



The Honker

Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

January 2017



Ruffed Grouse along the Similkameen River near Hedley. Photo by Paul Graham

In This Issue

President's Report

Coming Events

Take Back the Wild

Conservation Report

SOS National Park

A Poem

Orville Dyer Retires

The Heavens

Our Curious Relationship with Nature

Penticton Oxbows

Penticton CBC

Vaseux CBC

Oliver-Osoyoos CBC

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club
PO Box 23050, Penticton BC V2A 8L7
Website: <http://southokanagannature.com>



Mission Statement:

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

Membership: Individual: \$30; Family: \$40 (membership year is Sept 1 to Aug 31)

Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month from September through May (except December) at 7PM in the basement hall of the Penticton United Church, 696 Main St. (corner of Main and Eckhardt). Please bring your own coffee mug. New members always welcome.

Board meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Please contact any Executive or director 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 (northeast corner of Warren & Atkinson) at 9AM (except in the summer at 8AM). Be prepared to car pool. Trips range from 'car birding' to easy strolls to occasional more moderate hikes. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Everyone welcome. For more info contact Charmaine Foster or check out the birding page on the website.

Field Trips are generally held in the spring and fall and may be all day or occasionally overnight. Check the website for details. Please notify of the trip leader if you intend to participate. Dress for the prevailing weather conditions, wear appropriate footwear, bring a lunch and drinking water. Pets are not appropriate for field trips or Thursday outings.

SONC is a federated club of BC Nature and is affiliated with Nature Canada and the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance.

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Newsletter Submission Dates:

Please submit material for publication by the 15th of January, March, June, September and November. Any item relevant to the Club is welcome as are photos taken by club members.

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Thursday Birding: Charmaine Foster (see above)

Cover photo: The Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) is one of three grouse commonly seen in the Okanagan Valley and surrounding hills, the other two being Spruce grouse and Dusky (formerly blue) grouse. A fourth species, sharp-tailed grouse, while still seen in other parts of BC and Canada has been extirpated in the Okanagan. There are two colour phases of ruffed grouse, red and gray; the cover photo is the red phase. Ruffed grouse are found all across Canada and most of the northern US. Prefers open understory in aspen groves and mixed deciduous – conifer forests. Found both on the forest floor and in trees; feeds on leaves, buds, fruit, and ground plants.

Happy New Year to everyone— may you be successful in all you want to do this year. And may Linda Larson and the provincial Liberals finally get back to the table with Parks Canada (see page 4 for more on this).

Most of you I'm sure have heard of "citizen science" - the process of gathering of important data by average citizens which can then be used by the appropriate scientists to make conclusions about their field of endeavour. The Christmas Bird Count is perhaps the best known example of this—while the data from any one count may or may not be significant, what is definitely important is that the data helps with interpreting long term trends. There are simply not enough wildlife scientists to gather such immense amounts of data as are gathered by the many thousands of citizens who participate in the annual CBC's. Many of the CBC results for our local count circles are available on our website by looking at the January issue of The Honker for each of the past years back to about 2010. It is quite interesting to note some of the changes that have occurred—the most obvious being the explosive growth in the number of Eurasian collared doves counted each year. On a much smaller scale, our own Thursday Birding group is contributing important information to the knowledge base about the Penticton oxbows. Two years ago the Friends of the Oxbows asked the birding group to help gather information by undertaking monthly bird and wildlife surveys. The group agreed to do so and now valuable information is being generated; Rick McKelvey of Friends of the Oxbows have submitted two reports that are included on page 8 while a more complete survey report is available on our website. The Friends of the Oxbows have asked the birding group to continue with these surveys over the next few years and it is my hope that they will do so.

Many of you will receive this edition just before you sit down for our first winter pizza night and accompanying members' slide show. This is an experiment in substitution of the traditional pot-luck supper. I hope it will be a success. We sold a total of 44 tickets so that suggests that the idea is pretty popular with our members. We'll have a fuller report next edition.

Special thanks to the following businesses who supported our pizza night festivities: Raymond James Ltd (Judy Poole and Ryan Mahaffy), Garden Works and Panago Pizza.

Welcome to the following new members: Peter Maser's wife Claude Roberto, Gerry Gilligan's wife Holly Gilligan, Joan Barnett, Rebecca Carmichael, Ellen Rooney & Gary Seronik and Janis Wright.

Bob Handfield



February 23, SONC Meeting: Impressions from my safari in East Africa. Elvia Dumas will provide a look at the people, animals and birds of Kenya and Tanzania, where she spent two exciting weeks last February.

