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# THE OSPREY

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
WEST KOOTENAY NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION

1054 BRIDGEVIEW CR, CASTLEGAR BC V1N 4L1  
vol 37, no 1                      MARCH - JUNE 2010



Calliope Female Hummingbird

©Photo by Sharon Lelliott

Member address label  
HERE

## GENERAL MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the last Monday of each month, 7:00 pm, *except as noted*. Check newsletter for each month's venue. **Changes may be mentioned at meetings, and/or in your local newspaper.** Beverages will *not* be available at Nelson meetings until someone steps forward to handle this task. Venues for '09/'10: Sept – Nelson, Oct -- potluck always in Robson Hall, 6 pm. BYO dishes, cutlery, etc, Nov – Trail, Jan – Castlegar, February – Trail, March – Nelson, April – Robson, May -- Castlegar. For June annual picnic venue, see appropriate Field Trip Schedule. No meetings in July, August, or December. **“The Osprey” is distributed at September, January, and May meetings. Please attend to pick yours up or ask a friend** to also request yours, unless you are receiving it by email. Saving postage keeps costs down and dues stable.

## WKNA OFFICERS 2009-10

### **ELECTED:**

PRESIDENT	Brent Hancock	250-304-6840
VICE-PRESIDENT	Arnold By	250-368-3068
PAST PRESIDENT	Dr Joan Snyder	250-365-7633
RECORDING SECRETARY	Linda Szymkowiak	250-362-7107
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	Felicity Ross	250-367-9179
		<a href="mailto:dfrossbc@telus.net">dfrossbc@telus.net</a>
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP	Sharon Lelliott	250-365-1161
		<a href="mailto:g-slelliott@shaw.ca">g-slelliott@shaw.ca</a>

### **APPOINTED:**

<b>AREA REPRESENTATIVES:</b>		
CASTLEGAR/SLOCAN VALLEY	Marg Webster	250-365-2572
	Mary Martin	250-365-3827
TRAIL & AREA	Pamella Wik	250-368-3378
NELSON/SALMO/KASLO	Bill Bennetts	250-352-9834
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE	Pamella Wik	250-368-3385
BC NATURE DIRECTOR (WKNA)	Joan Snyder	250-226-0012
ARCHIVIST	Mary Martin	250-365-3827
NEWSLETTER EDITOR }	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229
JUMBO WILD CONTACT }		<a href="mailto:penandpaddle@lycos.com">penandpaddle@lycos.com</a>
FIELD TRIP DIRECTORS	Audrey Mann, Rosland, Trail & areas	250-362-9465
	(Nell Plotnikoff, Slocan/Nelson	250-359-7406
	(John Golik, Slocan/Nelson	250-359-7278
	Hazel Beynon, Castlegar	250-365-7806
	Webb Webster, Castlegar	250-365-2572
PRESENTATION COORDINATOR	Michael McMann	250-365-5647

### **SECTION CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:**

BIRDING, ENERGY	Ed Beynon	250-365-7806
CONSERVATION	Shirley Coffin	250-364-0339
		<a href="mailto:slcoffin@shaw.ca">slcoffin@shaw.ca</a>
BIRD COUNTS: Bird Studies Canada, WKNA, Christmas and Summer		
BLUEBIRDS	<b>vacant</b>	
BUTTERFLIES	Gary Lelliott	250-365-1161
INJURED BIRDS/ANIMALS	Rita Wege	250-359-7234
	Carol Pettigrew (birds)	250-365-3701
	Helen Jameson, Blewett (animals)	250-352-2356
RIVERS DAY (National)	<b>vacant</b>	
RIVERS DAY (Provincial)	Pamella Wik (Trail)	250-368-3378
VIOLIN LAKE STAKEHOLDERS	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229
WEBSITE, KOOTENAY REGIONAL	Kevin MacAskill	250-825-2245
	Arnold By	250-368-3068

