

# NEWSPACKET

Journal of the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

February 2026  
75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
1951-2026



Big Trees  
page 8

# NONC

## North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC)

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*NONC acknowledges the presence of the traditional, ancestral and unceded lands of the Syilx and Secwépemc peoples who have resided here since time immemorial. We recognize, honour, and respect the Syilx / Secwépemc lands upon which we live, work, and play.*

### EXECUTIVE

President	Eric Kowalski 604-600-6725
Vice-President	Michelle Gregoire 250-308-2838
Past President	Harold Sellers 250-307-3543
Secretary	rotational amongst Executive
Treasurer	Marnie Williamson 250-545-4743
Directors	Susan Ghattas 250-550-7063 Robert Hettler 250-309-7794 Pam Jenkins 250-545-0490

### LIFE MEMBERS

Ray Arlt, Kay Bartholomew, Joan Heriot, Phil Jones, Peter Legg, Malcolm Martin, Frank & Mary Paul



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### PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Contact the following if you have questions.

BC Nature	Eric Kowalski 604-600-6725
Bluebird Trails	Margaret Mackenzie 250-542-2712
Botany	Margaret Mackenzie 250-542-2712
Christmas Bird Count	Don Cecile
Conservation	Harold Sellers 250-307-3543
Cools Pond	Rod Drennan 250-545-4999
Hummingbird Banding	Louise Breneman 250-542-4050
Nature Walks	Ruth Drennan 250-309-5896
Newsletter	Harold Sellers 250-307-3543
Speakers	Bruce Tattersall 778-874-4614
Swan Lake	Michelle Gregoire, Joyce Heard, Robert Hettler, Eric Kowalski, Laurel MacDonald, Margaret MacKenzie, Marnie Williamson
Swan & Eagle Count	Norbert Maertens 250-503-8790 & Rod Drennan 250-545-4999
Trips	contact the club
Website & Social Media	Laura Barker 519-532-6600

### Annual Membership Dues:

Couple/Family	\$55
Single	\$38

see nonc.ca

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## Club News & Notes

At this point in early 2026 we have 33 family, 86 single, and one student memberships. Our latest new members are Katrina Camenzind and Muqaddar Ahmad. Welcome!

The increase of NONC membership fees for 2026 did not cover the increase in membership and insurance fees from BC Nature. The club is still in a good financial position, but more new members will certainly help. Promote NONC whenever you can.

Speaking of promotion, the NONC Facebook Group now has over 4,100 followers!

For 2026 Harold Sellers submitted three grant applications to help us with some club projects. All were successful! This year we will be continuing our stewardship and restoration efforts at the Swan Lake Nature Reserve. We also intend to install a Motus wildlife tracking station at the Allan Brooks Nature Centre. Third, we have hired professional biologists to look at the potential for Cools Pond and the Crane Road Park/Jordan Nature Reserve for man-made painted turtle nesting sites.

Club members are welcome to make donations to any of the above. Be sure to include a note with your donation, so we direct it as you intend.

Michelle Gregoire writes occasional articles for the MorningStar newspaper. Watch for one about the

work the club has done at the Swan Lake Nature Reserve Park.

A committee is hard at work planning a NONC 75th Anniversary Party on Thursday, May 21st. Yes, this year the club turns 75! Stay tuned for details.

Years ago a NONC History was compiled for 1951 to 1969. We need a volunteer to bring that up to date. Contact the club.

Parking at the Schubert Centre can be limited on Wednesday nights for our club meetings. Note that we can use the parking spaces at Catherine Gardens (underneath the building) during our meetings.

NONC has joined the BC Lakes Stewardship Society. We are looking into training that they offer for lake monitors.

Scotch Thistle Earth Day Event, during the week of Earth Day, date to be announced. For this project NONC will adopt the Grey Canal Trail between Cypress Drive and Warren Road. Mark your calendar and get your tools ready.

More details to come.

