife, and habitat management (more information to follow).

#### **"BUILDING A CULTURE THAT SUSTAINS LAND" NARAMATA, BC MARCH 18-20<sup>TH</sup>**

Join BC's land trusts, naturalists, stewardship, conservation and land use organizations & agencies in this foremost Land Trust and Stewardship Seminar Series, hosted by the Land Trust Alliance of BC. This three day event includes site visits to protected areas, including Skaha Bluffs, restored riparian areas and other Okanagan cultural sites. Plus local experts, Harold Baumbrough and Mike Sarrell, will give fascinating presentations on snakes, fire and other features of BC's incredible biodiversity. In addition to a full day workshop by renowned North American fundraiser Kim Klein, there are another 15 seminars about protecting BC's biodiversity and carbon storing forests and grasslands for healthy communities and a healthy climate. Thanks to the

Real Estate Foundation and the Islands Trust Fund, we are pleased to be able to provide travel subsidies to member organizations. This event is open to all, plus a ride sharing connection service is available. Please contact us at 250-538-0112 or email [info@landtrustalliance.bc.ca](mailto:info@landtrustalliance.bc.ca). The program and registration is at [www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca](http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca). Pre-registration discounts are available until March 1.

### WICKED WEEDS

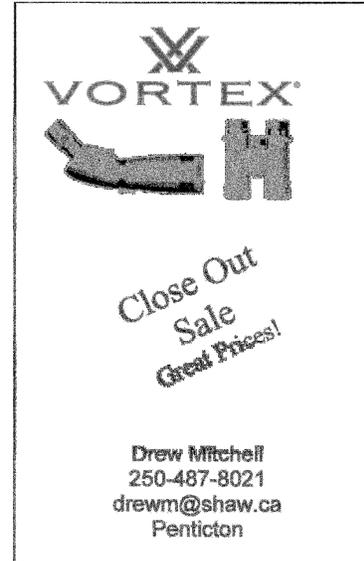
During our 11<sup>th</sup> year as weed warriors in the NE Sector of Penticton, we've noticed some big changes in unwanted flora. The good news is that Knapweed is declining due to bio-control agents. Toadflax, however, hangs on and flourishes in places despite bio-control. The insect agent needs optimum conditions, e.g., early spring warmth, to emerge as the plants start rampant growth. Usually the major wave of beetles manage to chew up the first flower spikes but then apparently complete their life cycle. Meanwhile toadflax, if water is available, manage to send out secondary spikes in late summer and early autumn. There are still beetles available, maybe a second generation, but not en-masse, so toadflax manages to produce seed enough to insure its survival. This could be seen as good host/predator balance.

The bad news is that Cinquefoil continues to take over our landscape. There is no official bio-control. The fleshy roots are sometimes uprooted by pocket gophers making them easy to pull. There is something that destroys a few flower buds amongst hundreds. Insect, disease, drought? It might be worth investigation. When we are long gone, I predict Cinquefoil and St. John's Wort, *Hypericum*, will be "duke-ing" it out on any land in our area left from developers. *Hypericum* has positively exploded in the last few years. It has followed the power line through the sector and been trans-located to many places elsewhere. There is a bio-control beetle which Lisa Scott's team released in the Campbell Mountain to Riddle Road area last year. Two years before that she provided us with a batch of beetles which we hope are establishing themselves though we found only three beetles in all of last season. Cattle usually avoid Cinquefoil, though a few flower heads are nipped off by some animal(s). However, when there is nothing much left to eat, cattle will browse on *Hypericum* which remains green when nearly all else is brown. It is said that *Hypericum* contains a toxin which makes cattle susceptible to ultra-violet light. *Hypericum* is used as a herbal remedy (no doubt the reason why it was introduced to this country in the first place). It's beloved by bees and other insects. This makes for an enormous crop of minute seeds which are easily spread by wind and

wildlife. It also reproduces by pieces of rhizome which creep underground over a wide area. This makes eradication very difficult.

Of course there are other bad weeds like Hound's Tongue which we continue to work on. They persist on the fringes of our territory and are constantly being re-introduced by wildlife. Weeding is good for the waistline, if not the elbows!

Anne Ginns



### SONG SPEAKER LIST

Meet at: Penticton United Church, 696 Main St  
Speaker at 7:30pm.

**Feb 25** - AGM and Members' Slide Evening. Please let Anthea know by Sunday February 21st if you have slides to show, how long you need, and equipment required (email [abryan@vip.net](mailto:abryan@vip.net)) Also, Anne Murray, Conservation Committee Co-Chair for BC Nature, will be giving us a short presentation on "The Important Bird Areas Program in the Okanagan". It's an illustrated slide show about Important Bird Areas and the IBA Caretaker Program, followed by a questions and discussion on this global program to protect birds and bird habitat.

