



The Honker

Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

September 2021



Rubber Boa Snake .

Photo by Doreen Olson

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IT IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club
193 Westview Drive
Penticton BC V2A 7W1
www.southokanagannature.com



Mission Statement:

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

Membership: Individual: \$32; Family: \$43 (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 (hours may change in summer & winter). 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 Wendy Stewart 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 society under the BC Societies Act and a federated club of BC Nature

Executive Officers:

President: Alex Bodden a.bodden@shaw.ca

Vice-president: Wendy Stewart 250 487 1442 wendyastewart@shaw.ca

Treasurer: Colleen Simmons colleensimmons@live.ca

Secretary: Val Fenn ; vfenn@shaw.ca

Membership secretary: Tim Gray timgray9@hotmail.com

Directors at large:

Bob Handfield bobnmaggie@shaw.ca

Edward Steltman edsteltman@gmail.com

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.

Coordinators/Representatives:

Archivist: Jim Ginns 250 492 9610; ginnsj@shaw.ca

Conservation Committee:

To be determined

BC Nature Rep: Alex Bodden; a.bodden@shaw.ca

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Refreshments: Jim Shaver Jim_Shaver@shaw.ca

S Okanagan Habitat Garden: Marlene Hikichi (temporarily)

Thursday Birding: Wendy Stewart, Alex Bodden and Jim Shaver

Cover photo: The Rubber Boa snake (*Charina bottae*) is also known as the two-headed snake and one look at our cover photo explains where that name came from. A true boa, the rubber boa is the most northern of all boas. Most people would be more familiar, at least from the movies, with the related boa constrictors and anacondas. Rubber boas occur from northern California to southern BC (as far as Williams Lake) and in the US as far east as Wyoming and Montana. Like most other BC snakes, they hibernate in winter.

President's Report

It does seem that our COVID existence is never going to end. All of us probably have friends who have been working the front line of this war against a virus and I know that they are all tired, but most of all frustrated at the incredible amount of resistance to a simple, proven solution. This of course has had impact on us all and on our club activities. As it stands, we still cannot say with any certainty when we will be meeting in person. We have had some false starts, but all the stars have not aligned as yet. We did try one outing, which was well attended, however maintaining distance was problematic and with the heat of summer, it did not make sense to do any more. The comfort level just is not there for a nonessential activity.

The fires, of course, set us all to thinking of our immediate safety needs and how the potential challenges in our future are unfolding before our eyes. I was in a position to see the first response to two fires this summer and found the choreography of the many aircrafts operating in close quarters to be mesmerizing. Most of us in Penticton watched as the Skaha Creek fire went from looking like an active volcano to just some smoke and small areas of flame in a day. Hopefully the reviews and debriefs that will be taking place over the winter will result in an even better response capacity for the future.

I have to admit that I did not do as much as I had hoped over the summer. The heat and smoke and growing COVID malaise took its toll on many of us. I did not advance my knowledge of butterflies as much as I'd hoped, but did manage to see and photograph several species. It is much trickier to photograph and study insects without harming them. I did learn a few techniques along the way and of course and now I am lusting after a new macro lens. If any of you are regulars on I-naturalists, you need to check out the impressive collection of moths that Dick Cannings put together this summer.

Being around the house did give me the opportunity to read up a bit more on climate change and I finally read *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. It obviously a bit dated in its content, but the overarching themes are still very current and are echoed in one of the climate change books that I read, *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* by David Wallace-Wells. I have a copy of each if anyone wants to borrow them. I wish that I felt better after reading them, but I fear for our future and what will have to be done to avert disaster when so many people cannot take one easy step to protect themselves and the community from a simple virus.

I trust that you all got out into nature as much as possible and have lots of highlights to share once we get together. I had several in the last couple of months. I have been doing the oxbow survey regularly and we counted a Yellow-headed Blackbird, Wilson's Snipe, Solitary Sandpiper, and a couple of Intergrade Northern Flickers. The highlight has to be the large number of Wood Ducks that have made the oxbows their home. Lots of turtles as well.