Mar. 23, SONC Meeting: Burrowing Owls in BC and Around the World.

Lauren Meads, Field Director and South Okanagan Operations Manager of the Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of BC., will speak about the progress the Society and its partners is making in burrowing owl recovery. Lauren says "we are increasingly working with partners in reversing the decline of burrowing owls in the Americas. These partners are in the US, the rest of Canada and even into South America. We continue to make great strides with our program here in BC with the expansion of suitable habitat with many engaged land stewards. What will be the future of burrowing owl recovery in BC and potentially the world in the coming years? I will also bring with me our newest member of the education team: Pluto the Burrowing Owl".

Take Back The Wild

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-BC) launched a conservation campaign training program in November 2016 called [Take Back the Wild: Raising the Voices of South Okanagan-Similkameen Seniors](#). Throughout November a group of 18 passionate participants came together to learn from local leaders in conservation, to engage in dialogue on key components of campaign planning, and to create projects that will engage the larger SOS community to engage in conservation efforts.

Highlights of the November summits included a panel discussion on local conservation by Bryn White (SOSCP), Lauren Meads (Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of BC), Doreen Olson (SOSNPN), and Karilyn Alex (ONA), and learning from Traditional Ecological Knowledge Keeper Richard Armstrong during a walk through the beautiful Locatee Lands at the En'owkin Centre. Together, we built a supportive network of conservation-minded individuals from across the SOS who will work together to create conservation campaigns, projects and events to share the wonder and beauty of this at-risk environment with the larger community.

To learn more about Take Back the Wild, visit the CPAWS-BC website: www.cpawsbc.org/campaigns/seniors or talk to Doreen Olson.

Conservation Report

As many of you know by now, the bylaw to establish the Conservation Fund for the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) was successfully passed. The Club wrote a letter to RDOS in support of the bylaw. Less than .1% of the eligible residents petitioned against the fund and the RDOS Board gave final approval in December. Money for the fund will be raised by a small property tax in the Areas of RDOS which opted for the fund. It will provide money for a variety of conservation projects in the South Okanagan. A process will be established whereby various conservation proposals can be considered to receive money from the fund each year.

The City of Penticton held a town hall meeting November 23 to discuss issues about commercial developments in Skaha Lake Park. Approximately 700 people attended, including member Gerry Gilligan who spoke passionately about preserving the Park and severing all ties with the existing contract with Trio Marine Group. Gerry spoke as an individual and not a representative of SONC, even though he is a member of our Conservation Committee. Many other attendees also urged the City to sever ties and agreements with Trio Marine. Despite this, City Council decided to accept the proposal for a 29 year lease of the marina and some other land for commercial purposes other than a water slide.

We are still waiting for information from Environment Minister Polak about SOS National Park which was originally scheduled for October (see Doreen's letter elsewhere on this page). While reading the annual report for Raincoast Conservation Foundation, I was struck by the similarity between our government's stonewalling on the SOS Park and its stonewalling on grizzly bear hunting in BC. According to Raincoast, 9 of 10 British Columbians believe grizzly bear hunting to be unacceptable, and: "research by a Stanford University think tank found that bear viewing supports ten times more employment, tourist spending, and government revenue than trophy hunting within the Great Bear Rainforest. Notably the revenue generated by fees and licenses affiliated with the grizzly hunt fails to cover the cost of the Province's management of the hunt. Consequently BC taxpayers, most of whom oppose the hunt, are in essence, subsidizing the trophy killing of grizzlies." Raincoast has so far purchased three hunting guide territories thus eliminating non-resident hunters from those territories (but not BC resident hunters).

OSCA (Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance) held its Annual General Meeting December 3rd. OSCA organizes various conservation events each year including the Meadowlark Festival which will be held May 18-22. Contact OSCA if you want to help organize the Festival or assist a trip leader with one of the trips (chair@osca.org). Tickets usually go in sale in April. The Meadowlark Festival will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2017, and plans are being made to make it an extra special event.

If you know of a conservation issue requiring attention, please let us know (Gerry Gilligan, Brian Horejsi, Jim Turnbull, or me).

Jim Bryan, Conservation Committee Chair

SOS Proposed National Park

Thank you to all of you who have supported the effort to establish a national park in the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed. Recently there were several comments by MLA Linda Larson that needed to be addressed. She had made incorrect and confusing comments publicly that needed to be addressed in the local papers. I have submitted a letter to the editor of the Osoyoos Times which is reproduced below. You may have read similar letters in the Penticton Western News. And Bob Handfield addressed this issue in the Nature Wise column this month.