**March 25** - Karen Nicol of Kaleden, the Blue Orchard Mason Bee. Native to North America, this solitary bee, *Osmia lignaria*, is found in B.C.'s southern Interior and coastal areas. According to Karen, "these bees are great pollinators and friendly too! The pollinating work they provide greatly increases fruit crops." Karen provides nests and information on bee care.

**April 22** - Alan Burger, Dept. of Biology, University of Victoria, will give a presentation titled Pursuing the Pacific Enigma: the Biology and Conservation of the Marbled Murrelet. Alan's presentation will cover the nesting and foraging biology of this unique seabird, with a light-hearted look into the trials, tribulations and successes of doing research in the foggy forests and soggy seas.

**PENTICTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 20 DECEMBER 2009**

54 observers, 21-24 parties, 139.5 party-hrs, 638.5 party-km. 1 to 3°C, wind calm, foggy, light rain all day, snow, 1 to 15 cm

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 26329 TOTAL SPECIES 88

Canada Goose	1583	Horned Grebe	57	Rock Pigeon	689	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5
Cackling Goose	2	Red-necked Grebe	21	Mourning Dove	29	Western Bluebird	81
Tundra Swan	4	Western Grebe	1	<b>Eurasian Collared-Dove</b>	<b>CW</b>	Townsend's Solitaire	3
Trumpeter Swan	8	Great Blue Heron	27	Great Horned Owl	8	American Robin	118
Wood Duck	2	Bald Eagle: adult	14	Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	Varied Thrush	2
Gadwall	12	Bald Eagle: immature	3	Belted Kingfisher	5	European Starling	5605
American Wigeon	205	Sharp-shinned Hawk	16	Lewis's Woodpecker	1	Bohemian Waxwing	3092
Mallard	1609	Cooper's Hawk	14	Downy Woodpecker	9	Cedar Waxwing	133
Canvasback	8	Northern Goshawk	1	Hairy Woodpecker	2	Yellow-rumped Warbler	13
Redhead	676	Accipiter sp.	2	Red-shafted Flicker	414	Spotted Towhee	7
Ring-necked Duck	8	Red-tailed Hawk	24	Northern Shrike	2	Song Sparrow	354
Greater Scaup	542	Rough-legged Hawk	1	Steller's Jay	58	<b>Lincoln's Sparrow</b>	<b>3</b>
Lesser Scaup	47	Buteo sp.	1	Clark's Nutcracker	29	White-crowned Sparrow	139
Common Goldeneye	41	American Kestrel	9	Black-billed Magpie	466	Dark-eyed (Sc) Junco	4
Barrow's Goldeneye	3	Merlin	8	American Crow	97	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco	1073
Bufflehead	65	American Coot	1183	Common Raven	197	Red-winged Blackbird	8
Hooded Merganser	8	<b>Mew Gull</b>	<b>1</b>	Black-capped Chickadee	170	Cassin's Finch	4
Common Merganser	27	Ring-billed Gull	76	Mountain Chickadee	126	House Finch	1578
Ring-necked Pheasant	26	California Gull	60	Red-breasted Nuthatch	113	Red Crossbill	403
Dusky Grouse	3	Herring Gull	81	White-breasted Nuthatch	9	Common Redpoll	47
California Quail	3005	Thayer's Gull	4	Pygmy Nuthatch	142	Pine Siskin	95
Common Loon	7	Glaucous-winged Gull	15	Brown Creeper	1	American Goldfinch	488
loon, sp.	1	GW X Western Gull	2	Canyon Wren	3	House Sparrow	918
Pied-billed Grebe	6	gull, sp.	62	Winter Wren	2		
				American Dipper	2		

**VASEUX LAKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: 27 DECEMBER 2009**

35 observers in 10-16 parties; 72 party-hours, 483 party-miles. Overcast, calm; -6C to -4C, snow 0 to 17 cm; southern end of Skaha and all other lakes frozen.

