



THE HARLEQUIN

VERMILION FORKS FIELD NATURALISTS

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Princeton, BC VOX 1W0

Newsletter #64

Oct 2013 – Jan. 2014

Editor June Hope 295-3524

Vermillion Forks Field Naturalist -

Review of our summer submitted by Janis Wright

The past few months, since our last newsletter was printed, have been busy ones for many members of our club. Joan Kelly once again organized two field trips and an evening presentation for the annual Meadowlark Festival on Friday of the May holiday weekend. One field trip was held at Swan Lake while the other traveled along the KVR trail from the tunnel to the Hoodoos. The turnout for Jeff and Sue Turner's film, "The Great Salmon Run," at the museum was particularly successful, with many tourists in attendance.

Our club enjoyed a visit in June from Lyn Grants and her North Vancouver hiking club, and both groups came together for several field trips over the course of a few days. It was a delight to host this most congenial collection of trekkers! They also managed to attend our June club meeting, when our enthusiastic hummingbird banding team gave an outstanding presentation, to the great interest of the visitors. Sue and her merry band then spent countless hours during the summer traveling to a variety of venues, trapping, catching, banding, scribing and releasing a record number of hummers this year. The report of their successful season is found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our Swan Lake committee, led by Madelon Schouten, applied for and received another grant, and we look forward to developing an information centre and more sophisticated trail signage. We are grateful to Habitat Public Conservation Trust Fund for its support! Our club also received donations from friends and family in memory of long standing member Bob Cormack. The donations were used to apply protective Lexan to Bob's beautifully painted sign depicting the unique kettle formations of the area.

Our bluebird boxes, which have been erected in a range of areas within our district, continue to be checked and maintained on a regular basis, under the leadership of Trish Reid. We would request that ranchers return boxes to existing positions after fence repair, however. This season's checks revealed a few interesting findings: one box contained 4 eggs; another contained two fledglings with their parent; yet another contained a mountain chickadee, while the most unusual discovery was a box containing two flying squirrels!

We have had a nice assortment of field trips since May, including Tip Anderson's very companionable hiking/fishing/kayaking trek that took us from Wolfe Lake to Issitz Lake, and wound up with freshly caught trout eaten around a cozy campfire. Peter Antonick's field trip along the Similkameen River was equally sociable, again with freshly caught trout, along with Peter's specialties: home-made wine and smoked salmon!

Our club sadly says goodbye to the lovely Marion Marsel, who passed away this month, and to Lynne Thomas, Janet Middleton, Donna Dodds, and Anthea Pugliese, who are leaving Princeton. We will miss all of you! Fortunately, the position of club historian has been taken over by our newest member, Gwyn Mckay – welcome to Gwyn!! As well, we were delighted this month to induct Jean Turner as our new club president – many thanks to Jean for taking charge of our formerly leaderless group!

Vermillion Forks Field Naturalist -

FIELD TRIPS: October 2013 – January 2014

October 6 Darcy Mountain Doug Rebagliati 250-295-6778

This will be an intermediate hike of 5 – 6 hours in duration. The first 1 ½ - 2 hours is uphill on a 4-wheel drive road under the power line. The rest of the hike is along a plateau; then we'll branch off through "Savage City" and head back to our starting point at Wolfe Lake. **Please note this takes place on Sunday.** Meet at Billy's at 9:00 am with water, lunch, binoculars and camera. Phone to confirm.

October 19 Tulameen riverbed John Henry 250-295-7154

John will lead us on a geological, educational walk along the riverbed of the Tulameen, from Allison Elementary School to the tunnel. It will be an easy walk but on uneven ground. Meet at Billy's at 10:00 am with snack, water and camera. Phone to confirm.

November 2 Mystery Hike Charlotte Sellers 250-295-6079

More information on this mystery hike will be announced closer to the date....