We hope that a favourable announcement about the park by Minister Polak will be forthcoming and that it will be that the province will be re-engaging with the federal government in national park reserve conversations. An announcement about the park was promised in October, then November and then moved to December. Now she says it will be made by the end of January. SOSNPN continue to communicate with Minister Polak but with the election near we will be stepping up the pressure. This is a non-partisan campaign to move the park concept forward. If you would like to help please let me know.

Doreen

Dear Editor

Thank you for the excellent reporting about the national park, in the Osoyoos Times, January 4, 2017. Unfortunately, MLA Larson is providing us with confusing and inaccurate information. The next step to establish a national park reserve is for the Province to inform Canada that they will return to the formal process – not the other way around. The Province abruptly left this process in 2011, so they need to initiate the next step. If, as Larson reports, provincial staff are having informal, preliminary talks with federal staff, this is positive but will go nowhere unless the Province formally re-engages.

The BC government needs to honour its own 2015 public consultation process, to which almost 3,600 individuals responded. Results show that 92% of respondents wanted a national park reserve, and a strong majority want Mt Kobaw (Area 2) included. The last public opinion poll conducted in 2015 showed over 3 to 1 local support for the establishment of a national park. Opposition has decreased significantly.

The BC government needs to seize the moment. The South Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys are undergoing a tsunami of change. The opportunity to establish a national park is disappearing as the land continues to be sold and fragmented. People living in the SOS understand the importance of protecting this vital corridor for the unique qualities that define this region. This vulnerable landscape needs to be secured as a legacy for our children and grandchildren.

MLA Larson seems to be unaware that a national park reserve will provide a higher level of protection, funding and (cont. next page)

management than provincial parks at no cost to the BC government. A national park would also provide the most benefits to nearby communities many of which are struggling economically – there are a significant number of empty storefronts on Main Street in Oliver, Osoyoos almost lost its high school, and Penticton’s economy is suffering. Rather than seeing the land being broken up and subdivided for houses built on small acreages, we need a national park reserve to keep our landscape connected for wildlife while bringing high paying permanent local jobs.

The SOS is one of the four most endangered ecosystems in Canada and deserves the highest level of protection. The 2015 public opinion poll showed that 89% of local citizens believe that the protection of our endangered species is a high priority. National Parks are required by law to protect endangered species and have the expertise and funding to do this. Parks Canada is also world renowned and respected for its wildfire management practices.

Our region is one of the last in Canada without a National Park. Back in 2003, both governments proposed an Okanagan-Similkameen National Park. We are still waiting for the Province to re-engage, rather than blocking, this process.

Image celebrating the establishment of our new South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve at Cherry Fiesta in Osoyoos July 1st for Canada’s 150th birthday!

Doreen Olson, Coordinator,
South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Network

A Poem

images

twin aspens mirror images
branches reflect each other
at angles silent echoes

broken limbs leave black ragged
matching scars
twigs lie broken on the ground

some marks differ
long roughened ridges
where a bear scratched one tree
but left the other

as I pass between these trees
join their smooth grey coolness with my touch
their energy trembles through me
sustains me
links me with the force
that flows through the root that cloned them
one to the other

Myrna Mattice (Bosomworth)

Orville Dyer Retires

For almost 35 years, Orville Dyer has worked tirelessly to conserve the natural spaces and species of the south Okanagan and Similkameen valleys. Working as an Ecosystem Biologist for the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Orville will retire at the end of this month. Starting in the days of recreational fisheries and big game hunting in the 1980s, he focused more on non-game species, such as reptiles, amphibians, bats, arthropods, birds and plants. It is well known that the south Okanagan and Similkameen valleys are home to many species that are found no where else in Canada. Many of these species are at risk because of habitat loss and degradation. Orville participated, with many others, in the development and management of Wildlife Management Areas such as SOWMA and Important Bird Areas such as Osoyoos Oxbows, White Lake, and the area around Kilpoola Lake. Working with other agencies and groups such as Canadian Wildlife Service, The Nature Trust and the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) has been integral to his conservation work. The SOSCP, established in 2000, now has over 35 partner institutions. With the passage of the federal Species at Risk Act in 2002, provincial buy-in meant Orville had to focus on recovery groups or teams for listed species. He has been chair, co-chair or team member on many teams such as the Southern Interior Invertebrates Recovery Team (5 species), Southern Interior Rare Plants Recovery Team (17 species), Southern Interior Reptiles and Amphibians Recovery Team (11 species), and other individual species such as Pallid Bat and Western Screech Owl. Recently he has met with the public to try to change destructive land use practices such as unfettered ATV access to public lands near Osoyoos. Orville Dyer has been a great asset to conservation activities in the south Okanagan and Similkameen valleys. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

