



NATURE BAY NEWS
Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society
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Big Changes on the Foreshore

Project supported by the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation has commenced



SPIDEX machine in operation on the foreshore

Early in November, work started on the foreshore to enhance the biodiversity of wetlands close to the Raven end of the trail. This was necessary because this area has been taken over by a monoculture of dense reed canary grass. The project, which is financed by a **\$48,000 +** grant from the **Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HTCF)**, has **in-kind support** from the **City of Salmon Arm**. The photo shows a **Spidex** machine creating one of the four hummocks between the trail and the lake. The project is the brainchild of biologist **Gerry Leering** who is also managing the project for **SABNES**. His idea was to form a partnership with the **City of Salmon Arm**, which will later this year embark on a major project on maintenance of the gravity sewer line that connects the Raven subdivision to the sewage treatment plant on the opposite side of the wharf.

The Spidex machine has now completed its task of forming the hummock shapes. In **Spring 2017** the hummocks will be “dressed “ with plantings of a variety of trees and shrubs. Snags, root wads, bedding sand and basking logs will be added. Western painted turtles, various kinds of reptiles, small mammals, juvenile salmon and water fowl are expected to benefit. Between four and seven poles with a variety of bird and bat houses attached are also planned for the area.. Our president, **Janet Aitken**, has been a key player in obtaining the **HTCF** grant and is planning to involve school groups in the detailed planning of the location of plants on the hummocks and also in the plantings themselves.

For additional information, find the sign on the trail close to where the hummocks have been created.

Geoff Benson

Foreshore Trail Closed for Extensive Sewer Maintenance

The City of Samon Arm is planning to close the trail on **Monday 19 December until 31 March 2017**, or earlier (if completion is quicker than expected). Parts of the trail will need to be widened in order to allow for the access of heavy equipment.



Volunteers on the Foreshore

Working clockwise from the top left:-

- A) A group of **Shuswap Naturalists** pose with bags of **Woody Nightside** removed from the foreshore. This was the second of two weed-pulls organised by the Naturalists, supplying the landfill with 150 bags in total. **Bravo!**
- B) **Dave Aitken** unloading the lumber donated by **Shuswap Rotary** for the repair of the Beaver boardwalk. Thanks to The **Stacer Team** for the loan of their van.
- C) The donated lumber was used to replace rotted planks on the boardwalk. This work bee was spearheaded by **Steve Genn** and three other **Rotarians** together with **SABNES** directors **Geoff Benson** and **Gary Lomax**.
- D) This sign has been fixed to the gate leading to Christmas Island. The sign was created by **Geoff Benson** and paid for by a grant from the **Province of BC**. **Dogs are not allowed on Christmas Island.**



THE MESSENGER PROJECT: **Imagine a world without BirdSong**

The **Shuswap Naturalist Club** and **SABNES** have jointly formed a **SOS Songbird Committee** "to help the birds and help ourselves." Our initial focus is to create more bird awareness and provide citizens of Salmon Arm a reminder to feed the birds over the winter months. This reminder includes cleaning your bird feeder of old food before setting it out. It is important to be consistent if you are feeding the birds so that the feeders remain full. Thank you to those already doing this.

The **SOS Songbird Committee** is hoping that you will consider purchasing Christmas gifts with a bird theme. This might be in the form of a bird feeder, a bird book or a bird calendar. **Bookingham** has lots of options. The Committee set up a table in Piccadilly Mall in mid-December to get this message out to the public. The Committee created attractive two sided bookmarks to

promote the **Shuswap Naturalist Club** and **SABNES** and remind people of the importance of feeding birds.

"**The Messenger**" documentary was well attended in Salmon Arm at two screenings at the Salmar Classic. The patrons were generous in their donations. We collected over \$1000. After expenses the **SOS Songbird Committee** is left with just \$200 over \$200 to promote their activities. If you are interested in being a part of this Committee or have ideas to share, please contact **Janet Aitken**. janetaitken1@gmail.com

Birding in the Bay 2016

2016 birding around the Salmon Arm Bay was generally uneventful. To date, the number of species is 206, down from last year's 214. The total number of birds I counted was approximately 335,000 in the first 10 months, a little down from previous years. No new species was added to our list of 280. The excitement of having nesting **barn owls** along the Foreshore Trail was short-lived, as the owls chose to move on.

