



THE HARLEQUIN

VFFN NEWSLETTER—FALL EDITION—2017

Fall arrived very quickly with temperatures dropping and snow tipping the top of mountains. It brought relief from heavy smoke caused by forest fires that had invaded the valleys. One has to wonder what Mother Nature has in store for the remainder of the year.



Kilpoola Lake



Fall day at Blue Lake in Kilpoola Lake area

RECOGNITION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists presented Madelon Schouten with a plaque that will be placed on a bench overlooking Swan Lake in appreciation for all the outstanding contributions that she has made to the society.



EVENING SPEAKERS:

Date: September 12, 2017

Speaker: Johanna Nott

Topic: Travels in Scotland

The first speaker after the summer break was Johanna Nott. She spoke on her travels in the Outer and Inner Hebrides, islands off the coast of Scotland. She also travelled in mainland Scotland as far as the the north coast.

Most of her travel was done by walking or hiking. At times this proved difficult because she had to rely on ferries whose schedules were always unpredictable. So, she was always trying to make a ferry or waiting to take a ferry. This mode of transportation was crucial in island hopping.



Watercolour by Johanna captures the Scottish countryside.



Her photos were outstanding in demonstrating the beauty of the land and the isolation which in itself was an attraction. Some of the areas reminded the audience of many similar ones in Princeton. Johanna's intention was to explore the wild, rural area of Scotland, and this she achieved very well.

Date: October 10, 2017

Speaker: Amanda Lahaie

Topic: Native birds

Amanda gave a short presentation of birds found around Princeton. Her photographs were incredible. VFFN has some outstanding photographers and they capture the natural world very well.



The Lahaie family is so talented when it comes to birds. Their knowledge of this subject is vast and they are so willing to share this information. It was a delight to listen to Amanda speak on a subject she knows well. The presentation consisted of photographs of different birds in their habitat.

Date: November 14, 2017
 Speaker: Johanna Nott
 Topic: Camino de Santiago

Johanna Nott decided to do a walk that many people are doing, but few have walked the distance that she did.

Her goal was to reach Santiago, Spain. There are numerous roads that lead to Santiago and to the famed cathedral that holds the relic of the saint (Santiago or St. James). The pilgrimage was very popular during the middle ages; then interest waned, only to remerge in 1992.

There are many reasons why people do the Camino de Santiago, but Ms. Nott saw it as challenge to see how long it would take and how many kilometres she could walk. She actually started in France and did her walk to Santiago, then continued to Porto, Portugal. In total she walked 1500 kilometres in two months, with the same pair of shoes! What a feat that was. When asked how far she travelled each day, she replied, "usually anywhere between 30 to 40 kms a day". On a few occasions she did 43, but added, "that distance was just too far, and tried not to do that very often".

She gave a wealth of information on the history, cultural observations, and the physical demands. Her wonderful pictures told the story.



Day's end ↑



Typical signpost for those doing the **Camino**

RANDY MOODY'S PRESENTATION ON THE WHITEBARK PINE

Special report: Mary Masiel



Randy Moody's presentation on the Whitebark Pine at the high school was an excellent one. He is a very good speaker and is very passionate about this topic that he has studied for fourteen years.

The Whitebark Pine transcends borders; it is found both in Canada and in the United States Northwest. It is an endangered species in Canada and soon be declared so in the United States.

This pine is found at high elevations and three species, the bear, Clark's Nutcracker, and squirrel depend on its seeds. Squirrels and Clark's Nutcrackers help spread the seeds. The squirrels build caches for winter storage; sometimes bears raid these caches and other times the squirrels forget about them. The Clark's nutcracker also store the seeds for winter often forgetting where they put them but spreading these seeds far and wide.

The seeds are important bear food. They provide 900 calories whereas blueberries only provide 84 calories. Randy showed a video taken at Kicking Horse Ski Area in Golden where Blue a captive grizzly bear resides. This bear has been captive since it was a small cub; it has never had any exposure or experience with other bears. He was given Whitebark pine cones,

and he immediately knew what to do. With great manual dexterity, using his paws, he opened the cone and ate the seeds. Meanwhile, he ignored the salmon that also had been provided for his meal. Instinctively, he knew what to do and what was best for him!

The Clark's Nutcracker also thrives on these seeds and if no cones are produced it does not fledge. It waits until food is readily available.

It takes a Whitebark Pine forty years to mature; once it has reached maturity it produces cones. A mature cone is purple in colour and it takes two years for a tree to produce one. Scientists have discovered that by taking the top branches with cones of an older, mature tree and then grafting it onto young saplings, the young tree thinks that it is mature and produces cones! Cones are often protected by enclosing them in a wire basket to keep animals away. The cones are collected and the seeds are manually extracted and used for growing saplings.

Mr. Moody's presentation demonstrated how the natural world is indeed a fascinating one.



Photo: M. Masiel

The **NORTHERN FLICKER** (*Colaptes auratus*) is a medium-sized bird of the woodpecker family. It is native to most of [North America](#), parts of [Central America](#), [Cuba](#), and the [Cayman Islands](#), and is one of the few woodpecker species that [migrate](#). Over 100 common names for the northern flicker are known, including

yellowhammer (not to be confused with the Eurasian yellowhammer), **clape**, **gaffer woodpecker**, **harry-wicket**, **heigh-ho**, **wake-up**, **walk-up**, **wick-up**, **yarrup**, and **gawker bird**. Many of these names derive from attempts to imitate some of its calls. Like most woodpeckers, northern flickers drum on objects as a form of communication and territory defence. In such cases, the object is to make as loud a noise as possible, so woodpeckers sometimes drum on metal objects.

A typical clutch consists of six to eight eggs whose shells are pure white with a smooth surface and high gloss. The eggs are the second-largest of the North American woodpecker species, exceeded only by the pileated woodpecker's. Incubation is by both sexes for about 11 to 12 days. The young are fed by regurgitation and fledge about 25 to 28 days after hatching.

Information from Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_flicker)

SPEAKERS for 2018

Listed below is a tentative list for Speaker for 2018. Joann has done a marvellous job of completing the slate. I hope that you will come to a general meeting and listen to some of these speakers.

TUES. JAN. 9th	Mary & John — Area hikes, Far & Near
TUES. FEB. 13th	Sue Elwell — Hummingbirds
TUES. MAR. 13th	Gerry Buzzell — Iceland
TUES. APR. 10th	Lisa Scott — Invasive Weeds, Stink bugs, etc.
TUES. MAY 8th	Heather & John Neville — Topic TBA
TUES. JUN 12th	Andrew Walker — Big Horn Sheep
JULY & AUGUST	No Meetings
TUES. SEPT. 11th	Merle Kindred — Guyana
TUES. OCT. 9th	Arthur Scully, Bobcats & Lynxs
TUES. NOV. 13th	TBA

DEC. — CHRISTMAS GATHERING

Contributions to the Harlequin are welcome. If you submit a photo, do a write up to go with it. Please send your submissions to Mary, vffnbc@gmail.com