Pam Krannitz



American Wigeon photo by Paul Graham

The Heavens

It's Venus this season for sure! — absolutely stunning in the western sky as darkness settles in. And Mars is nearby, to the left of Venus and looking faint in comparison . . . even though it is among the top ten brightest objects in the night sky. On the evening of January 31 they will be joined by a crescent Moon situated more-or-less between them. The three of them forming a small triangle above the mountains in the west should be quite a pretty sight.

Venus and Mars are drawing closer together and will appear closest, about ten moon-widths apart, on February 3. After that Venus takes a surprisingly quick dive toward the horizon as the planet overtakes the Earth and passes between us and the Sun. Each evening Venus will appear a little lower in the sky after sunset, and by mid March will be lost to us. When Venus is in this part of its orbit it appears brighter as it gets closer to us, but this is offset by us seeing less and less of the sunlit side. The combination of those two effects will make Venus appear brightest on February 16. And us seeing less and less of the sunlit side means it appears to us as a thinner and thinner crescent, which you will be able to make out with a small telescope.

Mars is also diving into the sunset glow, being a little lower in the western sky each evening, but is doing so more sedately than is Venus and won't be lost to us until well into May.

The second-brightest planet, Jupiter, is prominent in the morning sky, south to south-west as the sky starts to brighten. The star just below it is Spica, brightest star of the constellation Virgo.

Saturn is there also, low in the sky south to south-east and not as prominent as Jupiter. Those two planets will shift into the evening sky later in the year, which is more convenient. It's a good year for Saturn's rings, but unless you're in a hurry it will be easier, and warmer, later on.

And as for stars and constellations, the prize goes to Orion, prominent in the southern sky. Four bright stars in a large rectangle outline his torso, the famous red star Betelgeuse top left (Beetle Juice, if you must: "the armpit of the giant"), Bellatrix top right, brilliant blue Rigel bottom right, and the least conspicuous of the four, Saiph, bottom left. The real marker of Orion, though, is the three bright stars of his belt, very prominent, pointing up-rightward to Taurus and the Pleiades, and down-leftward to brilliant Sirius, the Dog Star. Below the belt of Orion are some fainter stars marking his sword, and they are QUITE interesting.

The accompanying photo is a 'close-up' of Orion's belt and sword, taken through a moderate-sized telescope. The three bright stars of the belt are obvious at the top of the picture, the sword looks a bit enigmatic near the bottom, and the telescope has brought out a myriad of fainter background stars that fill the entire picture. To the naked eye the sword would look like three faint stars one above the other, and if the sky were nice and clear the middle star of the three would be noticeably 'fuzzy'. Through binoculars the 'fuzzy'

as a 'hazy blob, not a star at all, and in fact it is the famous Orion Nebula.

The telescopic view shown in the picture shows the nebula quite clearly, and reveals that the stars we see above and below it are, each, actually a small collection of stars. The nebula itself is a giant cloud of gas measuring 25 light years across, at a distance of some 1300 light years.

That gas has been producing stars, thousands of them, over the past million years or so, and the brightest of those flood the surrounding gas with light, making it glow and rendering it visible to us. However, the radiation from the stars also drives the gas off into space and the nebula will be gone in about 100,000 years, so don't delay too long in taking a look.

Chris Purton



Orion's belt, with sword below. Photo by Marian McGaffney.

Our curious relationship with nature

How is it that the virtues of nature are enthusiastically praised when our attention is wanted, but sadly ignored when our consideration is needed?

Take real estate for example. Property ads mesmerize us with the proximity of natural features. "Backs onto undeveloped Crown Land." "180 degree lake and mountain views." "Close to walking and biking trails." Even a "peek-a-boo view" merits a mention. Or consider this ad for a twenty-story Yorkville condominium. A full-page ad features a pair of red-soled Laboutin ladies pumps, apparently tossed casually aside. The copy presents a dazzling description of life at this elite accommodation. "Within a façade of pale limestone and glass...tall ceilings, soundproof windows and precise attention to detail....reside in perfect stillness and comfort." The final kicker though is the advantage of adjacent parkland... "with it's ancient trees, pleasant walkways, tennis courts and skating rink." Or how about Tourism BC's spectacular ads that focus on BC's natural wonders while behind Tourism's back BC Parks are being stripped of their funding, staff and protections.

