



# NATURE BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society

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## SABNES AGM

Monday Oct 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM

Marine Peace Park

Outdoors-Near the Gazebo Stage

Please bring your own chairs and snacks,

wear a mask and practise social distancing at all times

*The public is welcome to attend*

### President's Message

I am pleased to report that usage of the Salmon Arm Bay foreshore trail increased this summer, despite the high precipitation in June that extended high water between Raven and Christmas Island by a few weeks. The bird viewing platform was completely destroyed and will need to be dismantled and rebuilt next Spring. When the water receded, it left a remarkable amount of debris on the trail. Thanks to Adrian and the Shuswap Trail Alliance crew for clearing the trail.

The City of Salmon Arm contracts the Shuswap Trail Alliance for specific trail sweeping and clean up. SABNES appreciates the collaborative working relationship we have with the City and the Trail Alliance.

SABNES received a summer student grant from the City of Salmon Arm that allowed us to hire former SABNES interpreter Ethan Quilty for a few months. His dedication to and innovative ideas for promoting the trail were outstanding. Unfortunately, we were only able to hire one student as we did not receive a Canada Summer Jobs Grant this year.

Our volunteer SABNES Board continues to put in long hours. I appreciate their mighty efforts and comradery. At the moment we have some vacancies on our Board. **If you are interested in being a SABNES Board member please let me know before our AGM on Monday, October 5th.**

Please check out our SABNES website and, if you have a moment, read the history section. Once again, we so appreciate your on-going support.

**Janet Aitken (250 803 1373)**

Footnote from Geoff Benson:- Janet sent this to me from Tenedos Bay in Desolation Sound where she and husband Dave are hopefully enjoying a sailing adventure in somewhat inclement weather.

# Birding in the Bay—2020

The Salmon Arm Bay continues to live up to its reputation as one of the top birding spots in the interior of British Columbia. Since January 1, birders here have recorded 195 species. Over the many years that records have been kept, a total of 283 species have now been seen. The totals this year include 36 species of water fowl, 24 species of shorebirds and six species of gulls.



This past spring, we had a few **American Avocets** and **Black-necked Stilts** feeding to the west of the wharf. These are a couple of my favourite species and it would have been great for them to extend their stay.

Another regular visitor this year has been the **American White Pelican**. There have been 12-40 mostly sub-adults in the Bay since the

end of April, which is more than usual. They are a large bird and have a good appetite. I wonder about the long-term effect they might have on the food supply for the **Western Grebes** if large groups continue to summer here.

The **Western Grebes** started arriving in numbers before the end of April. There may have been up to 150 pairs scat-



tered all over the Bay. Instead of nesting after high water, as is usual, they nested before the end of May. Beyond the walkway at the back of the Prestige Inn, approximately 75 nests were washed away by high water and strong winds, with nests and eggs floating away, together with some **American Coots'** nests. The grebes nested again, scattering all over the Bay, and produced an above average number of young. This included at least one **Clark's Grebe** that paired with a **Western Grebe** to raise a couple of young.

Not as many **Ospreys** as usual nested in the wharf area. The few successful nests fledged four young. However, one pair ended in disaster when a **Bald Eagle** attacked an **Osprey** in mid-air and killed it, a sight observed by several people who watched the Osprey tumble from the sky. Most of the 500 or so ring-billed gull nests on Christmas Island were washed out by high water. About 100 pairs

renested.

Under the end of the wharf approximately 25 pairs of **Barn Swallows** successfully nested. Not so successful were the cliff swallows that tried to nest on the Prestige Inn. Many nests were destroyed due to the painting of the exterior. Management was advised that it is unlawful to destroy the nests of migratory birds. About ten of the **Cliff Swallows** nested successfully on buildings at the end of the Wharf.

High water came early this year and the lake level was substantially above average into September. This has had a major effect on the shorebirds migrating through as there have been limited mudflats for them to feed upon, however, 15-20 relatively rare **Black-bellied Plovers** managed to land and feed.





White-headed Woodpecker (female)

A pair of **Yellow-breasted Chats** was found in the Raven area in mid-June. They were reported to have sung so loudly during the night that they kept some of the residents awake! It is highly probable that the Chats nested there, which would be a first for us. The last reported sighting of a Chat was in the Nature Park on July 27, which makes their nesting here all the more probable..

Another exciting, but unconfirmed, sighting was of a **White-headed Woodpecker** in the Raven area. This is an extremely rare bird in B.C. and would be a great addition to our list if confirmed.



Yellow-Breasted Chat

Whether you spend an occasional few minutes along the Bay, or an hour or two on a regular basis, the experience always has something to offer, so get out and enjoy it!!

Good Birding.

**Ted Hillary**, Shuswap Naturalists

### Swallows Continue to Thrive in New Nest Boxes

Flooding and aging reduced the number of available nest boxes along the foreshore and in Peter Jannink Park this year, although the percent occupancy rose slightly from 2019. Highlights of the annual data compilation included two **Blue-bird** nests (an increase of one from last year) and a successfully fledged batch of **Wood Ducks**.

The new boxes installed last year remain in tip-top shape although one, along with its 16' post, disappeared. Looks like high water and wave action overwhelmed them as they are nowhere to be found. Some of the old boxes have been ignored by the swallows for the past three years - for various reasons - so we've taken those down, given them a good cleaning and fixed them up. Now we need places to put the refurbished boxes, which means acquiring about half a dozen new posts. (Any donors out there?) The old boxes deemed permanently unfit have been discarded.

We cannot stress enough, how important a good clean box is! If a nest box is not properly maintained, it becomes a haven for parasites, particularly mites and feather lice. Believe it or not, many parasites are not killed by a cold winter. Some species go into a state of torpor, surviving without food until the spring. Others leave behind thousands of eggs that attack nestlings the following year. Wasps and spiders can also take over a nest box. The latter don't pose a serious threat unless they are permitted to thrive; in fact, some of them will become dinner if they're not careful. Wasp nests, on the other hand, should be removed when it's safe to do so (cold mornings, for example, when the wasps are lethargic or gone for the winter).

Continued overleaf



Di reaches for the sky while cleaning a nest box on the foreshore early in the morning.

## Nest Box Project (cont.)

The following is a quick summary of the data collected in 2020.

Successful swallow nests: 50  
 Successful chickadee nests: 5  
Successful bluebird nests: 2  
**Total successful songbird nests: 57**  
**Total songbird boxes available: 80**  
**Percent occupancy: 71%**

Successful wood duck: 1  
**Total duck nests fledged: 1**  
**Total duck boxes available: 4**  
**Percent occupancy: 25%**

2019 comparison:

Total songbird nests: 60  
 Total boxes available: 88  
**Percent occupancy: 68%**

**Total duck nests: 0**

Note: 1 house sparrow nest (invasive species)

### 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  
 Lakeside Health

### 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 : \_\_\_\_\_

Please Check

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.

Nature Bay Society, P.O. Box 27, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N2  
 website : [www.sabnes.org](http://www.sabnes.org)  
 Email: [sabnes.org@gmail.com](mailto:sabnes.org@gmail.com)



**Boys Carrying Buoys. Grandfather looks Buoyant!**

**SABNES**, using members' donations, purchased two additional buoys in order to more clearly define the non-boating area at the Southern end of Salmon Arm Bay. Thanks go to Hanne and Doug McKay, ably assisted by their grandchildren for installing the buoys.