

## **Nature Wise column May 2017 Fun Stuff in the South Okanagan**

Now that all of the electioneering is out of the way, let's focus on some fun stuff.

The South Okanagan Naturalists' Club is sponsoring a nature photography contest next year for amateur photographers who are residents of the RDOS. There will be multiple categories such as wildflowers, landscapes, waterfowl, etc. The photos must have been taken within the geographic limits of the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. There will be prizes in every category and the winning photos will be featured in local media. The photos will also be displayed in an exhibition celebrating nature in the south Okanagan Similkameen to be held at the Penticton Museum in the fall of 2018. The contest will close in June of 2018. Full contest details will be available on our website and elsewhere later this summer.

In celebration of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, BioBlitz Canada 150 is bringing together the Canadian public with scientists and naturalists to explore the richness of Canada's biodiversity and celebrate our natural heritage. Participants will explore dozens of ecologically important areas across Canada. It's Canada's "nature selfie," and you're invited!

The South Okanagan bioblitz is one of 20 community blitzes being held across Canada in addition to flagship blitzes in capital cities and parks of note.

Everyone's invited! There is no fee to participate although pre-registration is required. Enjoy a day in nature and learn more about local species, and habitats. Check out [www.bioblitzcanada.ca](http://www.bioblitzcanada.ca) for all the details and where to meet for each group. All events are on June 10 with the exception of the two night events which are on June 9.

### **South Okanagan Bioblitz events**

#### **1. Awesome Snakes at Skaha Bluffs Provincial Park**

*Event description:* join snake experts to learn about the species of snakes in the south Okanagan, their habits, habitats and conservation concerns.

#### **2. Invert Investigator for a Day: Identifying Aquatic Insects in Trout Creek**

*Event description:* prepare to be surprised as you discover the many species of macroinvertebrates hiding in the creek! Sample the water for aquatic insect species and learn about their role as indicators of aquatic ecosystem health.

#### **3. "Night biodiversity walk"**

*Event description:* as you walk along the path from dusk to dark your senses will adjust and you will begin to see and 'hear' the many species of the Okanagan night. Hint: think frogs!

#### **4. Counting Bats!**

*Event description:* Did you know that the Okanagan Valley has more species of bats than anywhere else in Canada? Come out and count them!

## **5. Explore Birds at Vaseux Lake**

*Event Description:* Explore birds along the boardwalk and new bird viewing blind looking onto Vaseux Lake. Learn about conservation efforts to protect endangered birds.

## **6. Identifying Butterflies, Birds and Plants on Mt. Kobau**

*Event description:* discover an astonishing number of butterflies, birds and plants as you work your way to the top of Mount Kobau where you can gaze out on the South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area.

## **7. East Chopaka Grasslands Botany, Birds and Butterflies**

*Event description:* visit key areas of the proposed South Okanagan National Park and Nature Conservancy of Canada's Sage and Sparrow Conservation areas.

## **8. White Lake to Mahoney Lake: the many species of the South Okanagan grasslands**

*Event description:* hike through the South Okanagan grasslands and identify the many (and often rare!) species that make this area so unique and experience a landscape found nowhere else in Canada.

## **9. BioBlitz wrap-up event at the Penticton Museum**

*Event description:* come out and compare your species tallies with others who have taken the BioBlitz challenge! Also on hand will be Pluto the Burrowing Owl and some rare Okanagan amphibians. Enjoy some refreshments while you browse the museum's Wildlife Corridors exhibit.

Event date: Saturday, June 10, 2017

Event location: Penticton Museum

Event time: 2:30-4:30 pm.

Open to the public, no registration required

The South Okanagan Naturalists' Club meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7PM. See our website ([southokanagannature.com](http://southokanagannature.com)) for meeting details.