

NATURE BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society
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A Very BIG Thank-You to our Members, Volunteers and Donors



Volunteers pause from installing wire around trees near the latest Beaver Dam

Our Board Members are constantly monitoring the trail, fixing boards, trimming trees, installing signs or putting wire on the trees to save them from the beavers. The main foreshore trail is carefully maintained by our steward volunteers who have each assumed responsibility for caring for a section of the trail. **Rotary** and **Steve Genn** in particular have helped us with materials, heavy equipment and manpower to rebuild the walkway going out to the bird tower. Thanks also to Ken at **G.I.D. Contracting** for the donation of signage poles.

We appreciate the generous grant of **\$6,000** from the **City of Salmon Arm** to fund a student for the summer to work in the Brighthouse Nature Centre. This year we were able to provide some of our own money and hire two students, enabling us to keep the **Nature Centre** open for almost every day between June 3rd and August 24th. Thanks to **Aidan Sparks** and **Ryon Ready** for doing such a good job, very much appreciated by a record number of visitors. During the last couple of



Ed Dahl and Steve Genn work on the bird tower. Recognize the person behind the pole?

years many of you will have witnessed the transformation of the Nature Centre into a bright and attractive place to visit, with plenty of activities to engage youngsters. Thanks also to the **Shuswap Community Foundation** for a grant of **\$3,000** for new signage. As the year is drawing to a close, please consider a donation to **SABNES** via the **Shuswap Community Foundation (c/o SABNES Endowment Fund)**. We are one of the few organizations that can boast that 100% percent of your donation goes to the cause.



Kathy Atkins at the Nature Centre with some of her creative work

Dogs on the Foreshore Trail

Because of increasing damage to "no dog signs" SABNES has asked City Council to formalize the legal situation.

After measuring carefully the location of the trail as compared to the City's ten meter wide emergency right-of-way, Bill Eaton and I found that the trail deviates significantly for three long stretches. Also, it's clear that all three board walks are in Nature Trust reserve as well as the access to the Christmas Island.

Unlike other reserves, because of the elongated configuration of the sanctuary, the trail actually forms an integral part of wildlife habitat, never far from the sensitive shoreline. Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers nest on the gravel surface of the trails, Pheasant and Quail and a dozen other species nest on the edge of the trail, The gorgeous Common Yellowthroat, the Song Sparrow and the Blackbirds nest just where a German Shepherd's nose would be.

Supporters have phoned me with at least nine separate tales of dogs they have observed in the past harassing wildlife in and around the Bay.

Mayor Dick Smith and council gave us the Wildlife Sanctuary to be saved in perpetuity, a priceless treasure. It would be a pity if the present Council inadvertently presided over its decline.

Tom Brighthouse



Tom Brighthouse and Bill Eaton trying to persuade a resident beaver to conform to zoning requirements



↑ Beavers are trying to dam a stream on the rail side of the main trail near the biffy.
↓ Amounts of material collected are vast.



The beavers on the foreshore are busy and eager as ever to expand their lodges. They are attempting to dam a small stream on the rail side of the trail near the biffy. By attempting to extend the dam over the trail they are making it difficult for users to pass. SABNES has procured a permit but removal of the dam will now have to wait until spring. In the meantime SABNES has wired a lot more trees in the vicinity and, thanks to **Jim Hoskins**, the area has been cleaned up on almost a daily basis. The sheer amount of materials collected by the beavers is incredible and makes it quite a **dam site!**

Geoff Benson

Birding in the Salmon Arm Bay in 2015

As I write this report about birding in the Salmon Arm Bay in 2015 I can't help but think about the 1,500 **Canada Geese** I recently watched flying in and the cacophony of sound they made as they tumbled out of the sky and landed in the Bay. What a wonderful place we are fortunate enough to live in and can enjoy right at our doorstep.

The year 2015 has been a good one for birding along the Bay. There have been **214** species reported seen by the end of October. Four new species have been added, bringing the total to **279**. This bit of paradise we often take for granted attracts birders from around the world.

I think the most exciting birding story of the year was the fledging of at least two **Barn Owls** nesting in a box adjacent to the Peter Jannink Nature Park. This is the first reported recent breeding record for Barn Owls in the Shuswap. The fact that the nesting site was so easily visible attracted birders and photographers from throughout the Okanagan and from as far away as Edmonton and Utah.



Clive Bryson

Barn Owl (Peter Jannink Park, 6th Aug)

This Bay is always vital habitat for waterfowl, both resident birds which nest along the shoreline and migrants which stock up on food for the next leg of their journey. To date, **43** migrant species have been seen. A new addition to the list is a **Ross's Goose**. On October 3, I saw a juvenile bird of this small relative of the **Snow Goose** feeding west of the Nature Park not paying any attention to several **Snow Geese** which were fairly close by.