BC Nature gives out awards to naturalists every year. They also award two scholarships to students. Check out these links:

[BC Nature Awards - BC Nature https://bcnature.org/bc-nature-awards/](https://bcnature.org/bc-nature-awards/)

[Scholarships - BC Nature https://bcnature.org/scholarships/](https://bcnature.org/scholarships/)

If you have suggestions for any of these to NONC members, let the club executive know. 🌱



## The Mystery of the Goose Lake Grouse

by Chris Siddle

**THE** mystery began on 19 December 2025 with the appearance of a stranger poking around a garden outside one of the tidy houses of Desert Cove Estates, a retirement community at Head-of-the-Lake a few kilometres north of Vernon. The stranger was not supposed to be there, trampling the plants and obviously not minding its own business. Resident Garry Vanderveen pulled back the drapes and took several photos of the stranger. Garry was puzzled. There was something odd about the bird. It was a grouse, but what kind of grouse? Garry sent a short email and four photos to Harold Sellers, well-known local naturalist.

Harold forwarded the email to me and asked if the bird was what he thought it was. Before opening the photos I expected to see a local species, a Ruffed Grouse taking a break from the forest or, more likely, a Dusky (formerly known as Blue) Grouse taking a short cut to the nearest patch of conifers. Staring in disbelief, I recognized the stranger immediately. It was a Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*), close relative of the Greater Prairie-Chicken, and a grouse that almost forty years ago provincial wildlife authorities had declared extirpated (locally extinct) in the Okanagan Valley. The Sharp-tailed Grouse is distributed widely across the prairie provinces and the northern central states and from James Bay northwest to interior Alaska. In the 1800s, Sharp-tailed Grouse were once common grassland-shrub steppe residents of the Okanagan Valley. Flocks were reported numbering in the hundreds. However, with white settlement the Sharp-tail population rapidly declined and by mid Twentieth Century the species was very rare, and obviously on its way to local extirpation. Over-

hunting, over-grazing and poor range management are generally acknowledged as major causes of its disappearance.

The Sharp-tail is well known among bird people as a species that gathers in early spring at leks. A lek is simply a traditional open display area where males gather to perform dances with females watching close by. The females presumably judge the males' fitness from the level of the dancer's energy. The male's display takes the form of rapid foot stamping with head lowered, wings spread, tail elevated and purple neck sacks inflated. Prose doesn't do the dancing justice so search your computer for footage of Sharp-tailed Grouse dancing. I recommend Liron Gertsman's You Tube video titled Dance of the Sharp-tailed Grouse.



*Sharp-tailed Grouse in Goose Lake Range Park on 6 January 2026. Photo by author*

The species hung on longer in the North Okanagan than it did in the South Okanagan. The last substantiated Vernon area bird was shot on 1 November 1942. Two broods of chicks were seen on the Commonage in July 1970, but since then none have been seen here. Rumours of a small population

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*Goose Lake Grouse continued*

living on the Goose Lake Range continued until about the year 2000.

Elsewhere in south and central British Columbia Sharp-tail populations are still present but generally have declined and their ranges generally have shrunk. Provincial authorities have listed the species in the Thompson, Cariboo, Chilcotin, and possibly the East Kootenays as at risk. Around Fort St. John and Dawson Creek Sharp-tails have adapted to open farmland/aspen groves and are thought to remain fairly common.

The Sharp-tailed Grouse, like most grouse species, is non-migratory in the normal sense of the word. A friend asked me if the Vernon Sharpie could have gotten “caught up” with a migrating flock of Canada Geese. No, to be blunt. Like its grouse relatives, the Sharp-tailed Grouse is essentially a ground bird faithful to its home ground and habitat. In winter it may move a few kilometres to more wooded groves and gullies for cover and food, and if flushed can fly strongly but not for any great distance. The Sharp-tailed Grouse is not a species you would expect to see on a list of avian strays.

The nearest leks to the North Okanagan are north and south of Kamloops, a couple of hundred kilometres distant. Between Kamloops and the North Okanagan the country is wooded or developed for settlement and transportation, unsuitable habitat for Sharp-tails.

In the past Fish and Game clubs and provincial wildlife branches biologists sympathetic to hunters' requests have attempted to stock the countryside with shootable gamebirds. Chukar (from Asia), Gray Partridge (Europe), Ring-necked Pheasants (China

via Europe), Bobwhite and Wild Turkey (eastern United States) were introduced to the Okanagan. Could an agency be attempting to re-introduce Sharp-tailed Grouse? I performed a cursory computer search but failed to find news of any Sharp-tailed Grouse re-introduction schemes. In the 1990s B.C. had been a source of birds for Sharp-tail re-introduction attempts to Washington and Oregon but there was nothing about re-introductions to our Okanagan.