If you have not been to Vaseux Lake lately, you have to go to check out the new board walk and drop in at the banding

station. Remember your COVID basics. A swan has been hanging out at the lake all summer, which most people, including me, felt was a Trumpeter until Chris Charlesworth managed to get a close look and identified it as a Tundra swan. I had believed that it stayed behind due to injury, until I saw it flying around. Perhaps it has recovered and will join its flock when they return this winter.

I have seen a few American black bears this year and Bobbi and I were very excited to watch one fishing on the west shore of the lake and come out with a large carp in its mouth. I am concerned though about the two young ones that have been frequenting my yard and seem to be getting much too comfortable being in town. I have been doing the daily census at the banding station a couple of days a week and the diversity seems to be high, but the numbers are down this year. My highlights there are an American Redstart, seven American White Pelicans and a Grey flycatcher. Not a lot of raptors though. A Black-crowned Night Heron and six Great Egrets were also seen by Matthias Bieber, the head bander.

I have greatly enjoyed the Facebook entries that some of our members have shared. Dianne and Jodi's daily chronicles have all of the elements of a nature blog as they recount their daily treks along the KVR trail. Curtis Zutz, one of our newest members, has shared some great images of rarities including a Lesser Goldfinch and Northern flying squirrel.

The big news to share is that as I write this we are expecting delivery of our hot off the press Nature Journal. I have discovered that there is a lot more to creating something like this than I ever imagined and we have several people and sponsors to thank for its production, most of all the contributing photographers. The sad part is that many great pictures did not make the final edit. This is a fund raiser for our club and I am sure you will all want to buy several copies as Christmas, birthday and hostess gifts. Watch our website, Facebook and our email for more details and start counting up how many you wish to have and buy quickly to avoid disappointment.

As usual too much to see and do in this great part of the world.

Hope to see you all in person soon.

Alex Bodden

Time to Renew your Membership

So easy to do—go to our website

www.southokanaganature.com, click on the **Join** icon at the top, fill out the form, press submit and you will be taken to our PayPal page. Super simple.

Congratulations Dick Cannings

There are probably not too many naturalist clubs in Canada with a sitting MP on their membership rolls. Congratulations on your re-election!

The Heavens

Yes, we have some nice planets: Jupiter and Saturn specifically, both inhabiting the constellation Capricornus and on duty together, main features of the southern sky as darkness falls.

Jupiter is the brighter of the two and will be quite obvious low in the southeast sky as twilight fades. Saturn will appear to the right of Jupiter, the two of them straddling the large but rather nondescript constellation of Capricornus. Saturn, considerably dimmer than Jupiter, could be mistaken for a bright star, but as there are no bright stars in Capricornus it should be easy to pick out. As the season progresses the whole assembly will shift to the right, appearing pretty well due south as day gives way to night during the latter part of November. At that time Venus will start to encroach on the scene, but will be very low in the southwest sky requiring a good low horizon in that direction for it to be visible. If you are fortunate enough to have such a low horizon, Venus will be **very** obvious, stunningly bright. By the end of November Venus will be a little higher and less likely to be hidden by the mountains, part of a Jupiter-Saturn-Venus lineup (going left to right) that should be quite a dramatic sight.

Jupiter and Saturn move very slowly against the background of stars. Saturn is the slower of the two, taking more than two years to make its way through one of the zodiacal constellations, whereas Jupiter can do it in one. So this time next year you can expect to see Saturn right splat in the middle of Capricornus, and Jupiter, having traversed the full extent of Aquarius, poised ready to push into Pisces. And for those of you who are into astrology and sense you are being given bad information here, remember that astrology uses the `signs' of the zodiac, which have the same names as the constellations but are in a different place.

