



# THE HARLEQUIN

## VFFN Newsletter—Summer Edition—2018

Summer was a mixed bag of hot and cold weather, brilliant sunshine or dark skies, plentiful rain causing flooding and droughts causing wildfires. The flora was amazing. At one point everything was behind schedule and then miraculously everything popped up. There were explanations galore for changing weather patterns, but ultimately one had to think, climate change.



Turkey Vultures



Bald Eagle



Twin Berries

### **EVENING PRESENTATION**

**TOPIC: Wild Sheep**

**PRESENTER: ANDREW WALKER**

The last evening presentation before summer breakup was “Living with Wild Sheep—History, Challenges & Options”. The presenter was Andrew Walker, a government biologist. This was a good presentation that gave the audience an overview of problems and solutions regarding the wild sheep in the area. It is interesting to note that one is hardly aware of all the issues surrounding wildlife until someone points them out.

Deregulation of wild sheep almost spelled the demise of these animals. In order to insure survival the government had to step in. One immediate solution was to curb the senseless killings of wild sheep. Challenges remained such as interaction between domestic and wild sheep, causing the spread of diseases between them. Another problem is the loss of habitat due to human encroachment.

Some of the solutions involved setting up Government agencies for the protection of the wild sheep. More collaboration and engagement between multi-stake holders was encouraged. Another very important program was Education and Outreach.



## FIELD TRIP WITH LISA SCOTT

This outing was truly an eye opener and educational. For most of the day we followed Biologist Lisa Scott from the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) as we visited different sites where various invasive weeds/plants could be found in the Princeton area. A large contingent of people (25–30) from various organizations made up the group. They were ranchers, industries such as, Weyerhaeuser, Copper Mountain Mine, Fire Suppression Crew Rep and representatives from various government ministries, from Kamloops, Merritt, and the Okanagan.

There are some incredibly knowledgeable people out there whose whole careers have been to manage and eradicate invasive plants. These invasive plants were introduced from elsewhere, outside of Canada. They have taken hold by infesting large sections of grasslands and competing with native grasses and making it problematic for ranchers and livestock.

Our first site was off River Road. Here we inspected the Leafy Spurge which appeared in great abundance. It is quite an attractive plant but capable of just taking over fields upon fields of land. In all instances to eradicate the weed, biological means are used. The agent here is the Leaf Tying Moth that originates in Italy. The process, although too lengthy to describe here, follows the insect stages of adult, egg, larva, pupa, etc. The pupa stage is interesting “early pupae are pale green, changing to brown just before emerging. At 21-24 deg. C. and 16 hours of daylight, pupation is complete in 26 days; therefore, the first generation development from egg to adult is completed in 36 days.”

Another agent that is used is the “root feeding flea beetle”. Its effectiveness is good. It causes significant damage to the plant. “The larvae feed on root hairs, young roots and parts of the main root, reducing the plant’s ability to absorb moisture and accumulate nutrients.” Another agent that appears to work on the Leafy Spurge is the Foliar Feeding Moth from Germany.



Our next site was along Barry Cooks Road (as referred to it by locals) or East China Creek Road. Here infestation of the Diffuse Knapweed has been very problematic. Again, a biological agent was used. It has proven somewhat effective, but it was pointed out things seem to go in cycles. Another invasive plant in this area is the Nodding Thistle or Musk Thistle, a very attractive plant.

Two agents that have been used to control this plant are Seed Feeding Beetle from France and the Rosette/Root Crown Feeding Beetle from Germany. We heard from ranchers about the problem with the knapweed and gave their response to the effectiveness of the biological intervention. Most of the reaction was favourable.

The last site was Knutson Creek and the site of the 2017 forest fire. We were given an account by the various groups involved, Fire Suppression, Weyerhaeuser, and ranchers. Replanting of good plants as soon as possible after a fire prevents weeds, especially the spread of invasive weeds.

By late afternoon with heads bursting with information, we made our way back to the Atkinson Ranch where a wonderful lunch awaited us. What a way to end a most productive day!



## BC NATURE CATHEDRAL LAKES CAMP: Special Report: mhmasiel



When Kees Visser, past president of BC Nature asked John and I if we were interested in leading some hikes with him at Cathedral Lakes Park, I was somewhat apprehensive, considering that I have a bad knee, but he indicated that I would lead the less vigorous hikes, leaving me somewhat puzzled because most of the hikes can be demanding.

Facing the 2 1/2 days with some trepidation, we finished the hikes with an absolute high! It was a fantastic experience. The setting as usual was awesome, but the participants were absolutely wonderful. I have found that the few times that we have participated in a BC Nature event that we have a strong connection with other naturalists. We care about the environment and all aspects of nature. Mentally and physically, we are activists. We enjoy activities like hiking, cycling, walking, skiing, and travelling.

I was told by Kees that we had to get at least 25 people interested in attending this camp; he also limited the number to 37 and we three made a total of 40. We were to all stay at the resort with full room and board and transportation, there and back. Kees said that the camp was full in two hours! I guess he also had a long waiting list.