November 16 Stemwinder Mountain Janis Wright 250-295-7560

This moderate hike starts at km. 4 on the mountain, and we'll climb no higher than km. 5. We'll take a circular route (2 – 3 hours) with a few nice views, and have lunch around a campfire, so bring food & drink. We'll meet at Billy's at 9:00 am and carpool from there. Phone to confirm.

December 7 China Ridge Ski Area Mary M. & John H. 250-295-7154

We hope to have enough snow for a 1 ½ - 2 hour trek along the relatively easy terrain of the snowshoe trail at China Ridge, starting at the Longhouse. Pack a lunch and we'll return to the Longhouse to eat. Snowshoe rentals are available from CR Ski Club, \$10 (cash) for shoes & poles. Proper footwear, snow or hiking boots required. Meet at Billy's at 9:30 or at China Ridge Longhouse at 10:00. **Phone Mary by 9:30 am Friday if rentals are required. She is not available for rentals after this time!**

Phone to confirm attendance.

January 4th Christmas Bird Count Madelon Schouten 250-295-7078

The annual bird count is always an educational & entertaining activity. Phone Madelon well in advance to confirm attendance, and bring lunch, hot drink and binoculars. We'll meet at Billy's at 8:00 am.

January 11 Allenby Area Mary Masiel 250-295-7154

Shirley & WahFee Low are graciously hosting this snowshoe outing on their property in the Allenby area, and will join us on a 1 ½ - 2 hour tour. Bring a snack & hot drink and meet at Billy's at 9:30. **Phone Mary for rentals by 9:30 am on Friday. She is not available for rentals after this time!** \$10 (cash) for rental package. Proper footwear required. Confirm with Mary or John.

January 25 Fisherman's Cove Terry Tellier 250-295-7354

Tellier's will host a moderate snowshoe trek on their property at 4184 Princeton-Summerland Road. It will last approximately 2 hours, with plenty of time to enjoy the vistas and animal tracks. We can warm up around a campfire afterwards with coffee or hot chocolate. Bring snack, water and lunch if you want to eat in the Bud Shed later. Meet at Billy's at 9:15 am. Confirm with Terry or Greg.

Report from Zoe Kirk after her Bear Aware presentation this fall

Thank-you ever so much for such a warm welcome, and fun evening! Wow there were a lot of folks squeezed into that room. Please pass on my gratitude for the gift of greeting cards to your club members. The cards are delightful – and just perfect for my programs. I like to use local images when I send correspondence. They will be gratefully and fully utilized.

Further to our quick discussion, I can do water conservation workshops; including rain barrel making and water re-use. I can do an evening 2.5 hours or a daytime event on the week end. What has been very popular this year is when I combine the water conservation workshops with a presentation “ Xeriscape does not mean Zeroscape” by Eva Antonijevic from the Summerland Ornamental Gardens. She has been making great strides in changing the philosophy of planting at the gardens, and has started revamping flower beds and areas to be low water, nearly NO water demonstration beds. Her presentation is beautiful and she is especially entertaining! As part of our combined outreach commitments the workshops are **free** to RDOS residents. We usually do a week end day from about 10:30 to 3:00 pm with a half hour lunch.

Also, as mentioned during the question and answer period last night, Cameron Baughen is the RDOS Solid Waste Coordinator and composting guru (my opinion) and can deliver workshops on composting, and much more!

I look forward to being in Princeton again,

Kindest Regards

Ms Zoe Kirk

RDOS WildSafeBC Community Coordinator:

Ph: 250-492-0237 ext 4110 cell: 250-488-0285

rdos@wildsafebc.com May 15 to November 30

INSECTS HELPING TO WIN THE WAR ON INVASIVE PLANTS By Lisa Scott - September 2013

As many landowners know, established infestations of invasive plants are typically difficult to and often persist for many years, costing significant time and money. Physical and chemical control measures can effectively reduce infestations in many situations. However, these options can also be impractical, labour intensive and costly. When infestations are large and dense or occur in sensitive habitats, biological control is often the only suitable option for long-term, effective control.