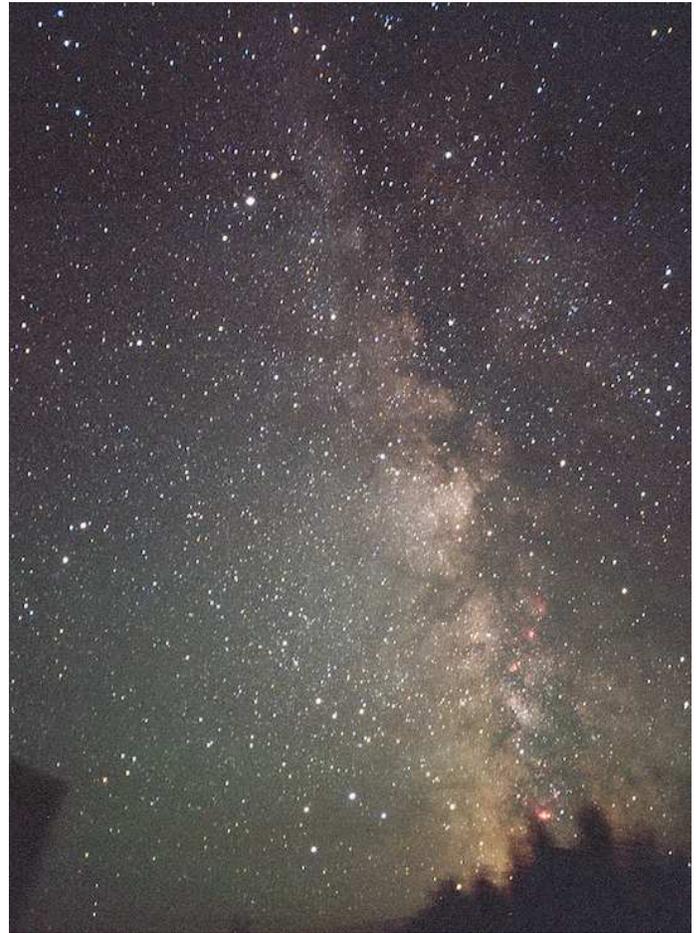
If you are interested in a little more action than that, take a boo at the Moon as it appears to pass by Saturn, then Jupiter, over the course of a few days. That happens mid-month, on October 13-14-15 and again on November 9-10-11, with the Moon near first quarter both times. The Moon's motion against the background of stars is **much** more obvious than that of Jupiter or Saturn, and a quick check on each of the three evenings of either occasion is all you need to see that motion. With any luck the weather will cooperate for at least one of those events.

Later in November the Moon will dive through Earth's shadow, giving us a lunar eclipse. An eclipse of the Moon is a leisurely affair, this one starting at 11:18 pm PST Nov. 18, with mid eclipse 1:03 am Nov. 19, and ending 2:47 am. Mid-eclipse won't *quite* be total, but close, with the Moon 97% immersed in shadow and taking on a deep coppery colour.

As for stars, those of autumn are coming on the scene. Despite that, the huge `summer triangle' of stars will still be very prominent (and actually will hang on right into winter). Cygnus the Swan (also known as the Northern Cross), its brightest star Deneb being one of three making up the Summer Triangle, will be right overhead in the early evening. This magnificent constellation is immersed in the Milky Way, which is most prominent at

this time of year, arching right across the sky from the horizon in The northwest, passing overhead and plunging down to the horizon in the southeast . . . although it takes a good dark sky to see it in its entirety like that. It's worth noting the structure of the Milky Way, particularly the part near Cygnus where it appears to split — features caused by enormous dark interstellar clouds hiding the light of the stars behind them. These structures can be seen in the picture, more obvious in a photograph (or with binoculars) than what you can see with your naked eye.

Chris Purton



Southern portion of Milky Way seen from Mount Kobau.
Photo credit: Jim Failes of Kelowna



Red-legged grasshopper.

Photo by Jodi Forster

Narratives of a Naturalist Rod and Elaine Malcolm

This month's featured "naturalists" are good examples of how widespread our membership is.