TOTAL SPECIES 89; TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 8571

Canada Goose	310	Great Blue Heron	3	Hairy Woodpecker	17	Western Bluebird	30
Trumpeter Swan	20	Bald Eagle: adult	21	Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	1	Townsend's Solitaire	21
Tundra Swan	2	Bald Eagle: immature	2	Northern (R.-s.) Flicker	148	American Robin	5
<b>Wood Duck</b>	<b>4</b>	Northern Harrier	6	Pileated Woodpecker	7	Varied Thrush	1
Gadwall	10	Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Northern Shrike	12	European Starling	1102
Mallard	593	Cooper's Hawk	8	Gray Jay	7	Bohemian Waxwing	293
Green-winged Teal	3	Northern Goshawk	1	Steller's Jay	99	Cedar Waxwing	20
Ring-necked Duck	77	Red-tailed Hawk	11	Clark's Nutcracker	47	Song Sparrow	102
Greater Scaup	11	Rough-legged Hawk	1	Black-billed Magpie	224	White-crowned Sparrow	4
scaup, sp.	21	Golden Eagle: adult	10	American Crow	10	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco	440
Common Goldeneye	21	Merlin	2	Common Raven	75	Red-winged Blackbird	17
Barrow's Goldeneye	40	American Kestrel	2	Black-capped Chickadee	194	<b>Rusty Blackbird</b>	<b>1</b>
Com.X Barrow's Goldeneye	1	Virginia Rail	2	Mountain Chickadee	218	Pine Grosbeak	5
Bufflehead	116	American Coot	3	Boreal Chickadee	1	Cassin's Finch	5
Hooded Merganser	27	Ring-billed Gull	7	Red-breasted Nuthatch	225	House Finch	1018
Common Merganser	16	gull, sp.	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	30	Red Crossbill	312
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Rock Pigeon	202	Pygmy Nuthatch	178	White-winged Crossbill	2
Dusky Grouse	1	Mourning Dove	13	Brown Creeper	1	Common Redpoll	211
Ruffed Grouse	8	Great Horned Owl	7	Canyon Wren	3	Pine Siskin	7
California Quail	997	Northern Pygmy-Owl	4	Winter Wren	2	American Goldfinch	248
Common Loon	1	<b>Great Gray Owl</b>	<b>1</b>	Marsh Wren	7	Evening Grosbeak	25
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Long-eared Owl	1	American Dipper	17	House Sparrow	554
Horned Grebe	7	N. Saw-whet Owl	2				
Red-necked Grebe	3	Downy Woodpecker	14	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5		

**APEX-HEDLEY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 16 DECEMBER 2009**

51 SPECIES; 1780 INDIVIDUALS

Great Blue Heron	1	Common Goldeneye	3	Bald Eagle Immature	1	Ruffed Grouse	1
<b>American Wigeon</b>	<b>3</b>	Barrow's Goldeneye	4	Golden Eagle: adult	6	Grouse sp.	4
Mallard	4	Common Merganser	2	Immature	2	White-tailed Ptarmigan	2*
<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>	<b>3</b>	Bald Eagle: adult	4	Chukar	20	California Quail	154

Wilson's Snipe	1*	Gray Jay-	10	White-breasted Nuthatch	4	Dark-eyed Junco	40
Rock Pigeon	40	Steller's Jay	56	Pygmy Nuthatch	6	Pine Grosbeak	7
Western Screech-Owl	1*	Clark's Nutcracker-	37	American Dipper	15	House Finch	182
Northern Pygmy-Owl	6	Black-billed Magpie	58	Golden-crowned Kinglet	8	Red Crossbill	31
Downy Woodpecker	4	American Crow	1	Townsend's Solitaire	16	White-winged Crossbill	26
Hairy Woodpecker	10	Common Raven-	69	American Robin-	4	Pine Siskin	1
Am. Three-toed		Black-capped Chickadee	76	Varied Thrush	1	American Goldfinch	75
Woodpecker	4	Mountain Chickadee-	141	Bohemian Waxwing	200	House Sparrow	14
N. (Red-shafted) Flicker	4	Boreal Chickadee	12	European Starling	17		
Pileated Woodpecker	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	54	Song Sparrow	4		

### OLIVER-OYOOS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 2 JANUARY 2010

33 observers, 15-17 parties, 5 at feeders, 116 party-hs (61.75.5 on foot, 54.25 by car), plus 7 party-hours owling, 610.8 party-kms (100.8 on foot, 510 by car), plus 125 party-kms owling . Weather: 1.5 to 5C, wind S 0-9 kph, no precipitation. Osoyoos Lake partly frozen, still water mostly frozen, Okanagan River open, snow depth 0 to 30cm.