Examining the photos of 19 December, I was stumped. Where had the stranger come from?

Christmas holidays came and went with a week long visit with family in Vancouver. The ornithological spotlight, a small Asian passerine foraging in the trees near the Burrard Street bridge and a first occurrence for Canada, took the ornithological spotlight. Hundreds of birders added the little bird to their lifelists. The media got involved and suddenly everyone knew about the Taiga Flycatcher. Even non-birders asked me if I was among the hundreds (now thousands) of birders who come to Vancouver to “tick” the Taiga. The Desert Cove Sharp-tailed Grouse receded in my mind.

On 2 January, 2026 Joyce Heard emailed me with half a dozen photos of some of her friends standing in the parking lot of the recently opened Goose Lake Range Park admiring a perfectly at ease Sharp-tailed Grouse standing on the back cover of a truck. These photos were the first photographic documentation of this particular bird's outrageously tame behaviour. Three days later, birders Margaret Mackenzie, Joyce Heard, and Pat McAllister were followed closely by the grouse along a path near the Goose Lake Range parking lot. They also photographed it. Pat phoned me from the park to come and see the bird perform

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*Goose Lake Grouse continued*

but I reached the park just after the sun set and the bird had disappeared. But the next morning, 6 January, Scott Thomson found the bird on a knoll near the parking lot. My wife, Sonja, and I arrived a few minutes later and I took several photographs as the grouse stood on the side of the knoll closest to the beginning of the main trail.



It became obvious about this time that walkers in the new park had been having interesting encounters with this ridiculously bold bird probably since late December or earliest January. After realizing that the grouse had an odd affinity for humans, there seemed little point in trying to keep the grouse's existence a secret. Anyone who visited Goose Lake Range Park had a chance of being closely followed by the bird or on returning to their vehicle to find the grouse pecking at its reflection in a window or sunroof. Cell phone videos taken by birders during this period (2-14 January) often show the grouse walking along with birders and walkers, quietly vocalizing in a seemingly companionable way. Postings of photos of the bird became common on NONC's Facebook Group during this period.

No other Sharp-tailed Grouse were seen in the

Okanagan at this time so it's very likely that the Desert Cove bird of 19 Dec. and the Goose Lake Range bird of 2 January onwards are the same bird. It's obvious that the grouse was unusually bold, displaying no obvious fear of people and a clear attraction towards some. As birder Mike Force of Kelowna wrote in a text to me "[The grouse was] bold and fearless. [It] chased us almost all the way back to the car park. Many times I've chased a rare bird but never [before] have I been chased by one."

I am still at a loss to explain this grouse's occurrence and tame behaviour.

### Post Script

As I was finishing this article on 25 January, Margaret Mackenzie emailed me. She had found the grouse happily enjoying the sunshine on 24 January perched in a rose bush at Goose Lake Range Park. It hopped down to her, whereupon she gave it a long talking to for being so incautious. Knowing Margaret to be a good and wise person, I am sure her advice was sound and I hope the grouse had been paying attention. Boldness is fine for a big bird like an Ostrich, but for a two pound grouse in a world of dogs, Coyotes, Bobcats, harriers, goshawks, and other hungry predators, a lot more caution seems called for.

Like many of the birders who saw the Goose Lake Sharp-tailed Grouse, I wonder (and ponder) about the bird's possible origins. Is it a stray individual or is there a remnant population of Sharp-tailed Grouse on the Goose Lake Range? Is it a wild bird that just happens to be unusually bold or is it a former pet?

1. Hypothesis One: It's a wild bird that wandered here from a wild "natural" population. It also just happens to be

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*Goose Lake Grouse continued*

hormonally “different” from the vast majority of other Sharp-tails which are known for their wariness toward people. Sharp-tailed Grouse spook easily, and readily fly away from humanity. Sure, in spring the occasional male Ruffed Grouse overloaded with testosterone can be quite feisty, but such behaviour has not been recorded in Sharp-tailed Grouse.

2. Maybe our Sharp-tail is an escapee from a facility breeding the species for a re-introduction plan. The trouble is there's no evidence that such a place and such a plan exist. And a Sharp-tail Farm doesn't really explain the odd bird's behaviour. Nice try...
3. Our grouse was someone's pet. Of course, it's illegal to possess wildlife for pets, but people

sometimes don't bother with rules and regulations. The Okanagan is a desirable place of retirement for many people who formerly lived in our Prairie Provinces, part of the range of other Sharpie populations. Could a former farmer or rancher, now looking forward to golfing in the Okanagan sunshine have crossed provincial lines with the family Sharp-tail which then got lost or escaped?

