

NATURE BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society

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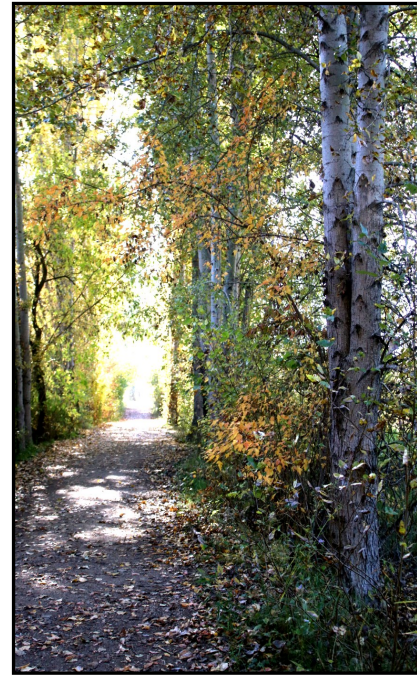
Fall 2019



President's Message

Don't you just love walking the trail this time of year? The trees have grown so much this year and the 'archway' is prominent again. If you are really lucky you may have spotted the Pileated Woodpecker. Summer rainfall was a welcome change.

This summer, thanks again to the **City of Salmon Arm** and the **Federal Canada Summer Jobs Agency**, we were able to hire two students at our **Brighthouse Nature Centre**. The application process for the **Canada Summer Jobs Grant** emphasized the need for ongoing supervision and mentoring, so we took this role seriously. A number of our **SABNES** Board of Directors stepped up and spent considerable time supporting and mentoring our students, **Gianna Ragsdale** and **Ethan Quilty**. I believe it made for a better experience for everyone. Our Board is very diverse and as a result the students learned a lot about the history of the area, the role of **SABNES**, the importance of the wetlands in an urban area, why the hummocks were constructed and how to identify common birds. By the end of the summer, our students were local experts on wildlife in the bay and could answer most questions posed by visitors to the Centre.



Sid Visser with a helper installing a new memorial bench on the trail

If you were out on the trail this summer and wandered onto the boardwalk by the beaver pond, you might have spotted **Sid Visser**, another valuable Director on our Board. He spent hours with pulleys and counter balances to raise single planks to create an even boardwalk and replaced the rails that had decayed. Sid also installed a new Memorial Bench. Precision defines his work.

Did you happen to run into **Scott Girvan** pulling **Woody Nightshade**? We received a grant from the **BC Naturalists Club** to fund this project. Scott filled over 50 bags with weeds. Because Woody Nightshade strangles everything in its path, it needs regular removal. We appreciate the support of **CSIS (Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society)** in this endeavour.

Boaters are heeding the buoys in the Bay. Each Spring **Hanne** and **Doug Mackay**, with the help of their grandsons, scrub the buoys and make sure they are positioned to remind all watercraft to stay out of the foreshore marshes. This has helped protect our waterfowl, especially during the sensitive nesting months.





Pair of Bald Eagles near Raven

My highlight this summer was the news that one of the bat boxes that **Jim Hoskins** built for the Hummock project is now occupied. The bird box story is another wonderful success to celebrate. Special thanks to our Board Members for all the jobs they do behind the scenes. Thank you to our **SABNES** members for your continued interest and ongoing support.

Janet Aitken

If you enjoy the Nature Trail, or support the work of SABNES, consider joining or renewing your membership, or forwarding this to friends. See Page 4

Discourse on Birds—*New Homes for Our Feathered Friends*

It feels like Christmas in August when we open nest boxes and find treasures inside. Hopefully, we find a spent nest, the fledglings long gone and headed south. Sometimes it's a delicate egg or four inches of soft down, as warm and inviting as a feather duvet. Most often, it's a mat of compressed materials glued together with droppings but occasionally, it's something tragic like the dried skeletons of dead nestlings who never knew what it meant to fly.

Thanks to the generosity of several community groups, particularly MakerSpace and South Canoe Elementary School, the summer of 2019 was a banner year for swallows on the foreshore. For three years, we've been improving the number and quality of nest boxes along the trail and in Peter Jannink Park until we will have reached what we hope is the ideal capacity for our feathered cavity nesters.

By the end of March we had a total of 92 boxes erected, most of them intended for swallows and bluebirds. Although there were only two boxes built specifically for smaller cavity nesters such as chickadees and nuthatches, these species often avail themselves of swallow boxes, so we hoped they would move in as well. A total of six ultra-large boxes -- suitable for goldeneyes, wood ducks, and some owls -- were included. Three years ago, four new bat boxes of four different designs were placed on high posts near the hummocks. We've been waiting ever since for the tiny mammals to move in.

It took three days to get the boxes in place and, even as we were installing them, swallows checked out their new apartments. Over the summer, our monitors reported a high rate of occupancy so when late August rolled around, it was time to get out the ladders, backpacks, and data sheets to see what the actual numbers were. (In 2018, for comparison, the total number of successful broods was 29.) These results exceeded our expectations! With songbirds in decline all over the world, every project that

In a Nutshell:-

- Total boxes available **April 1st: 92**
- Successful swallow broods: **55**
- Successful chickadee broods: **4**
- Successful bluebird broods: **1**
- Unknown species: **1**
- Invasive species (house sparrows): **1**
- Flying squirrel: **1** (probably a temporary occupancy)
- Notable: **Two duck nests** were started then abandoned prior to egg-laying
- Bonus: **One bat** box was occupied!
- Unfortunate addendum: **Three** boxes went missing



Two Juvenile Tree Swallows Brimming with Anticipation

enhances their population is valuable. We are thrilled for the birds and will continue this undertaking for as long as the birds respond.