Vehicle advertising, especially of SUV's, provides gleaming high tech people movers challenging tree-lined roads on the way to pristine wilderness. Off camera, just over the ridge, a crowd of protesters is probably blocking a pipeline that could tear apart the same landscape.

When I moved to a Calgary design firm, my first project, a logo for a sprawling subdivision, had me questioning the odd juxtaposition of the subdivision's name and the land it decimated.

I've seen the mechanical monsters that blow prairie dust as their front blades cut into the soil like a carpenter's plane rendering all the natural undulations and indentations smooth. Then geometrical streetscapes appear followed by the bright yellow of new lumber and plywood that become expensive 'estate homes.' Perhaps it was Silver Springs. Or Meadowlark Park. Maybe Cougar Ridge. Might have been Canyon Meadows. Deer Run? Wildwood? Hawk's Landing? It suddenly seemed especially odd that we name our subdivisions, new condo buildings, and resorts after the landscape and inhabitants they've replaced.

I noticed a similar tendency here in the Okanagan Valley with Vernon's Predator Ridge. Considering the possibility that some of us actually fear the wild, I'm amazed that Predator Ridge was selected for this resort/golf/residential community with "a 1200 acre backyard." The promotional website is alive with deer, people walking, hiking, meditating on a bluff, golfing, with expansive lake and mountain vistas.

There's a plethora of wildlife and natural references in the central Okanagan too, including Sandpiper Lane, Kingfisher Drive, Sumac Ridge and Gulch Road. I must admit Gulch Road has a rather catchy ring to it.

Cherry Lane, now a shopping Mall, reflects the orchards I remember in that area when I visited Penticton fifty years ago. The mall logo incorporates a sprig of cherries, all bright and inviting.

The vigorous re-creation of a somewhat natural setting around our abodes often adds the disturbing element we call invasives, further evidence of our conflicted relationship with nature. A sort of "I want that plant, but I don't want it here, or especially over there. And I certainly don't want gophers in my garden!" At the same time, nature refuses to cooperate with our co-optation. Coyotes, raccoons, deer, voles, moles, rats, ants, birds and insects re-colonize our communities. Even cougars and bears are tempted by the delicacies of fruit, vegetables and flowers in our yards.

All this begs the question, "What is natural, what is nature?" Definitions abound but I'll take it that nature is that which is 'not us and our works.' As writer Diane Ackerman author of, "The Human Age, The world shaped by us," suggests, we have transitioned to a different accord. It's not us and 'them.' We are part of a continuum where that which is not us is more appreciated and understood, therefore not separate from us, not exploitable.

Maybe there will be sandpipers in Sandpiper Lane or four legged predators at Predator Ridge. Perhaps we'll even welcome them.

Dianne Bersea



Northern Shoveler at the oxbows; photo by Paul Graham

Bird surveys on the Penticton Oxbows

In early 2015 The Friends of the Oxbows requested the South Okanagan Naturalist's Club to help the Friends gather data on the diversity and number of birds using the Penticton oxbows. The Friends have been promoting the clean-up and rejuvenation of those wetlands, and as part of their efforts the Friends wished to measure the effectiveness of any such clean-ups by looking at changes in local bird populations. Now with two years of data on hand the Friends have produced a short report on the findings of this effort.

Reporting the numbers of birds seen on each survey on each pond is not meaningful, because the ponds are all of different sizes, have differing amounts of cover, and are subject to a range of disturbances. In addition, the counts change from month to month as the seasons progress. These factors can contribute greatly to variations in surveys between ponds and between years. The Friends' report therefore uses a measure of bird use-days and bird use-days per hectare to allow comparisons between years and between oxbows. With only two years of data, the Friends caution that these results are only preliminary, and that there are factors causing variation between years and between oxbows that will take more surveys to isolate. Briefly, the total bird use-days for all ponds surveyed was 1544 for 2015, and 1608 for 2016. When the total area of the wetlands was accounted for, there were larger differences between years, and between ponds. Birds use-days per ha was 3156 for 2015 and 3631 for 2016. Smaller ponds were relatively more important, Ellis Creek Basin receiving the heaviest use per ha in 2015, while the Falcon Crescent oxbow received the heaviest total use per ha in 2016. The total number of species seen was similar in each year, 58 in 2015 and 57 in 2016, and peaks in the number of species were seen in both years corresponding with the spring and fall migrations. The peak number of turtles seen, assumed to be Western Painted Turtles, was similar in both years, and the population of this species in the ponds surveyed is estimated to be between 40 and 50.