Being a birder with an Okanagan life list to which our Sharp-tailed Grouse was added when I saw it on 6 January, I would strongly prefer to believe that the bird is a wild wanderer that just happens to be incredibly tame. But what are the chances of such a combination? Pretty slim, I'd say. However, until someone comes forth with a credible explanation of the bird's origins, I'm happy to live with the unsolved mystery of the Goose Lake Grouse. 🌿

## New Birder

*by Joyce Heard*

Are you a new birder? Here are a few tips to help you get started. Where to go is one of the first dilemmas. The club website has a listing, under Programs, of local places of interest. There are also links given to websites such as Ribbons of Green. As Vernon is the Trails Capital of BC, there are lots of great places to go birding. The Saturday club walks are another great activity to experience some of the local trails.

E-bird is a great website to help you find what birds have been seen, where in the area and around what time of day. It is a citizen science program where many local birders report their sightings. Once at the site, look up Recent Checklists.

Merlin is a very handy app to have on your phone to alert you to what birds are in the area by their sounds. Then you have an idea of what bird you are looking for. You have to be cautious here as it is just a guide, and sometimes can be wrong. It does help with learning bird songs and calls which will assist you in finding birds to study.

Be patient and keep going out! There are not a lot of birds around in winter, but on the positive side, it narrows down your identification choices. Water birds are fun as they tend to sit a lot stiller and give you time to note field marks.

## NONC

## BC Big Tree Registry

by Harold Sellers

**FOLLOWING** up on last month's article, which introduced us to the Big Tree Website & Registry, here are instructions on how to nominate a tree. This comes from the registry website. We've provided links in the article, so you can get more information with a simple click. (H.S.)

### Nominating trees

Any of BC's native tree species are eligible for nomination – they don't have to make the top ten list to be accepted into the registry! To nominate a tree you need a valid email address. Your contact information will be kept confidential and you can even request to remain anonymous if you don't want your name displayed.

For a tree to be displayed in the registry, its height, circumference and crown spread measurements need to be verified by a qualified individual (see "Measurement Verification" in the menu to the left). If you can not arrange to have an experienced verifier accompany you in the field, the measurements you submit will be not displayed until the tree has been re-located and measured by a BC BigTree Registered Verifier. However, we do encourage you to attempt the measurements yourself. It can be fun and there are some simple techniques that can give fairly good approximations (see "[Measuring trees](#)" for measuring techniques and guidelines). Tree trunk circumference is the easiest to measure and is the only required measurement when nominating a tree.

### Field Package

We have prepared a "Field Package" describing the nomination process and the types of information you need to record. The measurement techniques and guidelines described on this website are included in the package, as well as a printable nomination form

that you can take into the field.

Download the [BC BigTree Field Package](#).

Download the [BC BigTree Nomination Form](#) for taking into the field

### Nomination Forms

There are two ways to nominate a tree.

1. **PDF:** Fill out the PDF nomination form and email the form and photos to the [Registrar](#). Download the [nomination form](#).
2. **Online:** Submit your nomination and upload your photos online. Visit the online [online nomination](#) page.

### Measurement verification

Tree measurements should be made following the measurement standards described in [Measuring Trees](#). For acceptance into the BC BigTree Registry, your tree measurements will need to be verified. This can be done by a B.C. Registered Professional Forester, Registered Professional Biologist, Forestry Technician, Timber Cruiser, Registered Land Surveyor, or other person experienced at the measurement of trees. You can find these individuals at a local office for: (a) Ministry of Forests; (b) Timber industry; (c) Ministry of Environment; or (d) universities or colleges. If you need further help in locating someone to measure your tree, contact the Association of B.C. Professional Foresters at (604) 687-8027. If you arranged to have your tree verified, you will be asked to provide the name and contact information of the verifier. Again, all contact information will be kept confidential, and verifiers can also request to remain anonymous.

If you can not arrange to have a qualified individual accompany you, submit your measurements, and we will try to have a registered verifier visit the tree.