Rod and Elaine Malcom live in Keremeos in the Similkameen Valley but they are not our only members to live outside the South Okanagan. Of course, like most people in this part of the world, they are transplants from elsewhere – the BC coast in their case. Rod and Elaine met in high school in Victoria, were married in Victoria and lived there until 1991 when they moved to Kelowna. Like many SONC members, Rod's career moved him around – from Kelowna to Vancouver to Gatineau to Edmonton before retiring in 2014 to their present location.

Rod started his career as a technician with a BC Land Surveyor and a forestry consulting firm in Victoria, working throughout Vancouver Island and BC coastal regions completing timber inventory and survey/assessment of resource lands. After completing an Urban Land Economics education, Rod worked in the property appraisal industry achieving professional designations with the Appraisal Institute of Canada (AAI, P.App) and Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). He worked 25 years in the private sector followed by 20 years with the Government of Canada. Although formally retired in 2013, Rod continues to provide part-time support to the Government of Canada as a special advisor to the Chief Appraiser of Canada. Through his career, Rod developed specialization in the valuation of special purpose properties (conservation and park land, natural resource, institutional holdings, expropriation, related litigation support). Post-retirement, Rod served on the BC Property Assessment Review Panel for Oliver-Keremeos-Osoyoos, and as Pacific Region member of Environment Canada's Ecological Gift Appraisal Review Panel.

From a British Columbia land conservation perspective, Rod has been involved in ecological gift initiatives, conservation land rights acquisition (i.e. conservation easements), provincial and regional park land acquisition, and compensation valuation for avoidance of resource extraction (i.e. standing timber, minerals & gravel). These professional activities transitioned quite smoothly into semi-retirement conservation interests and involvement with SONC.

Elaine comes pursued a different course – her family started the first Japanese restaurant in Victoria in 1971 but no restaurant career for her. She worked in administration at the BC Motor Vehicle Branch, at CIBC and then at Rod's appraisal firm. Later she moved into retail with Sears and Purdy's before retiring in 2007.

Rod and Elaine say they have loved natural area outings since they first met as teenagers. This early interest, coupled with Rod's work with conservation and park lands, led them quite effortlessly into a retirement involving conservation issues and involvement with SONC. Rod says we were enjoying back yard patio time in the summer of 2014 when a beautiful, bright yellow bird with a brilliant red head and black accents landed on our Gingko tree. We had no idea what it was, but through some sleuthing finally identified it as a Western Tanager. We concluded that it would be wonderful to find a group of birding

enthusiasts with skills in identification, seasonal timing, feeding characteristics and preferred habitat. The solution was discovering and joining SONC where we found the perfect combination of bird, insect and plant expertise, exceptionally genuine people and opportunities to meet like-minded friends. We joined SONC in the fall of 2014. We are low-key members of SONC as we continue to develop knowledge regarding our natural environment. Thursday birding throughout the south Okanagan and Similkameen turned out to be an ideal situation for us as it significantly enhanced our understanding of optimal birding locations, species identification, habitat, feeding and calls. The positive social aspect of sharing special viewings and friendly discussions on naturalist and more general topics has been particularly rewarding for us.

We appreciated the opportunity to lead a few birding outings in the Similkameen valley to guide the group (SONC & Princeton naturalists) to our favourite places and to host post-birding lunches/rest stops at our residence. We hope to do so again.

A few of our favourite areas of the south Okanagan-Similkameen include:

- Similkameen River from Manning Park to Nighthawk, particularly hiking and bicycling through dyked and riparian areas in the Keremeos-Cawston vicinities.

- Ashnola River riparian areas and forestry sites/trails; always a perfect escape from the hotter Okanagan and Similkameen.

- White Lake basin through to Mahoney Lake; we've enjoyed many hikes through this beautiful area and never cease to be amazed by the flora, fauna and geography.