Rick McKelvey

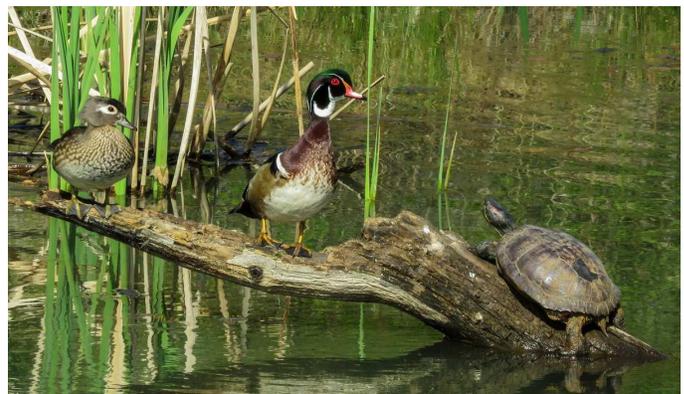
Conservation update on the Penticton Oxbows

The term "oxbow wetland" refers to a segment of a slow moving waterway that has been cut off from the main channel, by river and erosional processes. Once cut off they may retain water directly from the ground water table, or from flood waters in freshet. The term "oxbow" comes from the shape of the yoke oxen were attached to for various forms of draft work. The Penticton oxbows, though cut off from the main river channel, were not generally formed from natural processes, but have resulted from the channelization of the Okanagan River in the 1950s. None-the-less they function as oxbows, being wetted mostly from ground water intrusion, and with limited connection to the existing river channel. As they are situated in an urban environment they serve as storm water receiving environments presently, and have become degraded from rapid siltation, removal of riparian vegetation, the introduction of exotic plant species, and debris.

For the past eight years the Friends of the Oxbows have been making the case for a cleanup of the Penticton oxbows, and subsequent management to maintain them in a more ecologically useful fashion. These efforts culminated in September 2016 with the removal of 340 m³ of silt from the Brandon Ave oxbow by the City of Penticton. The Friends had been concerned about the rapid infilling of this oxbow in particular due to the fact it had a large storm drain entering, draining a significant amount of southwest Penticton. Prior to the silt removal, the City had rectified the siltation problem to large extent by the installation of a silt interceptor on the storm sewer main, so the rate of sedimentation in the future should be much reduced.

Before the clean-up of the Brandon Ave oxbow, the Friends had been collecting water quality data on that and other oxbows in the Penticton area. In addition the Friends have preliminary data on the abundance of benthic invertebrates for the Brandon Ave oxbow, and with the generous help of the South Okanagan Naturalist's Club, two years of bird surveys on all the Penticton oxbows. The Friends look forward to measuring the positive impact of the rejuvenation of the Brandon Ave oxbow over the next couple of years.

Rick McKelvey



Some ox-bow life: top—Western Painted Turtle (native)
bottom—pair of Wood Ducks and a non-native red-eared slider.

Photos by Paul Graham

**Penticton Christmas Bird Count
18 December 2016**

42 observers in 18 to 22 parties. -11 to -6°C, ponds and oxbows frozen, lakes open; snow depth 1-6", wind south 30-53 kph, sunny with cloudy periods.