Before continuing, let me say that the service at the lodge was great and so were the meals! On our arrival the first order of business was to have lunch, then 2 short hikes were organized. John led one around Quiniscoe Lake and up to Quiniscoe Falls. Kees led another to Scout Lake.

After dinner the participants signed up for the hike they were interested in doing the following day. John had a group of 16 who accompanied him up to Lakeview Mountain and back, a total of 8 hours, Kees also had a group of 16 and they went up to Glacier Lake, then up to the rim, coming back by way of Ladyslipper Lake. Theirs was a 7 hour hike. I had 5 ladies from White Rock and we went up to Glacier Lake, down to Pyramid Lake and up to Ladyslipper and back. We took 5 hours. My group went slowly and stopped often to photograph and identify flowers. At the end of the day each group was happy with their accomplishment. "Don't worry, Mary," Kees said to me, "tomorrow you will have a lot more people because they will realize that the hikes John and I are leading are not that easy." He was right.

The following day, John took 18 ladies up to the Rim and went past Stone City to view Smoky the Bear and the Giant Cleft before returning by way of Ladyslipper Lake. Kees's group went up to the Centennial Trail to connect with the Rim Trail and then to Red Mountain. My group (18 of us!) did the Diamond Trail. Walking along a trail with 18 people is quite interesting but I didn't lose anyone. I warned everyone that signed up with me that my group would go slowly and stop often to take photos of flowers. The response was "Yeah! that's what I want."

Diamond Trail is a moderate trail; it meanders through a treed area, eventually arriving at an alpine meadow. It soon became evident that we were hiking around the back of Scout Mountain. When the top of the col is reached one is treated to a spectacular view. This area is nothing but rock but with its charm and to the side is an awesome view of Lakeview Mountain, the Boxcar, Macabre Tower, Grimface Mountain, and even the Giant Cleft. The view is so enjoyable that you don't want to come down. The trail down is quite steep but you have that wonderful view to look at whenever you stop for a rest. We arrived half an hour after Kees's group, but John's group arrived 3 hours later. John said that they were moving very fast to make it back by 6:00 and supper time.

Kees later told us that the participants were mostly hikers from the naturalists groups, and they came from White Rock, Vancouver, Chilliwack, Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna, and other places. Some had been to the Cathedrals, but others had not. Women far outnumbered men. John says that this is usually the case. Those people who come to hike the Cathedrals are mostly groups of women. The Cathedrals Lakes Camp was an interesting, enjoyable experience. Many of the wildflowers were just starting to come out and when they do, many are miniatures of the ones at lower elevations. Plentiful plants of Trapper's Tea abounded. Temperatures in the morning and evening were decidedly cool, but the days were great for hiking. Hiking the trails at the Cathedral Lakes Park is highly recommended.



Kees Visser's group crosses a snow field



A view of Glacier Lake



Alpine Tarn seen from Diamond Trail





## BC NATURE RECOGNIZES VFFN NATURE MENTOR

### SUE ELWELL—NATURE MENTOR

Donna Hills, VFFN BC Nature Director, presents Sue Elwell with a certificate from BC Nature that recognizes her work in the Hummingbird Banding Project, especially in teaching others the valuable skills of hummingbird banding. Accolades from fellow members were read at the presentation.

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## VFFN VISITS THE LIBRARY

VFFN was invited by the Princeton Library to give a presentation to the young readers attending the Summer Reading Program. It was an interesting experience to sit in and listen to Jeremy, the librarian, ask questions and responding with facts that the children seem to enjoy knowing.

John and I were guest speakers. I gave a simple explanation of what VFFN is all about and then showed the short video of the hummingbird banding which the kids found interesting. John, as always, got everyone's attention with his animal skull collection. The children tried to guess what animal each skull represented. The one of the cow and goat were easily identified. John then gave an explanation of why the teeth from each animal is so specialized all dependent on the animal's need. We concluded our presentation by giving each child a sticker that showed the Similkameen River with the wording "water, our precious resource".



Bear skull

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## WHAT'S NEW AT SWAN LAKE?



The above photo is one of four new attractions added to Swan Lake which give the visitor information about this very popular site. The signs are a collage of images consisting of wildflowers, birds, butterflies, grasses, etc. The panels involved the work of many people. Ed and Cathy Lahaie designed the signs, Cathy, Sue Elwell and Mary Masiel contributed photos, Ed Muckle printed them, David Gilham placed them in specially built frames, Kevin Kunderman gave VFFN the steel posts, John Henry cut the posts and helped dig the holes for the posts, and Ken Oliver cut and placed plexiglass on the signs to protect them and then erected them in their proper spot. The combined effort of many hands made possible a very attractive project.

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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](mailto:vffnbc@gmail.com)



THE END OF SUMMER &  
THE BEGINNING OF FALL

Pin Cherries (*Prunus pensylvanica*)