This year the seasons started earlier than usual. By mid-February, the **American bald eagles** west of the Foreshore Trail were sitting on eggs; two chicks were successfully fledged by the end of the summer. Two errant **violet green swallows** were seen on February 29. What they found to eat is a mystery, and they did not stay long. **Canada geese** nested in many of the local **ospreys'** nests, forcing the **ospreys** to find nesting spots elsewhere. Our unseasonably warm Spring resulted in Shuswap Lake rising so rapidly that the usual food-rich mud-flats flooded over. Most north-bound migratory shorebirds flew over, without stopping, to find nourishment elsewhere.



It was a good year for the **western grebe**. Courtship behaviours were seen all over the Bay before the end of April. I saw 78 on April 18; the number quickly doubled. High water occurred in early June, and nesting had already begun. Before the end of June, young **grebes** could be seen riding on the backs of their parents. There were approximately 100 pairs and over 200 young, which is above average. There was at least one pair of **Clark's grebes** with two young. Early high-water also meant successful nesting for **ring-billed gulls**. Usually they build their nests too early, and a high percentage of the eggs wash away. This year, I believe that most of the 600 pairs plus were successful and that over a 1,000 young fledged.



Between early and mid-April, interesting sightings included a **red-breasted merganser**, a female **long-tailed duck**, and an early **red-necked grebe**. The most interesting bird to have been reported in this time period was a male **Eurasian (common) teal (right)** which stayed nearly a week east of the wharf. It is closely related to the **green-winged teal (left)**, except that the **Eurasian male** has a white horizontal bar on its side and lacks the white vertical stripe from shoulder to breast possessed by the male **green-winged teal**.



There were up to 26 **American white pelicans** in the Bay this summer. These are always an eye catcher and a draw for tourists. **Terns**, however, were noticeable by their absence: the **Caspian**, the **common** and the **black**. Once plentiful but seldom seen anymore is the **common nighthawk**. **Vaux's swifts** are still sighted, though the **white-throated** and the **black** are becoming increasingly rare.

Sixteen species of **warblers** have been seen over the years around the Bay. Several of these are migratory, but many do nest here. For example, the **yellow warbler**, the **yellow-rumped (Audubon) warbler** and the **common yellowthroat** could be seen and heard all summer as they went about their nesting. One warbler, which is a rare but a more regular visitor in the late spring, is the **Tennessee warbler (right)**. This small bird, with a dull yellow back, narrow dark wing bands, dull grayish head and white breast, is a warbler worth seeking.



Insect-eating birds are rapidly decreasing at an alarming rate across North America. This summer saw only two **cliff swallow** nests, down from 20 plus of a few years ago. Both nests were attached to a building at the end of the wharf. The numbers of **barn swallows** nesting under the end of the wharf were also down this year. Continent-wide, we are fast approaching the time when most insect eating birds may disappear.

The fall rains started in September, nearly a month earlier than usual. As the Lake rose again, the mudflats disappeared and the food supply for migratory shorebirds was again lost. Not only were species fewer, but overall numbers were lower. By the end of October all migrants had left, when in the past, one could see stragglers into December. The numbers of waterfowl, such as **widgeons**, **scaups**, **ducks**, particularly **mallards**, and thousands of **Canada geese** increased. A day after the last **pelican** left the **swans** arrived, on schedule to feed mainly on vegetation, in particular, **milfoil**.

Birding around the Bay is a different experience every day. It is ours to enjoy and to preserve.

Ted Hillary

SABNES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected Directors

Janet Aitken, President;
Geoff Benson, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor;
Moana Broad; Hanne MacKay; Gale-Paule Davison ; Gary Lomax; Sid Visser

Appointed Directors

Councillor. Ken Jamieson, **City of Salmon Arm**;
FishNGame and **Downtown Improvement Association**

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

Browne Johnson Land Surveyors
Dr Lyle A Martin
Gentech Engineering Inc.
Hub International Barton Insurance
Johnston Meier Insurance Agencies Group
Shuswap Acupuncture and Laser Therapy Clinic
Warrenwelter.com

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

* All but \$5 is tax-deductible

Membership Form

(If you have been a member, we only need you to enter 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
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Thanks to a grant of **\$3,000** from the **City of Salmon Arm** and **\$3,718** from the **Fed. Govt. CSJ Program** we hired **Amelia Moore** and **Christina Patterson** over a period of 13 weeks to staff the **Brighthouse Nature Centre**. Thanks **Amelia** and **Christina** for doing such a great job!

A Way of making an Everlasting contribution to SABNES

As the year is 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 indicate 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