We enjoy SONC just the way it is and appreciate both current and past volunteer leadership and expertise. One area where SONC could expand its areas of interest in a highly relevant manner would be to seek input, knowledge and historical context from appropriate First Nation groups regarding traditional gathering rights, conservation practices towards plants, water bodies and wildlife, and of course, First Nations history throughout this region.



Rod and Elaine in their Keremeos garden.



Elaine Malcolm bike birding along the Similkameen River.

Travelling and Nature Guides

We don't know when, but the day will come when we can start to feel comfortable travelling more than a short distance from home and when we do, we will want some guide books to help us identify what we are seeing. So whether it is a trip to Yukon and NWT or as far as New Zealand, or Bhutan, here's some books available for **making a donation to SONC**. These books are courtesy of Club members Mits and Marlene Hikichi. Contact them if you are interested. 250 494 8731 or m.mhikichi@gmail.com

- Birds of New Zealand - Collins;
- Mexican Birds - Peterson;
- Birds of Bhutan - Helm Field Guide
- Bhutan Travel Guide - Lonely Planet
- Birds by the Dempster Highway R. Frisch
- Dempster Highway Travelogue;
- Bird Watcher's Guide to Hawaii -R. Soehren
- Trinidad & Tobago Field Guide to Birds;
- Birds of Panama by R.Ridgley/ John Gwynne, Jr.
- Wildflowers Along the Alaska Highway - Verna Pratt

The Fastest Known Underwater Trap

In mid-August, I received an enquiry from an Osoyoos Lake resident regarding a plant he couldn't identify. Neil was kayaking the oxbows at the north end of Osoyoos Lake and spotted yellow flowers growing out of the water. The oxbows were also teeming with Western Painted Turtles but the vegetation was so thick the turtles only stuck their heads above the water. My heart sank, thinking that a new aquatic plant had invaded our precious waters. This was something I had never seen before. I reached out to Ken Marr, botanist at the Royal BC Museum who confirmed the plant to be a bladderwort, likely *Utricularia intermedia* or flat-leaved bladderwort. Fortunately its a native species. What is unique about this plant is that its carnivorous!

Flat-leaved bladderwort grows in shallow marshy areas of lakes and open wetlands. It is a perennial aquatic herb without roots. Its stems are very slender, floating, submerged or creeping along the bottom. The yellow flowers are on short stalks, rising above the water. The leaves are alternate, numerous, 0.5-2 cm long, divided into 3 parts at the base and then again 1-3 times into 20 or more thread-like segments. This particular species of bladderwort has bladders (small hollow sacs) on branches distinct from those bearing the leaves. These bladders are triggered by tiny aquatic animals. When the animals touch the sensitive hairs on the bladder, the bladder pops open, sucks in the animal and snaps shut again. All in a fraction of a second. The tiny creature is then digested by the plant.

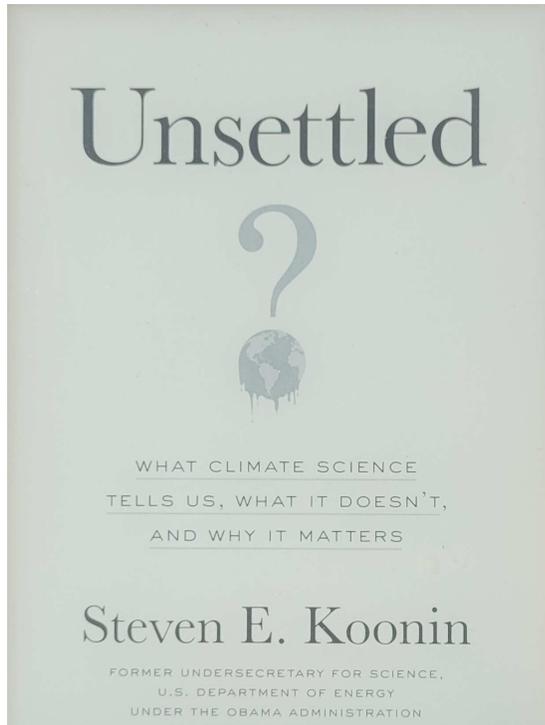
It is the fastest known underwater trap! I highly encourage you to watch this video to learn more: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zb_SLZFsMyQ