Many thanks to the following contributors who made it all possible:

- MakerSpace South Canoe Elementary School Rona Warner Rentals**
BC Nature BC Naturalists' Foundation Shuswap Naturalist Club Volunteers



Lewis's Woodpecker (juvenile)

Birding in the Bay—2019

Once again, this year has been rewarding for birding around the Bay. There have been 202 species recorded including several highlights. On September 5 there was a **juvenile Lewis's Woodpecker** seen west of the Nature Park. This is rarely found here and is becoming endangered. It's a dry-belt bird that nests in ponderosa pine forests. In the same general area for several weeks, one or two **Peregrine Falcons** cruised the shoreline and kept everyone honest! From May 6 until mid October, there were 12- 46 **American White Pelicans** fed and rested, usu-



Peregrine Falcon



American Avocet

ally near the mouth of the river. In recent years we have always had a few pelicans but never so many as 46 sticking around. More **Snow Geese** than usual, about 300, rested and fed over Thanksgiving. In the spring two to seven **American Avocets** fed west of the Nature Park. The Bay continues to provide valuable habitat for both resident and migratory waterfowl. To date this year, 42 species have been



White-Winged Scoter

recorded, including six species of Grebes, four species of Loons, and a number of **White-Winged** and **Surf Scoters**. **Western Grebes** successfully nested with at least 96 young fledged. One of the rare **Clark's Grebes** paired with a **Western Grebe**, producing two young. **The Bay is now the only place in British Columbia where Western Grebes nest!**



Wiki Grebes

Clark's

Western

The **Ring-Billed Gull** colony on Christmas Island had approximately 500 nests and about 1,000 young. With the high numbers we get here one would not think that this is a



Fieldfare

red-listed bird in B.C. Nesting among them were some **Mew Gulls** and **Herring Gulls**. In total nine species of gulls were recorded this year including the rare **Franklin's** and **Sabine's Gulls**. The number of species of shorebirds recorded this year was 24, down from last year's 30. This decline was partly due to higher water levels in March/April after the mild spring and the earlier than usual rainfall in September/October that flooded mudflats upon which migrants feed. The substantial decrease in shorebirds in North America has been caused at least partly by deteriorating migratory bird habitat.

This year's 50 new nesting boxes put up around the Bay brought the total to over 90. Fifty-five **Swallows** made use of them, an increase from 29 last year. Considering the sharp decline in insectivorous birds, this is a great success story. Before closing, I would be remiss if I did not mention the **Fieldfare**

which was spotted off Silver Creek Road during last year's Christmas Bird Count. This rare Eurasian thrush stayed in the area into January. It became the highlight of the Canadian Christmas Bird Count and put Salmon Arm and the Shuswap on the North American birding map. Birders came from as far away as Eastern Canada and Florida. Many stayed to spend more time birding around the Bay and enjoying our magnificent scenery.

Enjoy your Birding.

SABNES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected Directors

Janet Aitken, President.
Geoff Benson, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor.
Mona Broad, Hanne MacKay, Carla Kirkpatrick,
Sid Visser, Sarah Weaver, Di Wittner.

Appointed Directors

Councillor Sylvia Lindgren, **City of Salmon Arm; Fish and Game Club** and **Downtown Salmon Arm Improvement Association**: No appointed representatives.

Non-voting Directors

Georgia McLeod, Secretary
Tom Brighthouse, Advisor

We greatly appreciate the financial and service support from the following companies:

LIFE CORPORATE MEMBERS

Askews Foods
Royal Bank

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Browne Johnson Land Surveyors
Dr Lyle A Martin
Gentech Engineering Inc.
Dr Chris Parfitt
Shuswap Acupuncture and Laser
Therapy Clinic

GRANTING AGENCIES

City of Salmon Arm
Salmon Arm Rotary Club
Shuswap Community Foundation
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund

Annual Membership Fees *

Individual.....	\$15
Family.....	\$25
Sustaining Individual.....	\$50
Sustaining Family.....	\$100
Life Membership.....	\$500
Corporate or Organization	
1-4 Employees.....	\$50
5-10 Employees.....	\$100
+ 10 Employees.....	\$150
Life Membership.....	\$2,500

Membership Form

(If you have already given us information, enter only new information)

Name: _____

Address : _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Amount Paid : _____ Date : _____

I would like to give **SABNES** my time :
to help staff the nature centre
(June, July and August)

Please check

to help with trail clean-up and maintenance

Nature Bay Society (**SABNES**) is a Charitable Organization.
Most of the Annual Fee is tax-deductible.
Receipts for Income Tax purposes will be issued.

Nature Bay Society, P.O. Box 27, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N2
website : www.sabnes.org
Email: sabnes.org@gmail.com

Janet Aitken



Long-billed Dowitchers on Christmas Island

Funding for our Nature Centre

This year the Nature Centre operating expenses were **\$10,543**. We are grateful for grants of **\$4,000** from the **City of Salmon Arm** and **\$4,357** from the **Fed. Govt. Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) Program**. **The remaining \$2,186 was made up by SABNES from memberships and generous donations.** **Please help us increase our memberships by sharing this newsletter with friends and relations.**

A Way of making an Everlasting contribution to SABNES

As the year draws to a close, please consider making a donation to **SABNES** via the **Shuswap Community Foundation (c/o SABNES Endowment Fund)**. Your donation will remain in perpetuity in the fund, and generate income which will be used to help keep the **SABNES** lands in their natural state for the foreseeable future. **Please** send your cheque payable to **Shuswap Community Foundation, PO Box #624, 450 Lakeshore Drive, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N7**. Please mark on your cheque that you wish to place the donation in the **SABNES ENDOWMENT FUND**. The **Shuswap Community Foundation** will send you a tax receipt.

Clive Bryson



Red-tailed Hawk