## FIELD TRIPS

For all field trips, please call the contact person for meeting time and place

### MARCH

<b>Saturday March 6</b>	Snowshoe/ski Sunshine Cr 'road', past Ben Shaw cabin. Mod/stren	Pat West 250-304-2656
<b>Saturday March 13</b>	Snowshoe Plewman Ridge Cabin loop. Mod	Harvey Pitman 250-368-6691
<b>Saturday March 20</b>	Snowshoe/ski to Ripple Ridge Cabin @ Kootenay Pass. Mod	Nell Plotnikoff 250-359-7406 John Golik 250-359-7278
<b>Saturday March 27</b>	Columbia River hike -- Twin Rivers to Blueberry, OR Birchbank Flats	Ed&Hazel Beynon 250-365-7806
<b>Monday March 29</b>	Gen Meeting & Presentation: "Threatened Honey Bees", Lynn Westcott	

### APRIL

<b>Saturday April 3</b>	Hike Yellow Pine Trail. Easy	Webb Webster 250-365-2572
<b>Saturday April 10</b>	Hike Ft Sheppard area. Easy	Vince Loyola 250-512-7168
<b>Saturday April 17</b>	2 for 1 hike! SVRT & Slocan Pool Trail	Lynda Stevens 250-359-7439
<b>Saturday April 24</b>	Earth Day Cleanup – Nancy Greene Lake loop. Mod	Webb Webster 250-365-2572
<b>Monday April 26</b>	Potluck, AGM & Presentation: Robson Hall, 6 pm "Harlequin Ducks in the Kootenays", Marlene Machmer	

### MAY

<b>Saturday May 1</b>	Deer Point Trail, Christina Lake. Mod	Ed&Hazel Beynon 250-365-7806
<b>Saturday May 8</b>	Hike to Cascade Falls, then a 'discovery hike' in Christina Lake area. Easy	Webb Webster 250-365-2572
<b>Saturday May 15</b>	Violin Lake Spring Stakeholders' Hike and clean-up along road. Mod	Margo Saunders 250-693-2229
<b>Saturday May 22</b>	Hike to Red Lake. Easy	Pat Thomson 250-362-5795
<b>Saturday May 29</b>	Whiskey Trail. Mod. Car shuttle	Gloria Maigler 250-362-7493 Pat Thomson 250-362-5795
<b>Monday May 31</b>	General Meeting & Presentation: * see also "Safely...", Page 6 "Hummingbirds of the Kootenays", Gary Lelliott	

### JUNE

<b>Saturday June 5</b>	Spring Bird Count	No Bird count coordinator -- Call your rep
<b>Sunday June 6</b>	Waldie Island Trail birding. Easy	Ed&Hazel Beynon 250-365-7806
<b>Saturday June 12</b>	Erie Lake birding. Easy	Gwen Nicol 250-362-7282
<b>Saturday June 19</b>	Merry Creek Trail hike, ppn'd from last autumn. Easy. Rain alt: Sunday, June 20	Lynda Stevens 250-359-7439 Ruth Ingles 250-352-7957
<b>Wednesday, June 23</b>	Geology drive 'n' hike. Very easy. Venues, meeting time & place TBA. Facilitator: Frank Fowler	Webb Webster 250-365-2572 Margo Saunders 250-693-2229
<b>Saturday June 26</b>	Picnic – birding along SVRT to Walter Clough Sanctuary, then back to Peter's for lunch. Easy	Peter Mclver 250-365-1191

## TRIP REPORTS

### **Saturday, September 5, 2009:**

Hike to Hidden Lake with Deyanne Davies – Deyanne and Edward Davies greeted fourteen Nats at their lovely log house in lower Rossland. The day was cool but sunny – a perfect hiking day. The trail to the lake wound west of their property, on private land, through a forest of deciduous and coniferous trees. We were able to identify the difference between bracken and ferns, which has always been a puzzle. After 20+ minutes of uphill walking, we came upon an open area in which lay a rather large, almost dry lake. In this area, there were sedges and rushes, plus a raft and abandoned boat. These were all evidence that we will be able to return in the spring to see the lake with water in it. Deyanne told us that they have seen herons and sandpipers there. Thanks to their generosity, it was a good exploratory day and will, hopefully occur again in the spring.