Biological control, or the use of natural enemies for the suppression of weed populations, was first introduced to BC in 1952 with the release of the St. John's-wort defoliating beetle *Chrysolina quadrigemina*. Since then, over 60 agents have been established in BC, providing control of approximately 20 different invasive plants. In fact, BC has the best track record in Canada for running an effective provincial biocontrol program.

In the Okanagan-Similkameen region, biological control is proving especially fruitful. Many invasive species are now considered under control in localized areas due to the establishment of biological control agents. These species include diffuse knapweed, Dalmatian toadflax, purple loosestrife, St. John's-wort, and most recently hound's-tongue.

In the Princeton area, infestations of knapweed, toadflax and hound's-tongue (among other species) have moved into grasslands and dry, open forests and competed with our native plants and agricultural crops for several decades. However, the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society has been working closely with the provincial government and other partners to make a difference. Insects have been released to control all three species.

Mecinus janthinus, a black stem-boring beetle, has been released to control the Dalmatian toadflax. The beetles cause damage to the stems and also create holes in the leaves.

Several different types of insects have been released to control the knapweed, with two beetle species seemingly having the greatest results. A seedhead beetle, *Larinus minutus*, eats the leaves, stems and seeds of knapweed, while a much larger beetle, *Cyphocleonus achates*, mines the root. The two insects together can cause significant damage to the knapweed plants, creating shorter plants with less seeds, and overtime the weed population will become much sparser.

You may have noticed that knapweed appears to have made somewhat of a comeback this year, and this appears to be due to a temporary reduction in the number of beetles. This is not totally unexpected, as the introduction of these insect enemies essentially results in the establishment of a predator-prey relationship. In this sense, when the prey (invasive plant) is abundant one year, the predator (insect enemy) will follow suit the next year. Once the prey is successfully reduced in abundance, the predator will also decrease. This cycle is ongoing, except in the rare cases where the bioagents actually kill the invasive plant and are then anticipated to perish themselves.

Biological control is proving to be one of the most effective means of controlling invasive plant outbreaks that have reached significant proportions. Agents are self-propagating and self-dispersing, thus supporting a long-term, cost-effective and environmentally friendly means of control. And rest assured that these beetles prefer their host plants over anything else and will not decide that your garden plants taste better!

For further information on invasive species go to our NEW website: www.oasiss.ca or contact the Program Coordinator for the Okanagan-Similkameen, Lisa Scott, at 250-404-0115 or email her at oasiss@shaw.ca



Marion Marsel

It was very sad news to hear that Marion Marsel has passed away. Marion was a long time member of the Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists and was a Director on the Executive for many of those years.

Marion was always a lady and a very positive person and this attitude came through at executive and General meetings. She had much to contribute. Marion will be greatly missed in the community

**Guest Speakers: Second Tuesday of each month October 2013 to February 2014
Riverside Center 7 p.m.**

Tues. Oct. 8th - Dennis St. John - "Monarch and other Butterflies"

Tues., Nov. 12th - Mine Engineer - "Copper Mountain Mining Operation"

Dec. - Christmas Party – TBA

Tues., Feb. 11th - John Henry & Mary Masiel - Topic to be announced

Appeal for B.C. breeding bird and habitat photographs

The Atlas Publication Committee is seeking free contributions (i.e. unpaid) of very high quality, colour photographs of every breeding bird species in B.C.

We do stress that the overall well-being of the birds is our top priority, and photographers should not cause any stress or harm to wildlife or habitat while obtaining photos. We will not use any photographs that were unethically acquired, or that did not follow the "Ethics of Birding" guidelines <http://www.birdatlas.bc.ca/english/guidelines.jsp>

PLEASE read and follow the instructions detailed here

<http://www.birdatlas.bc.ca/download/BC> Breeding Bird Atlas photograph appeal.pdf or see the Atlas homepage.