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*Big Tree continued***Measuring trees**

To nominate a tree, you will need to include a measurement of trunk circumference (the girth of the trunk at a specified height). It is the easiest measurement to take accurately without specialized equipment. The measurement of tree height and crown spread (breadth or horizontal extent of its crown) are more difficult to obtain, especially for tall trees, trees in dense forests or on steep slopes. These measurements should be made as precisely as possible and will need to be **verified by a qualified individual**. The measurement guidelines described here and in the BC BigTree Field Package follow those set by American Forests, which are used in the National and most of the state-wide big tree programs in the USA (see our [“Links”](#) page). If you have arranged to have your tree verified, please ensure that your verifier has a copy of these guidelines and the “BC BigTree Field Package” before you head out.

**Field Package**

[Download the BC BigTree Field Package \(PDF file\).](#)

**Repurposing Your Old Christmas Tree**

by Margaret MacKenzie

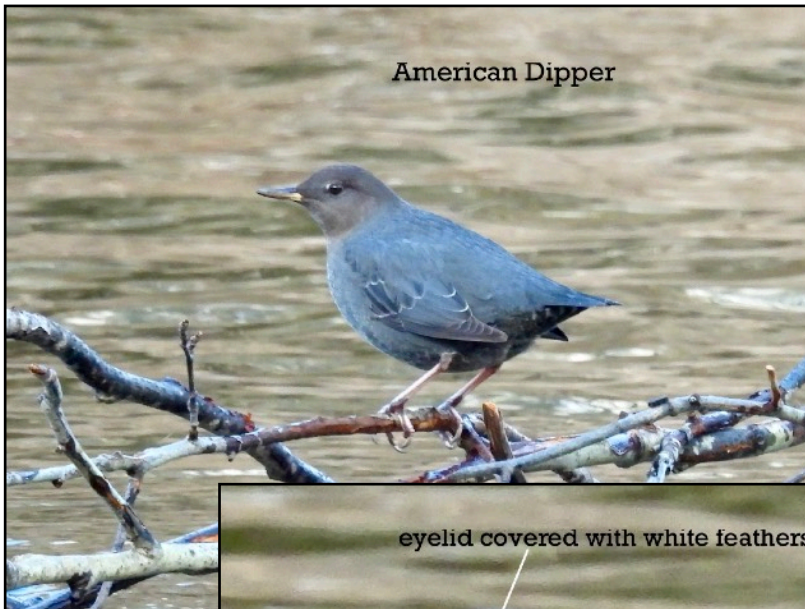
When the Christmas tree is finally taken down, besides being recycled, it can be re-instated in your back yard where it adds some green colour and provides shelter for birds during the remainder of winter. I don't have a Christmas tree anymore, so I go to the empty city lot on 20th street where there are stacks of trees left to be chipped for compost by the city. I pick out a couple I like and bring them home tied to the top of my car. During the winter months, my back yard looks quite bleak with bare branched deciduous shrubs and trees. The newly added green fir trees now placed upright in their stands, brighten it up considerably. I hang some suet and a couple of coloured balls and the birds can enjoy sitting on its branches and eating the suet too. The trees keep their needles all winter and only begin to brown sometime in late March or early April. At that time, out they go to the street to be picked up by the city for the spring chipping and composting program.

# NONC

## Curious Dipper Facts

by Margaret MacKenzie

**WHEN** I was walking the trail at the Shuswap River Boat Launch I followed the very musical sound of a singing bird to the river where I found an American Dipper standing on a few branches in midstream. The singing was reminiscent of a Townsend's Solitaire. It sang merrily for quite awhile, then flew downstream where I could see it bobbing up and down along the river's edge. We seldom hear the dipper sing, or, its lovely song is masked by the sound of the noisy rapids on the creeks and rivers in which it spends time.



The Dipper is the only North American songbird that swims underwater, hunting for aquatic prey like caddis fly larvae, worms, and even small fish. When they dive, their short wings act like paddles to propel them down to the pebbly bottom and help push back against the current. They also use their toes and claws to grip the bottom of the streams while they walk along picking through the pebbles for food.

The American Dipper is also the only songbird that replaces its worn feathers all at once. During this

molt, they are like ducks, unable to fly until the new feathers regrow.