Canada Goose	1960	Red-shafted Flicker	271
Trumpeter Swan	4	Pileated Woodpecker	3
Tundra Swan	2	Northern Shrike	1
Wood Duck	3	Steller's Jay	64
Gadwall	22	Black-billed Magpie	277
American Wigeon	129	Clark's Nutcracker	13
Mallard	1200	American Crow	35
Redhead	451	Common Raven	356
Ring-necked Duck	1	Black-capped Chickadee	148
Greater Scaup	186	Mountain Chickadee	115
Lesser Scaup	3	Boreal Chickadee	1
Bufflehead	177	Red-breasted Nuthatch	110
Common Goldeneye	86	White-breasted Nuthatch	12
Barrow's Goldeneye	14	Pygmy Nuthatch	227
Hooded Merganser	17	Brown Creeper	3
Common Merganser	51	Canyon Wren	3
Ruddy Duck	11	Pacific Wren	2
Ring-necked Pheasant	19	American Dipper	6
Dusky Grouse	5	Golden-crowned Kinglet	25
Ruffed Grouse	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
California Quail	1826	Western Bluebird	201
Wild Turkey	1	Townsend's Solitaire	12
Common Loon	4	American Robin	110
Pied-billed Grebe	17	Varied Thrush	5
Horned Grebe	10	European Starling	4786
Red-necked Grebe	1	Bohemian Waxwing	3768
Western Grebe	4	Cedar Waxwing	90
Great Blue Heron	18	Y-r. (Audubon's) Warbler	3
Bald Eagle	54	Spotted Towhee	15
Northern Harrier	2	Song Sparrow	129
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	White-throated Sparrow	1
Cooper's Hawk	10	White-crowned Sparrow	30
Northern Goshawk	3	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco	1125
Accipiter, sp.	1	Dark-eyed (Sc) Junco	7
Red-tailed Hawk	50	Red-winged Blackbird	82
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	2	Brewer's Blackbird	20
Rough-legged Hawk	9	Pine Grosbeak	12
Golden Eagle	4	House Finch	732
American Kestrel	11	Cassin's Finch	2
Merlin	3	Red Crossbill	15
Peregrine Falcon	1	American Goldfinch	249
American Coot	629	House Sparrow	171
Mew Gull	3		
Ring-billed Gull	108	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	21260
California Gull	27	TOTAL SPECIES	96
Herring Gull	123		
Thayer's Gull	2	Party-hours (foot)	80.75
Glaucous-winged Gull	52	Party-hours (car)	40.85
gull, sp.	77	Party-km (foot)	131.75
Rock Pigeon	396	Party-km (car)	519.5
Eurasian Collared-Dove	131		
Mourning Dove	53		
Great Horned Owl	3		
Northern Pygmy-Owl	2		
Anna's Hummingbird	1		
Belted Kingfisher	3		
Downy Woodpecker	6		
Hairy Woodpecker	17		

**Vaseux Lake Christmas Bird Count
21 December 2016**

16 observers in 7 to 11 parties. -6 to -2°C, Vaseux Lake frozen except for north end; snow depth 2-6", mostly calm, mostly sunny in valley with some cloudy periods.

Canada Goose	420	Northern Shrike	5
Trumpeter Swan	76	Gray Jay	6
Wood Duck	11	Steller's Jay	32
Gadwall	22	Black-billed Magpie	94
American Wigeon	54	Clark's Nutcracker	35
Mallard	734	American Crow	6
Green-winged Teal	8	Common Raven	93
Redhead	2	Black-capped Chickadee	110
Ring-necked Duck	370	Mountain Chickadee	231
Greater Scaup	32	Red-breasted Nuthatch	169
Lesser Scaup	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	13
scaup, sp.	4	Pygmy Nuthatch	103
Bufflehead	201	Brown Creeper	1
Common Goldeneye	49	Canyon Wren	9
Barrow's Goldeneye	365	Bewick's Wren	1
Hooded Merganser	68	Pacific Wren	7
Common Merganser	108	Marsh Wren	3
Chukar	6	American Dipper	16
Gray Partridge	count week	Golden-crowned Kinglet	40
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Dusky Grouse	1	Western Bluebird	12
Ruffed Grouse	2	Townsend's Solitaire	17
California Quail	1334	American Robin	6
Common Loon	3	Varied Thrush	2
Pied-billed Grebe	20	European Starling	986
Horned Grebe	2	Bohemian Waxwing	260
Red-necked Grebe	2	American Tree Sparrow	8
Great Blue Heron	11	Song Sparrow	99
Bald Eagle	25	White-crowned Sparrow	17
Northern Harrier	1	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco	276
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Dark-eyed (Sc) Junco	2
Cooper's Hawk	7	Red-winged Blackbird	40
Northern Goshawk	2	House Finch	356
Red-tailed Hawk	29	Cassin's Finch	6
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	1	Red Crossbill	15
Rough-legged Hawk	4	Common Redpoll	1
Golden Eagle	5	Pine Siskin	46
Virginia Rail	6	American Goldfinch	144
American Coot	237	House Sparrow	295
Herring Gull	1		
Rock Pigeon	83	Total individuals	8053
Eurasian Collared-Dove	45	Total Species	90
Mourning Dove	6		
Western Screech-Owl	1	Observers	16
Great Horned Owl	4	Parties (min)	9
Northern Pygmy-Owl	3	Parties (max)	12
Belted Kingfisher	2	Hours on foot	35
Downy Woodpecker	9	Hours by car	27.75
Hairy Woodpecker	9	Km on foot	71
Am. 3-toed Woodpecker	1	Km by car	364
Northern (R.-s.) Flicker	88		
Pileated Woodpecker	2		
American Kestrel	3		
Merlin	2		
Peregrine Falcon	2		

Oliver-Osoyoos Christmas Bird Count

December 31, 2016

33 observers in 11-12 parties plus 4 at feeders. 79 party-hours (25.75 by car, 53.25 by foot). 515.9 party-kms (419.8 by car, 96.1 on foot) Weather: -4 to -16.3C, wind-N 2-11 kph, no precipitation Osoyoos Lake partly frozen, still water frozen, Okanagan River open. Snow depth 0-35 cm.