On October 27 I saw four species of loons scattered over the Bay. In addition to **32 Common Loons** there were two **Pacific Loons**, one **Yellow-billed Loon**, and one **Red-necked Loon**. Although we may get these four species in the Bay each year, seldom is there the opportunity to have them fairly close together so that comparisons can be easily made.

Another noteworthy waterfowl sighting was the **46 Greater White-fronted Geese** I saw near the mouth of the Salmon River



Pacific Loon

Yellow-Billed Loon

Red-necked Loon with recently hatched young

on April 24. These geese are regular visitors, but never in such large numbers. Also, over the summer, **12 – 18 American White Pelicans** spent time swimming around the Bay, much to the delight of both locals and tourists.

Migratory shorebirds always stop here in large numbers on both their northern and southern journeys. Our extensive mudflats provide a rich microfilm diet, providing the energy for their ongoing flight. This year **32 species** were recorded. There were two additions to the list, plus a visit from a



Whimbrel



Ring-billed Gull on Christmas I.

Plover seldom seen here. The new species were a **Whimbrel**, photographed flying at the end of the wharf on June 6, and a **Ruff**, seen by several birders on August 14, as it fed near the wharf. The rare visitor was a juvenile **Pacific Golden Plover** seen for several days from September 22 feeding between the mouth of the Salmon River and Christmas Island.

Many non-birders, when they see gulls, pay them little attention, thinking that they are just another "sea-gull". But it behooves one to pay them more attention. Even our most common gull, the ring-billed, which had **550** nests on Christmas Island this year, is red listed.



Icelandic Gull

There have been **12** species of gulls recorded here over the years. To add to the list I was fortunate on May 1 to see an **Icelandic Gull**, in all its white splendor, sitting on a piling at the end of the wharf. This species has been seen in the southern Okanagan on occasion, but it has never been recorded here.

This year continued to see a decline in the numbers of insect eating birds. For example, there were fewer recorded sightings of some of the swallows and nighthawks. This is a continent-wide phenomenon at least partially attributable to insecticides used to coat seeds. Setting up nesting boxes for some of the swallow species will help a little, but more attention needs to be paid to the environment before it is too late.

The Salmon Arm Bay is enjoyed by all for its beauty and for its abundance and diversity of flora and fauna. **It is incumbent on all of us to protect and preserve its fragility for future generations.**

Ted Hillary

Elected Directors

Janet Aitken, President;
Geoff Benson, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor;
Ed Dahl; Hanne MacKay; Gale-Paule Davison ;
Gary Lomax

Appointed Directors

Pat Mearns, **Shuswap Naturalists Club** ;
Councillor. Ken Jamieson, **City of Salmon Arm**;
FishNGame and **DowntownImprovementAssn**
No appointed reps

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

Bernd Hermanski Architect Inc.
Browne Johnson Land Surveyors
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Hub International Barton Insurance
Prestige Harbourfront Resort and Convention Centre
Shuswap Acupuncture and Laser Therapy Clinic
Shuswap Lady Striders
Standard Roofing Corporation
Terratech Consulting Ltd
Innovation Catalyst

GRANTING AGENCIES

City of Salmon Arm
Salmon Arm Rotary Club
Shuswap Community Foundation

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

* All but \$5 is tax-deductible

Membership Form

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)

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

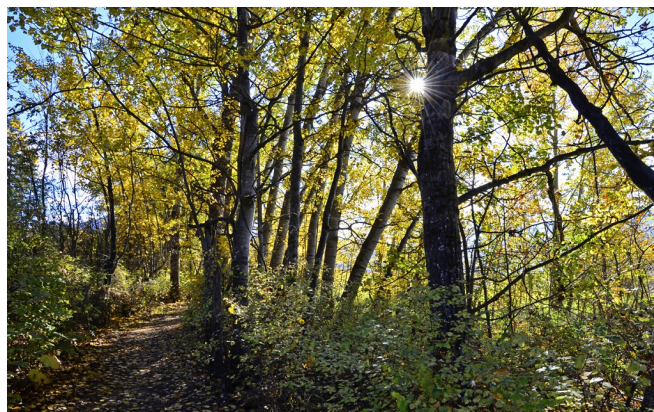
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Greta Grebe here.

I'm delighted with the flattering **fridge magnets**. They will make spiffing Christmas Presents. Get them from **SABNES** Board members or at **Lady-in-the-Tub Bath and Boutique**.



Pelicans on Christmas Island. Taken by **Clive Bryson** on Sept 4th, 2015



Autumn on the **SABNES** trail **Jim Hoskins**
Great Blue Heron on the Bay **Hoskins**