Dippers survive in cold mountain water because they have 4200 feathers compared to an American Robin with 3000 feathers ! This fact boggled my mind while I pictured someone in a lab coat methodically counting each and every feather for this comparison! Along with all this extra padding the dipper preens its feathers with a waterproof oil. They also have a nostril flap that closes while underwater to keep out cold water from entering the nasal passages. And, they use their third transparent eyelid (the nictitating membrane) as a goggle allowing them to protect the eye from the cold and to see clearly underwater.

While I watched the Dipper and took photos, it blinked, which the camera caught showing a flash of bright white. This is the actual eyelid, not the third or nictitating eyelid, and it's covered with tiny white feathers! Other birds have unfeathered eyelids and why a

Dipper has a white eyelid isn't known, unless it's to help locate or show off for other Dippers.

The Dipper is well named as it does just that - dips and bobs along the water's edge - and it's this bobbing motion that helps us notice it along a stretch of water. 🌿

# NONC

## Love Medicines

by Roseanne Van Ee

**VALENTINES** Day is just around the corner. Historically, the Okanagan Indian/First Nations People concocted an interesting variety of “love medicines” from local native plants. These medicines fell into three categories:

- 1 medicines to gain love
  - 2 medicines for loving
  - 3 medicines for regaining love
- \* warning: do not try preparing or ingesting any of the following:

1) Arnica (*A. cordifolia* & *A. latifolia*) M

Men would mix the roots of Arnica with a Robin’s (or swallow’s) heart and tongue and ochre paint (a rock mineral). This mixture was dried and powdered. A “charming” man would walk into water (a creek or lake) facing East and recite certain words including the name of his desired woman while marking his face with the powdered mixture.

at right: Arnica

Mountain Valerian (possibly *Valeriana sitchensis*)

M & F  
The Valerian stalk was pounded up with a hummingbird’s heart to make a strong love potion for men and women.

2) A Milkweed-like plant (unknown) M or F  
This kept newlyweds together. Two leaves were placed together, parched and powdered. Typically the

wife (or occasionally the husband) kept the powder in a small pouch. Elders interviewed for this research said, “ Usually, it was the women who had to look out for these things.”

Rosy Pussytoes (*Antennaria rosea*) M  
Leaves of the lowland variety were chewed and swallowed to increase male virility.

Spreading Dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*)  
M & F

This was a strong aphrodisiac. The leaves were chewed and the juice and pulp swallowed. It acts within half an hour and is highly effective! Or, the leaves were dried to a crisp, crushed then smoked directly, making it even more potent!

Bedstraw (*Galvin aparine*) M & F  
People wouldn’t play around with bedstraw. If so, brothers and sisters would keep on dying and they would have to marry their spouses (as was the custom).

3) Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria matricarioides*) M & F  
This kept loved ones (including relatives) from going away. Flower heads were mixed with a combination of one’s own hair and the loved one(s) and buried

on the “charmer’s” property.

Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*) F  
These roots were steeped in hot water and drunk by women as a love potion to win back the affections of a man who no longer cared for her.

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*Love Medicines continued*A Wild Morning Glory-like Plant (unknown) F

This was gathered by women, whose husband had just taken another wife, to break up the second union (if unwanted) and retain his love and affection for herself. She would take one of the new wife's possessions (ie. Something she chewed, wore or had contact with), sprinkle with powder prepared from a single plant which has been parched, powdered and mixed with vermilion (ochre?) and placed in a buckskin bag. The possession was burned with the powder, bags and even the grinding rocks, or it was all set adrift in a stream. If followed correctly, the husband would soon break up with his second wife. The same plant dug along its entire root complex and prepared differently would hold a family together and prevent dissension.

Information for this article was gathered from *Ethnobotany of the Okanagan-Colville Indians of British Columbia and Washington* by Nancy Turner, Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy. January 1980 Publisher: BC Provincial Museum



above: Milkweed

Many of our modern pharmaceuticals originated or are still sourced from plants and fungi. 🌱

## 2026 Swan and Eagle Count – North Okanagan Region

by Rod Drennan

On Sunday, January 18, 2026 about 21 members of the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club, with family and friends, conducted the annual swan and eagle count. The general region includes Oyama, Vernon, Coldstream, Lumby north to Mabel Lake, and then the corridor from north of Vernon to Mara Lake. The weather was cool, damp, with low cloud and about 0 to -2C. Nevertheless, the annual count was completed and the data were compiled. One of our teams mentioned that most of the swans were observed on farm fields and not in open water where they are usually found.