By Lisa Scott

Photos by Neil Bousquet



Book Review



Unsettled – What Climate Science Tells Us, What It Doesn't and Why It Matters

Steven E Koonin, BenBella Books, 2021

If you plan to read any books about climate change, you should probably include this one. It's not written by an investigative reporter or a Hollywood activist movie star or a "climate change denier". It is written by an eminent scientist with much experience in computer modelling and who served as Obama's Undersecretary for Science in the US Department of Energy. Yes, at one time he also worked for the oil company BP, where he was chief scientist in charge of advancing renewable energy. He has led, or been involved in, many scientific committees looking into the state of climate science. He is currently a professor at New York University. He is regarded as a climate change skeptic by some.

The title comes from the oft repeated statement that the "The Science is settled." referring to science about climate change. "*The Science*" says *Earth is doomed.*" Koonin says "Well...not quite. Yes, it's true the globe is warming and that humans are exerting a warming influence upon it. But...I do not think the science says what you think it says."

Unlike some climate change books I've read, this one is not full of doom and gloom predictions based on models that disagree and contradict one another – it analyzes the data presented in the UN reports known by their initials IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) as well as other reports by various government agencies. We've all seen some of the media headlines generated by statements in the various IPCC reports. Unfortunately good news doesn't sell papers or generate clicks on websites. If it did here's three headlines you would have seen (but almost certainly have not):

UN and US Climate reports show droughts not getting any worse!

The IPCC's AR5 report (UN) in 2014 stated "There is high confidence for droughts during the last millennium of greater magnitude and longer duration than those observed since the beginning of the 20th century in many regions."

The 2009 National Climate Assessment (US) says "These data reveal that some droughts in the past have been more severe and longer lasting than any experienced in the last 100 years."

Models Used to predict Climate Change Inadequate for the Job!

The IPCC uses more than one model to assess climate change – in fact it uses between 25 and 30 models built by at least 19 different groups (universities, institutes, agencies, etc) and runs hundreds of simulations. The interesting thing is that the different results between the different models vary by more than the observed changes they are trying to predict. And all of the models fail to show the observed warming that occurred between 1910 and 1940 – even though that warming is on the same scale as the amount observed in the past thirty to forty years. The IPCC notes: "It remains difficult to quantify the contribution to this warming (1910 to 1940) from internal variability, natural forcing and anthropogenic forcing, due to forcing and response uncertainties and incomplete observational coverage." *In plain English, they're saying that we don't know what causes this failure of the models.*

Climate Change Unlikely to impact your Economic Future

IPCC AR5 Report states: "For most economic sectors the impact of climate change will be small relative to the impacts of other drivers. Changes in population, age, income, technology, relative prices, lifestyle, regulation, governance and many other aspects of socioeconomic development will have an impact on the supply and demand of economic goods and services that is large relative to the impact of climate change." The report further shows that if the climate does warm by the projected 3C by 2100, the world economy will be negatively impacted by 3% or less. Three percent spread over 80 years is hardly a significant impact.

In addition to looking at the actual data and predictions, Koonin also looks at what actions the world could actually take that would make any difference in the outcomes.

As a geologist I know the climate is changing all the time—if the globe hadn't been warming for the past 12,000 years we would still be under a kilometre of glacial ice! As a scientist, I know that science is not a democracy—it doesn't matter if a majority of scientists agree on something; it only matters if the data supports their position (data is subject to change). There are numerous instances in the past of the majority of scientists in some field being wrong. Am I climate denier—no I am not, but am I conflicted about where the truth lies—yes I am!

Bob Handfield

The Two-headed Snake

Over the years I have lived here I have found several Rubber Boas while out walking and working outdoors.