TOTAL SPECIES: 111

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 29,312

Greater White-fronted		Common Loon	13	Barred Owl	1	Mountain Bluebird	1
Goose	1	Pied-billed Grebe	9	Long-eared Owl	2	Townsend's Solitaire	36
Canada Goose	2641	Horned Grebe	124	Short-eared Owl	3	American Robin	95
Cackling Goose	6	Red-necked Grebe	24	Northern Saw-whet Owl	4	<b>Gray Catbird</b>	<b>cw</b>
Trumpeter Swan	30	Great Blue Heron	9	Belted Kingfisher	8	European Starling	6567
Wood Duck	cw	Bald Eagle	49	Downy Woodpecker	19	Bohemian Waxwing	5299
Gadwall	18	-immature	17	Hairy Woodpecker	8	Cedar Waxwing	26
American Wigeon	139	Northern Harrier	18	Am. Three-toed		Yellow-rumped Warbler	cw
Eurasian Wigeon	1	Sharp-shinned Hawk	10	Woodpecker	1	Spotted Towhee	4
Mallard	2057	Cooper's Hawk	16	Northern Flicker	342	American Tree Sparrow	19
<b>Blue-winged Teal</b>	<b>2</b>	Northern Goshawk	2	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Song Sparrow	231
Green-winged Teal	11	accipiter sp.	1	Say's Phoebe	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Canvasback	51	Red-tailed Hawk	48	Northern Shrike	12	Swamp Sparrow	1
Redhead	200	Rough-legged Hawk	3	Gray Jay	4	White-crowned Sparrow	269
Ring-necked Duck	46	Golden Eagle-adult	6	Steller's Jay	36	Dark-eyed (Oregon)Junco	1233
Greater Scaup	206	-immature	1	Clark's Nutcracker	32	Dark-eyed (Slate-colored)Junco	2
Lesser Scaup	33	American Kestrel	7	Black-billed Magpie	157	Snow Bunting	35
Bufflehead	185	Merlin	10	American Crow	38	Red-winged Blackbird	1201
Common Goldeneye	108	American Coot	256	Common Raven	416	Western Meadowlark	7
Barrow's Goldeneye	10	Killdeer	1	Black-capped Chickadee	242	Rusty Blackbird	1
goldeneye sp.	10	Wilson's Snipe	1	Mountain Chickadee	44	Brewer's Blackbird	98
Hooded Merganser	65	Ring-billed Gull	6	Red-breasted Nuthatch	39	Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Common Merganser	461	California Gull	12	White-breasted Nuthatch	2	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	230
Red-breasted Merganser	10	Herring Gull	4	Pygmy Nuthatch	2	Cassin's Finch	5
duck sp.	17	gull sp.	1	Brown Creeper	1	House Finch	1311
Chukar	98	Rock Pigeon	978	Rock Wren	1	Red Crossbill	32
Gray Partridge	17	Eurasian Collared-dove	19	Canyon Wren	16	Common Redpoll	60
Ring-necked Pheasant	72	Mourning Dove	35	Marsh Wren	2	Pine Siskin	27
Dusky Grouse	1	Western Screech-owl	1	American Dipper	3	American Goldfinch	117
Ruffed Grouse	2	Great Horned Owl	19	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5	House Sparrow	1320
California Quail	1320	Northern Pygmy-Owl	4	Western Bluebird	46		

### BRIDESVILLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 30 DECEMBER 2009

8 observers in 5 parties. Snow, at times heavy, and local fog throughout the day. CW: count week.

TOTAL SPECIES 44

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 2116

Common Goldeneye	4	Mourning Dove	17	American Crow	1	Bohemian Waxwing	20
Barrow's Goldeneye	1	Northern Pygmy-Owl	5	Common Raven	80	Song Sparrow	1
Wild Turkey	17	Downy Woodpecker	3	Black-capped Chickadee	39	Dark-eyed Junco	19
Ruffed Grouse	4	Hairy Woodpecker	11	Mountain Chickadee	371	Pine Grosbeak	3
California Quail	56	Three-toed Woodpecker	1	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	cw	House Finch	9
Bald Eagle-adult	1	Northern (Red-sh.) Flicker	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	73	Red Crossbill	42
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Pileated Woodpecker	5	White-breasted Nuthatch	4	Common Redpoll	1167
Northern Goshawk	1	Northern Shrike	2	Pygmy Nuthatch	14	<b>Hoary Redpoll</b>	<b>1</b>
Red-tailed Hawk	2	Gray Jay	11	Brown Creeper	15	Pine Siskin	20
<b>Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk</b>	<b>1</b>	Steller's Jay	21	Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	American Goldfinch	1
Rough-legged Hawk	14	Clark's Nutcracker	15	Townsend's Solitaire	1	Evening Grosbeak	CW
Golden Eagle-adult	1	Black-billed Magpie	37	European Starling	1		