**Pat Thomson**

### **Saturday, October 3, 2009:**

Hike to Sproule Creek – the weather was cool and damp for eight Nats. This trail follows an old wagon trail and railroad constructed by the A G Lambert Lumber Co Ltd between 1919 and 1930. The trail provides access to the old mill site and is a ten km return easy hike. Some old saw blades and a piece of rail line still remain on the trail. Some hikers ventured deeper into the woods to see what other memorabilia remained from that era. Dennis Holden identified several mushrooms for us along the way, including Lobster and Slipper Jack, my personal favourite.

**Diane White**

### **Saturday, October 10, 2009:**

Ten Nats and one guest did our requisite Stakeholders' Hike to Violin Lake on a crisp, bright day. Atco has installed another gate, 1.3 km this side of the old one, to try to keep the myriad trespassers out. It will work for the trucks and campers, but we heard evidence that the ATVs are still rampaging in there. We also found much garbage, and it was suggested that we do our Earth Day clean-up here, in conjunction with our Spring Stakeholders' Hike, on April 17, 2010. We decided to take a different route, and walked the higher road, above Cambridge Lake, rejoining the main road south of the reservoir. This was much appreciated, as the warmth of the sun was most welcome above, and much missed while we had lunch and a birthday cake and card for Lloyd Jeffery (one day early). Only one of us voted to carry on, and the chill chased us back to the vehicles. Erik pointed out a very dangerous situation while we were celebrating – someone had tried to drop a tree beside and above the road, had gotten his chainsaw bar stuck, and left the tree, with the bar in his last notch, almost cut through. The tree will fall at any time, and perhaps on some unsuspecting hiker. A report has been forwarded to Larry Abenante, City of Trail Public Works foreman, in order to have this remedied post haste.

**Margo Saunders**

### **Saturday, November 7, 2009:**

Eight members showed up for the Castlegar West Bench Loop hike despite predictions of rain. Fortunately there was no rain and we even got a fleeting glimpse of the sun. We hiked for three hours minus a lunch break, which was short because of a cool breeze. We observed many types of deciduous and coniferous trees, elk and deer antler rubs on small trees, and bear plus possible cougar claw marks on tree trunks. There were excellent views of the Kootenay/Columbia confluence, Selkirk College, and the mountains to the north and east of Castlegar.

**Ed and Hazel Beynon**

### **Saturday, November 14, 2009:**

We (7) met at Taghum on a beautiful, sunny morning and by group consensus changed our hike destination from Sproule Creek to Smallwood Creek. We all wanted to take advantage of the sunny day, knowing that the Sproule Creek hike would be mostly in the shade. However, what we didn't bargain for was the approximate 8 inches of snow up at Smallwood! No snowshoes, no gaiters--just a lot of "go for it" enthusiasm. We followed a bunny trail almost to the view point but decided to turn back when we encountered some windfalls. The blue sky and the snow glistening in the sunshine was awesome!

**Nell Plotnikoff**

### **Saturday, November 28, 2009:**

Dennis Holden led a group of seven Nats on a tour to Krestova and Deer Park. He pointed out areas which are being managed to enhance habitat for large animals. This also results in reduced potential for serious wildfires. Dennis described which grasses and shrubs provide nutritional grazing for elk, deer and sheep. He also showed us the downside of sixty years of fire suppression. It was a very informative day. Thank you, Dennis!

**SW Webster**

### **Saturday, December 12, 2009:**

Twelve people joined the hike on the Mel DeAnna Trail. It was a frosty day but very pleasant in the trees. The area has quite a different ambience in the winter with the lakes frozen enough to walk on them. Most of the group were appalled at an ugly road, which has been bulldozed down from the highway for no obvious reason. We had lunch at the far shelter, but did not tarry long because of the cold. It was a pleasant day and a great group.