The first Boa I found was on a rocky outcrop, a favourite spot where I like to see wildflowers. It was in the early spring probably around 1998 or so when I made my first acquaintance with this unique species. The snake was all coiled up basking in the sun. To be truthful, I didn't recognize it as a snake at first. It was a pile of brown, the colour, size and shine of fresh dog poop. As I got a bit closer, I noticed that indeed it was a snake. It did not move as I came nearer to take a good look at it. The tail and head were remarkably alike, giving it a better chance to survive predation, I supposed. There was a large scar on the body about an inch long which had long since healed. Perhaps it had been the intended prey of a raptor but luckily got away. When I got back to the house, I did a bit of research and found that it was a true boa and was listed in BC as a species of concern.

A few years later I was cleaning out an old shed, it had been used as an outhouse by a previous owner. I cautiously lifted an old board fearing what might be living under it. Great intuition, there it was, a really large Rubber Boa, possibly 24-26 inches long (61 –66 cm). (*Editor's note: adults are normally 38 to 84 cm long so this one is actually on the high side of medium sized*). This one was very dark brown in colour and quite thick around. I wondered if being in this dark location caused the skin to be darker. The old outhouse would be a good place for catching prey like mice and their pinkies (young). Again, this snake did not attempt a getaway but just stayed in the same position as I found it. Perhaps it thought I would mistake it for a stick. I haven't seen that snake again, however, I do look from time to time as a photo would be good to have.

In May of 2012, I saw another rubber boa in the garden near the fishpond. This time I took a photo. This snake was about 18 inches long and lighter brown in colour. Again, the snake did not move. I used a stick to see if I could roll it over. The underside was a yellowish, much lighter than the rest of the body. The snake coiled up a bit but did not attempt to move away.

Just a few days ago, in the early evening, my dog, Friday, was sniffing curiously at something near the very same location as the 2012 boa sighting. I put Friday away and went to investigate and there it was, another rubber boa. This one was about 20 inches long and had a large bulge showing in the body, some mice or voles I hoped. It was almost 10 years since the last sighting in the garden. Is this the same snake? It would be nice to think that my garden has provided habitat for this snake for all those years.

Doreen Olson



Which end is the head? Not that easy to tell at a glance.

Photo by Doreen Olson



In BC, American White Pelicans breed only in a few lakes in the Chilcotin, but they are seen every summer in the South Okanagan, generally in small flocks as they pass through our area. This lone young pelican was photographed by Alex Boddan on Okanagan Lake just in front of the Penticton Art Gallery.

Our wicked summer of fire

It was a tough summer: A blistering heat wave in June, sizzling summer sun earlier than normal, dense smoke forcing us inside for days on end, and the roar of fire-fighting aircraft overhead day after day after day.

Add to that evacuation orders and alerts and raging flames a short distance away, it was a horrible summer for many South Okanagan SONC members, families and friends.

For those living in the Penticton area, the Thomas Creek fire near Okanagan Falls was a terrible worry when it broke out July 11, pumping out large plumes of smoke that formed clouds while torching close to 10,600 hectares of land before stalling in late August.

For folks further south, the Nk'Mip fire east of Oliver and Osoyoos scorched a whopping 19,335 hectares from close to Road 22 all the way east to Mt Baldy and southeast to Anarchist Mountain.

Then, on August 28, the Skaha Creek fire broke out above the Penticton airport. This human-caused fire was highly visible to the community as flames crested the top of the hill and started to sneak down the northern slope as darkness fell at day's end.

In total, close to 30,400 hectares of wildland and private property were torched this summer in the South Okanagan. The flames destroyed wildlife habitat, personal possessions and left behind scarred and standing burned trees, ash where fertile soil once supported life and barren charcoal landscapes that will quickly begin to sprout new growth but take years to be truly productive again.

Fire has always been part of the natural cycle in the Okanagan but these fires, several of which were human caused in drought conditions, left people worried and on edge for weeks.