Photographs for consideration can be submitted in the following ways (DO NOT SUBMIT FILES BY E-MAIL, thank you):

1. On CD/DVD, memory card or portable hard drive to: Christopher Di Corrado, BC Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator, 5421 Robertson Road, Delta, BC V4K 3N2.
2. Online via our Dropbox account. Please contact Christopher Di Corrado cdicorrado@birdscanada.org or 1-877-592-8527 to be invited to the account.

3. If you have a large collection of photographs that you would like to make available (e.g., from a web-based collection), please contact the Atlas office with some basic information on the size and scope of your collection, and any weblinks and passwords required to view photographs.

Please note that while we sincerely appreciate your submissions, not all photographs submitted for consideration will be used in the publication, thank-you.

NOTE - New phone number 604-350-1911

Hummingbird Banding Season 2013 by Sue Elwell

Although it is not quite the end of our second year of banding, I wanted to include an article in this edition of the Harlequin Newsletter. It has been such an exciting year with: great numbers of birds banded; a “foreign recap”; sub-banders trip to Rocky Point Bird Observatory Conference in Burnaby; and trainees from Castlegar and Saskatoon coming to Princeton.

On the bird front, it has been amazing. This year our group of dedicated volunteers have banded 720 birds and handled 109 recaps. This is 200 more birds processed than last year. The breakdown of the banding is 205 Rufous males, 136 Rufous females, 205 Calliope males, 234 Calliope females, 8 Black-chinned males, 16 Black-chinned females, 10 Anna’s males(all juveniles) and 15 Anna’s females. Of the 829 birds handled so far in 2013 121 were this year’s offspring. Of note is the increased number of Anna’s which we have banded - 5 last year to 24 so far this year. We are witnessing the expansion of their range which is exciting and interesting.

As for the “foreign recap”, on May 9th at Hope’s we trapped a female Rufous Hummingbird which had been banded April 21st at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. This was so exciting for both teams who handled this bird because now we know some of the birds which call the Princeton area home and/or go through this valley come from their Mexican wintering grounds through Arizona. Other parts of B. C. have birds which come through Texas. Also our trapping this bird answered a question the Fort Huachuca team had which was could a bird with no fat reserves make the migration. Answer YES! Hopefully at some point one of our banded birds will be trapped somewhere else!

For those who were not at the June meeting and did not hear about our planned trip to Burnaby for a conference, on June 14th Terry, Amanda and I headed down to the lower mainland. On June 15th there were information sessions all day long at Simon Fraser University. It was a wonderful experience for the three of us as we learned so much and also, and this is invaluable, we networked with other teams in the Province. Alison Moran, the person in charge of the hummingbird banding program, asked the Princeton team to do a presentation on how we organize our banding environment, handle the birds and process the birds. This was a real pat on the back and affirmation that we are doing things right! On Sunday, June 16th, we were up before 3:00 a.m. as we headed out to Widgeon Marsh in Coquitlam(through a locked gate so no late arrivals) with Roy Teo, the bander who takes care of this location. Once again this was a learning experience that could not be duplicated in a classroom setting as we all shared and watched how each team went about banding. We gave ideas to other teams and we came home with some new improvements to our system.

Now for the last item, we welcomed people who are looking for a place to train. Sharon Lelliott from Castlegar came last year to get experience and returned this year to finish off and apply for her sub-banders permit. She has now received it and will be establishing her own sites in the Castlegar area. Ron Jensen from Saskatoon came at the end of July, at the suggestion of Alison, to begin training. Over two days he banded 23 birds so will have to return next year to finish his training as a base number of 100 banded birds is needed. When done he will be banding in the Saskatoon area. Unlike our team, which has to handle four species of hummingbirds, Ron will only have to deal with one, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and he is very happy about this!

A GREAT YEAR. Thank you first and foremost to the host sites. They are so enthusiastic and accommodating and make our job a pleasure. Also a huge shout out to everyone on the team and for the support from the VFFN Club. Amanda, Terry and I would especially like to thank the club for the financial support in connection with the conference and in running the program.

Heads up as well because there have been mutterings that we might host the bi-annual conference in two years time!! Sue Elwell



The Fall bring us back into the season for Yellowjackets, Hornets and Wasps and this seems a particularly bad year for them so here's some information.