**SW Webster**

*MARCH 22 IS WORLD WATER DAY*

## \*\* JUST A REMINDER \*\*

1. **Everyone likes cookies and squares!** We need TWO people to bring them to each meeting. Contact Shirley Coffin to volunteer your baking skills. Get your name in early and choose your month (new list begins each September).
2. **Do you have any suggestions for new areas to visit?** Would you be willing to lead a hike? Please contact a Program Director with your great ideas. Thank you to all the contacts/leaders in all seasons. We learn so much from each of you.
3. **Common courtesy and common sense** dictates that you call the contact person to confirm your attendance at an event on the program. Lead time for the newsletter is as much as nine months between planning and execution. Nothing is written in stone and changes may have to be made from time to time, due to weather conditions or personal reasons. We would not want you to miss out on a single chance to enjoy our environment! **Don't wait until the last minute** to phone if you are interested in any of our events....leader may have already left, especially if camping or long distances are involved.
4. **The leader of an outing is responsible for:**
  - ✓ Finding a replacement contact/leader if you cannot be available for your planned outing. A replacement *leader* may choose to do the same outing, or they may suggest another,
  - ✓ Getting the waiver form signed by every person attending, and forwarding this form to Webb Webster immediately. Waiver forms are included in your newsletter (if you are getting hard copy), one for each hike you are leading. If you are getting your newsletter by email, please request the waiver as an attachment and the Editor or the Treasurer will be happy to supply it,
  - ✓ Make it a policy with the entire group to keep the person behind you in sight. If your follower on the trail is lagging, slow your pace to keep them in sight. If everyone in the group continually checks to make sure they can see the person behind them, it is impossible for anyone to get into serious trouble. If you split into groups, do not allow any one person to 'take off' by him/herself.
  - ✓ Making sure that no one is left behind with car trouble at the parking area, especially in winter,
  - ✓ Arranging to have the trip report forwarded to the Editor. It is not necessary to write it – you may delegate this, of course, but please advise the Editor from whom to expect it. In a perfect world, we would have a different participant write each report, so we could have many different viewpoints. The writer also has the obligation to get the report submitted in time.

### **Multi-day trips:**

Because of renewed interest, we resumed the backpacking trips in 2004, with a hike in Top of the World Provincial Park (PP), followed by several in Kokanee Glacier PP in 2005. The 2006 trip was a "duffle & daypack" to Cathedral PP, as was the very popular trip to Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park in 2009. 2007 saw us marveling at the mountains and glaciers in Elk Lakes PP in the East Kootenays. In 2008, we hiked to Lake of the Hanging Glacier and the Welsh Lakes Group, also in the East Kootenays.

The list of places that members are keen to explore, some for the first time, and others to rekindle fond memories, is growing quickly. The list includes, but is not confined to: Mt Revelstoke (drive & daypack), Berg Lake, St. Mary's Alpine PP, Dennis Basin, and a return to Elk Lakes and Top of the World PP. This last one was prompted by the rainstorm that necessitated a quick in & out. Those interested in other venues should contact a Field Trip Director, for consideration by the Committee.

*We try to do the same week each year*, so that people can work it into their annual plans. In 2010, the dates of the trip will be as in past years – the first Monday to Friday in August (2 – 6). **Beginning in 2011, we will change to the week before this, ie: July 25 – 29**, as the first week in August historically has been quite wet and miserable.

**In 2010, we will be driving to the Monica Meadows trail head landing to 'car camp', and take day hikes out from there to Jumbo, Monica, Starbird and/or Horseshoe Glacier. Those that so wish may decide to try the MacBeth Glacier trail, likely on their last day. See the next Field Trip Schedule for contact info and to register.**

## SAFELY FEEDING AND ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS

Many of us look forward to the spring day when the first hummingbird arrives at our feeder. These tiny jewels bring colour and life to our gardens, and we want to keep them in our yard as long as possible, by feeding them. The feeders are primarily for the people's pleasure, even though we think we're helping the birds. Remember, they survived very well on their natural foods before human presence. The birds are opportunists, and like other animals and humans, will take advantage of a source of an easy meal. There are a few considerations, however, to attract and keep them safe.

Hummingbirds have excellent eyesight and have great fidelity to established feeding stops along their migration route. Attracting hummers to your yard will require a bright splash of colour, accomplished by selective plantings or by artificial means such as surveyor's ribbon or silk flowers. You can also plant tubular-shaped red, orange or pink flowers. Native plants are the best choice. Please check out the Hummer Bird Study Group website [www.hummingbirdsplus.org](http://www.hummingbirdsplus.org) for a list of preferred plants.