This year's province-wide fire statistics are staggering. The BC Wildfire Service report this season's fires across the province have damaged 868,604 hectares or 8,686 square kilometers of land.

So how much is that?

It represents the area from Vancouver to Chilliwack's eastern boundary in the Fraser Valley and all the municipalities in that area, north and south of the Fraser River (to the border with the USA) multiplied by more than 3.5 times.

Simply put, the area damaged by fire in BC this summer, is more than 3.5 times the area of the lower mainland of British Columbia.

Wildfire damage this year is the third highest on record, behind 2018's 13,542 square kilometers burned and 2017's 12,160 square kilometers torched.

BC's three most damaging wildfire seasons (for land burned) have occurred in the past four years.

As naturalists heading out to enjoy the Fall season in nature, let's reflect on our role and what more we can do to be champions of the environment.

Let's also consider the measures we can take to address climate change, the consequences of which we saw all around us this summer.

Wendy Stewart



An air tanker lays a line of fire retardant to slow the progress of the fire on the Skaha Creek blaze above the Penticton airport. The scars of an earlier fire in this same area are evident by the standing dead trees, particularly on the left of the photo.

New Members

Despite our activities being seriously curtailed over the past 18 months, we are pleased to welcome six new members to the Club.

Margaretha Hogeling, Penticton, February 2020

Ken Oliver, Princeton, February 2020,

Shannon Rutherford, Penticton, - May 2021

Rona Fluney, Penticton, June 2021

Lois James, Penticton, July 2021

Curtis Zutz, Oliver, July 2021

Let's hope we can meet in person very soon.

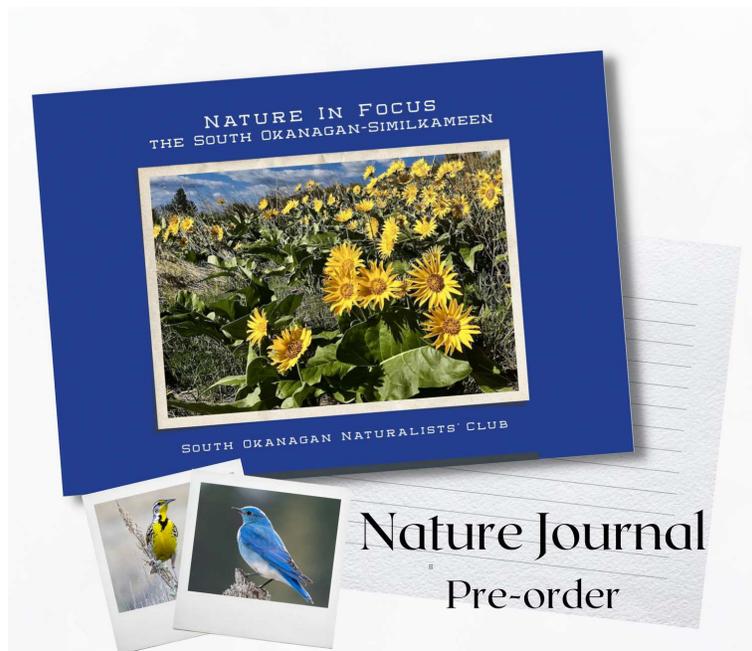


You don't see many Yellow Warblers at this time of year but they are hard to miss when they show up in the spring.

Photo by Jodi Forster

www.southokanagannature.com

If you haven't checked out our Club's website recently, you should do so. Our site has all 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.



The Club is proud to announce the publication of the South Okanagan Similkameen Nature Journal featuring images from the Club's 2018 photo contest as well as photos from some members.

Enjoy 160 pages of beautiful photos, educational content and lots of space for your thoughts, writings and sketches.

Find out more on our website—the journal will be available for purchase in early October.

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Mail form to SONC, 193 Westview Drive, Penticton BC V2A 7W1

Individual.....\$32 per year

Family\$43 per year

Date:.....

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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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.