Snow Goose	4	Cooper's Hawk	9	Red-breasted Nuthatch	27
Canada Goose	2346	<i>accipiter sp.</i>	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	2
Trumpeter Swan	10	Red-tailed Hawk	50	Pygmy Nuthatch	23
Tundra Swan	2	Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	1	Brown Creeper	3
Wood Duck	2	Rough-legged Hawk	19	Canyon Wren	8
Gadwall	35	Golden Eagle-adult	3	Bewick's Wren	5
American Wigeon	54	American Kestrel	6	Pacific Wren	5
Mallard	1452	Merlin	5	Marsh Wren	4
Northern Shoveler	5	Virginia Rail	1	American Dipper	3
Northern Pintail	cw	American Coot	456	Golden-crowned Kinglet	10
Green-winged Teal	9	Wilson's Snipe	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Canvasback	1	Herring Gull	2	Western Bluebird	97
Redhead	11	Thayer's Gull	1	Townsend's Solitaire	5
Ring-necked Duck	6	<i>gull sp.</i>	2	American Robin	117
Greater Scaup	122	Rock Pigeon	138	Varied Thrush	1
Lesser Scaup	148	Mourning Dove	40	European Starling	2656
Long-tailed Duck	cw	Eurasian Collared-dove	403	Bohemian Waxwing	3042
Bufflehead	122	Barn Owl	1	Cedar Waxwing	10
Common Goldeneye	59	Western Screech-Owl	1	Snow Bunting	1
Barrow's Goldeneye	11	Great Horned Owl	6	Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler	6
Hooded Merganser	19	Northern Pygmy-Owl	2	Spotted Towhee	3
Common Merganser	104	Long-eared Owl	1	American Tree Sparrow	9
Red-breasted Merganser	15	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Fox Sparrow	1
California Quail	1579	Downy Woodpecker	17	Song Sparrow	220
Chukar	115	Hairy Woodpecker	4	Lincoln's Sparrow	cw
Ring-necked Pheasant	43	Black-backed Woodpecker	1	White-crowned Sparrow	134
Ruffed Grouse	1	Northern Flicker	283	Dark-eyed (Oregon)Junco	1148
Common Loon	2	Pileated Woodpecker	2	Dark-eyed (Slate-colored)Junco	2
Pied-billed Grebe	17	Northern Shrike	4	Red-winged Blackbird	472
Horned Grebe	3	Gray Jay	1	Western Meadowlark	cw
Red-necked Grebe	3	Steller's Jay	22	Brewer's Blackbird	98
Western Grebe	cw	Clark's Nutcracker	13	Cassin's Finch	2
Great Blue Heron	8	Black-billed Magpie	120	House Finch	481
Bald Eagle-adult	24	American Crow	21	Red Crossbill	2
-immature	25	Common Raven	285	American Goldfinch	235
Northern Harrier	15	Black-capped Chickadee	98	House Sparrow	452
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12	Mountain Chickadee	30		

Total Species: 100

Total birds: 17,720

www.southokanagan nature.com

If you haven't checked out our Club's website recently, you should do so. Glenda and Bob work hard to try and keep it up to date (we do fall behind some times) and keep you informed as to what is going on. This is the spot to go for the latest information on monthly meetings, etc. Glenda has been working on changing the photographs, both on the home page and in the photography section. She is always looking for new photos so why not send her a few of your Okanagan Valley nature photos and let other Club members have a look at your work.



Since Frank and Margaret Focken moved from Naramata to Penticton in July, this impressive guy has been a frequent visitor to their back yard. I dare say there are few places in Canada (or the US for that matter) where you would frequently see California big-horn sheep in your back yard. Quite impressive!

Photo by Frank Focken

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Mail form to SONC, PO Box 23050, Penticton BC V2A 8L7

Individual.....\$30 per year

Family\$40 per year

Date:.....

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Do you wish to receive The Honker by email? _____

The membership year is Sept. to August; if joining after February 1st please contact the membership secretary first.