Hummingbirds feed on flower nectar and at your feeders for energy and hydration, and they get protein from feeding on small soft-bodied insects such as fruit flies, gnats, mosquitoes, aphids, spiders, caterpillars and insect eggs. Foraging for insects is done by "hawking" from an exposed perch, gleaning bark and leaves and robbing spider webs and sapsucker wells. Spider web is an important nesting material and a healthy spider population may encourage hummingbird nesting in your yard. Using pesticides in your garden can destroy important food and nesting resources for hummingbirds and may be harmful to the birds. Large shrubs or small trees located close to flower beds or feeders provide them with places to take cover from predators and weather, to perch, and to build nests.

Sugar-water feeders are a great way to attract, watch and learn about hummingbirds. Here are some do's and don'ts about using feeders.

**Buying a Feeder** - make sure all parts can be reached for cleaning with a brush. Glass feeders are easiest to clean and are less likely than plastic to become moldy. The feeder should be coloured red in the area where the feeding ports are.

**Clean** feeders are attractive and healthy for the birds. The general rule of thumb about cleaning the feeder is – if you yourself are not willing to drink the sugar water, it's time to change it – at least once weekly. Hot days require more frequent cleaning. Use hot water, a bottle brush, and if necessary, a pipe cleaner to clean out the holes. If mold or bacteria develop, use a solution of 1 part vinegar to 4 parts water. Do not use bleach or soap as these can leave potentially harmful residues. Fill the feeder with only as much syrup as the birds will drink in a few days; don't fill it up completely.

**Sugar Water** – The recipe closest to natural flower nectar is 4 parts regular tap water to 1 part white sugar. A stronger solution may not give them enough water, and a weaker solution may be ignored. Heat the water and stir until the sugar is completely dissolved. It isn't necessary to boil the syrup. Let cool, then add to your feeder. You can store extra solution in the refrigerator for up to one week.

**Bees, Wasps and Ants** can be attracted to a feeder. The best solution is a clean feeder with ports too small for bees to get access to the sugar water. Some feeders come with special bee-guards through which the bird's bill can fit, but not the bees or wasps. Hang one or two wasp traps near the feeder if they become a problem to the hummers. Ant-guards can be purchased. These water-filled moats hang between the feeder and the hanging point and will keep ants off feeders as long as the moat is kept filled. Double-sided tape or a sticky insect barrier at the base of a feeder post can also help prevent ant access. Do not use petroleum jelly or oils on feeders because these can be harmful to the birds, create cleaning problems and don't always prevent insects from getting to feeders.

**Autumn** -Usually leave your feeder up one to two weeks after you last see a hummingbird. The birds will migrate when their inner clock tells them to, even though there's still food available at your feeder.

**Do not add red dye to the solution**. It is both unnatural and unnecessary and may contain chemical additives that may harm the health of the bird.

**Do not use honey, or any other sugars or artificial sweeteners**. Honey contains spores that can cause fatal infections, and artificial sweeteners do not give the birds the energy they need.

**Do not use commercial feeder mixes**. These usually contain dyes, preservatives and other unnatural ingredients which the hummingbirds do not need. Besides, the cost of these mixes is much higher than using just plain sugar water.

If you follow these few rules, both you and the hummingbirds will have a satisfying, healthy summer. The birds will benefit from having the extra energy food available, and, in exchange, you will be entertained all summer.

Submitted by Sharon Lelliott, with excerpts taken from:

- The Nature Conservancy pamphlet, written by Mark Pretti, Naturalist
- Hummer/Bird Study Group pamphlet, written by Mob and Martha Sargent
- Hummingbirds of North America, written by Sheri L. Williamson
- Personal knowledge gleaned from involvement in hummingbird banding

## Spotlight Story

### **The John Fenger Memorial Trail Gets a Facelift Thursday, November 12, 2009**



An example of the beauty found while exploring the John Fenger Memorial Trail

For those who are hikers, skiers and outdoor enthusiasts the Columbia Basin offers some wonderful opportunities to be surrounded by ancient forests and natural elements - the John Fenger Memorial Trail being a great example of this.

This past summer local groups in the Lardeau River Valley have been working hard to restore and improve the trail so that more people are able to explore the unique values the area and Goat Range Provincial Park have to offer.