Spring – Nest building – Weather determines wasp problems, cold rainy weather in April and May reduces the likelihood that queens can build a nest and collect enough food to feed her immature offspring, while warm dry weather through June enhances the nest success.

Take these common-sense steps to reduce unintentional contacts with foraging wasps:

- Minimize use of perfumes
- Wear white or tan clothing
- Don't hang traps on your balcony or near the picnic area
- Teach children to stay away from any nests discovered.
- Walk backward/Move slowly. Wasps especially respond to rapidly moving dark silhouettes.
- Flick, Don't swat, don't crush bodies, crushing releases alarm pheromones that bring others.
- Run but not to trees or shrubs. Take shelter in a building or vehicle, or keep running until wasps stop their pursuit. They may chase you several hundred feet.

Yellowjackets, baldfaced hornets and paper wasps build new nests each spring

Yellowjackets are shiny, bare of hair and sleeker than bees, they can sting multiple times.

Although sting and bite are commonly used terms they mean different things. Some wasps bite, they defend themselves by nipping at attackers with their jaws. But the painful welt that results from a wasp attack is a **sting not a bite**. Stinging insects deliver venom into their victims by means of a needle-like apparatus – the sting- located at the tip of the abdomen. Only females can sting, this is because the sting is an egg-laying tube that has become modified for injecting venom.

Yellowjackets are more readily provoked into stinging during late summer as natural foods become scarce and workers aggressively scavenge picnic food scraps; they also vigorously defend their nests as new reproductive queens and males are produced.

Multiple stings by one insect are likely when the insect becomes trapped under clothing against bare skin. The pain is from the venom injected which can cause intense pain, kills cells and causes swelling immediately surrounding the sting site. Usually symptoms go away without treatment in a few hours to several days. Sometimes delayed reaction – such as hot, red swelling of a leg or arm – can last a week.. Applying an Ice compress to reduce swelling and pain, over the counter antihistamines are also helpful. I have found a few drops of “Bach Flower Rescue Remedy” on the site as soon as possible relieves a lot of the distress. A certain percent of the population (1-3%) can have an allergic reaction to the venom. Honey bee venom differs from these other stinging insects so people allergic to bees may not be allergic to Wasps. **Anyone who ever has suffered a severe allergic reaction to stinging insects should consult with his/her physician about allergen testing and venom desensitizing immunotherapy.**

VFFN Executive February 2013 – January 2014

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	Linda Neumann	7013
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Publicity	Janis Wright	7560
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Swan Lake Committee	Madelon Schouten (Chair)	7078
	Peter Antonick, Cora & Tony Cherry, Joan Kelly, Ed, Cathy, Jason & Amanda Lahaie, Anthea Pugliese, Charlotte Sellers, Charles Weber, Consultant: Maggie Trehearne	
Youth Coordinator	Ken Heuser	7647

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION--THE VERMILION FORKS FIELD NATURALIST SOCIETY

I, the undersigned, apply for membership in the Vermilion Forks Field Naturalist Society (The Naturalists) and acknowledge that I am aware of the risks inherent in participating in the activities of the society, and do hereby, in consideration of this membership, for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify the Naturalists, their members, directors, officers, trip leaders, agents or representatives from and against all claims, actions, costs, expenses and demands by reason of any damage, loss, death, injury, disability or psychosis arising out of or in any connection with my participation in these activities, notwithstanding that the same may have been contributed to by the negligence of the Naturalists. I (we) accept the terms of this release from liability. I (we) are 19 years or older.

Date _____ Signature(s) _____

Please print name(s) in full

Box Number _____ *City* _____ *Postal Code* _____

Phone Number _____ *Enclosed are \$* _____

E-mail Address _____

Student Membership is \$10.00 Single Adult Membership is \$25.00 Family Membership is \$35.00

Fees may be mailed to Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists Box 2074 Princeton, B.C. V0X 1W0

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