The John Fenger Memorial Trail is named after a forester from the area that initiated the protection of two hectares of an old growth Cedar forest.

The trail is a comfortable 30-minute hike and is located in the Goat Range Provincial Park area, between Slocan and Kootenay lakes at the south end and between Arrow Lakes and Duncan Lake at the north end.

"This is a unique forest with trees as old as 1,000 years that have survived development and logging," said Grant Trower, Friends of Lardeau River Society. "And it compliments many other sites in the area like the Lardeau Valley Museum, Meadow Creek spawning channel, the Duncan dam lookout, Glayco beach and spawning grounds of the Kokanee, the Gerrard rainbow trout, bull trout and mountain white fish that we want to bring to people's attention."

The Friends of the Lardeau River, Lardeau River Historical Society, the Valhalla Society in collaboration with the Ministry of Parks and Protected Areas and supported by CBT with \$5,320 have completed work that includes trail restoration, trail clean-up and the replacement of two bridges on the trail.

"The beautiful natural environment that surrounds us is part of the legacy we can leave our children and future generations," said Lynda Lafleur, CBT Community Liaison. "CBT is proud to support a project that is taking care of the Basin's natural assets and I hope more people will set-out and discover trails like this one and support groups that are maintaining the integrity of these valuable resources."

Currently the trail is being well used by school groups for educational hikes and by local tourism providers who are known to take tourists on hikes for the opportunity to see grizzly bears, elk, mountain goats and woodland caribou.

In addition to the old growth Cedar forest, the Lardeau River is highly valued by those in fisheries, as it is the only known spawning grounds of the Gerrard trout and the largest spawning channel in the world for Kokanee salmon.

With increased use of the trail, the various groups involved in this project hope to raise awareness of the significance of this area, while also increasing awareness about the collective sight-seeing possibilities of the Lardeau Valley.

## Hot off the presses, for Naturalists and Birders

For the past year I have volunteered my time in developing a booklet on when and where to find birds in the Creston Valley, and this project is completed, having gone to the printers in mid-November.

The booklet is 36 pages, has a [colour map](#), features [ten bird watching sites](#), and an updated comprehensive bar graph [checklist](#) on the 301 species which are known to occur in the checklist area. The booklet will sell for **\$3.99 plus postage and handling for a total of \$5.50** for those wishing to have it mailed to them. The booklet will also be available for sale at a few outlets in the Creston Valley. If any members are interested in purchasing the booklet, they can email me at: [lvd2@shaw.ca](mailto:lvd2@shaw.ca) or give me a call at 250-428-9892.

Proceeds from the sale of this booklet will go towards re-printing, as I would like this project to be sustainable over the long term.

Thank you for your support!

Linda Van Damme, [lvd2@shaw.ca](mailto:lvd2@shaw.ca)



Margo Saunders photos: Nats on Red Mtn



Pat and Lloyd at Fenger Mem Park



Nats on Winter Range Assessment

## Good to Know

### Lace your boots for maximum comfort

This method leaves wiggle room for toes and swelling feet, but still keeps the heel locked in place.

1. Lace boots normally, but don't pull tight.
2. Tie a snug overhand loop at the ankle.
3. Repeat the single overhand loop at each pair of eyelets.
4. If the boots feel too tight while hiking, relieve pressure by skipping a pair of eyelets near the top.

### International Whistle Code

One blast	Where are you?
Two blasts	Come to me.
Three blasts	I need help!

If you hear any of these signals, respond with one blast. Each blast should last 3 seconds.

### Even in a Day Pack

Keep a mini-flashlight, cigarette lighter, bandanna, cord, some duct tape, TP and water purification tablets in a ziplok bag at the bottom of your pack. They go a long way toward resolving most backcountry mishaps.

## Parting Thought

### **Quotable Quote:**

" The lesson I read in the past is this: that the health of land and water-and of woods, which are keepers of water - can be the only lasting basis for any civilization's survival and success."

**Ronald Wright from his 2004 Massey Lecture: A Short History of Progress**

That sums it all up, in my opinion. I got the book from the library and recommend it..... from Pamella Wik