80 Trumpeter Swans, 176 Bald Eagles and three Golden Eagles were counted.

These numbers are "average" in comparison to past counts. Both eagle and swan numbers can vary dramatically from count to count, Trumpeter swan numbers in particular are very variable. The count is only a one day snapshot, but the results do show that these birds are doing well in our area.

This is a 'citizen science' initiative and has been done in the southern Interior regions since the early 1970s under the direction of Rick Howie, a Kamloops-based biologist who is now deceased.

# NONC

## Watching for our disappearing wildlife

by Ben van Drimmelen, Director, BC Nature  
January 15, 2026

**TWICE** per year, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) meets to discuss and evaluate the status of Canadian wildlife species.

I reviewed the wildlife species assessments results for just those species in BC that have been made extinct, eliminated from the province or endangered. The depressive (as opposed to impressive) list is enclosed for your info.

I've started such a matrix; below is how it might look. I've included probably-extirpated species because member clubs would get VERY EXCITED if

one of their members found a remnant population. The list would continue with endangered species as well.

To determine the member clubs with potential occurrences, I've cast the "net" a bit wide, including buffer clubs that are likely to be near, rather than within, the expected range of each species.

A suggestion is that their members look up how to recognize each species that is listed for their area and then keep a special eye open whenever they are doing field trips. If they see what they suspect is an endangered or an "extirpated" creature, take a photo and report the observation by email to the Conservation Data Centre at the CDC team.

Editor's Note: Ben's list is quite extensive, so I have made it into a multi-part series. In this issue we look at MAMMALS. 🌿

<b>Species (Extirpated or Endangered only)</b>	<b>BCN member clubs with potential occurrences</b>	<b>Habitat</b>
American badger	Oliver/Osoyoos, Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, Rocky Mountain, Lillooet, Nicola, South Okanagan	Grassland, shrub, pasture
Eastern red bat	South Okanagan	Grasslands, prairies
Hoary bat	Oliver/Osoyoos, Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, Rocky Mountain, Lillooet, Nicola, South Okanagan, Vermillion, Kamloops, West Kootenay	Lakes, wetlands, riparian areas.
Silver-haired bat	Oliver/Osoyoos, Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, Rocky Mountain, Lillooet, Nicola, South Okanagan, Central Okanagan, Vermillion, Kamloops, West Kootenay, Alberni, Comox, Arrowsmith, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Salt Spring, Victoria, Abbotsford/Mission, Bowen, Burke Mountain, Delta, Langley, Malaspina, Chilliwack, Vancouver, Pender Harbour, White Rock and Surrey, Delkatla, Williams Lake	Forest and grassland habitats up to 1220 metres.

# NONC

## *Disappearing Wildlife continued*

Central mountain caribou	Timberline	High elevation forests with high canopy cover, mild, dry climate, Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir, young and old closed canopy cedar, hemlock and spruce forests of low elevations, old subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce high elevation forests
Southern mountain caribou	Rocky Mountain, West Kootenay	Old forests
Vancouver Island marmot	Alberni, Arrowsmith, Comox, Nanaimo, Cowichan	Subalpine areas
Townsend's mole	Abbotsford, Chilliwack	Pastures, prairies, and shrub habitats in lowlands and flood plains, and occasionally in true fir forests. In more open habitats with heavy soils with moderate water content.
Western harvest mouse	Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, South Okanagan, Oliver/Osoyoos	Agricultural cultivated areas – hedgerows, old fields, grasslands, shrubby grasslands, sagebrush steppe areas
Little brown myotis ( <i>This bat is not yet endangered, but may become so as the white nose syndrome fungal disease reaches BC</i> )	All clubs except Timberline	Use a wide range of habitats and often use human-made structures for resting and maternity sites; also use caves and hollow trees. Foraging over water, along the margins of lakes and streams, or in woodlands near water.
Northern myotis ( <i>bat</i> )	Mackenzie, Prince George, Timberline, Williams Lake	Old-growth forests composed of trees 100 years old or older. Relies on intact interior forest habitat, with low edge-to-interior ratios. Relevant late-successional forest features include a high percentage of old trees, uneven forest structure (resulting in multilayered vertical structure), single and multiple tree-fall gaps, standing snags, and woody debris.
Pacific water shrew	Abbotsford/Mission, Burke Mountain, Delta, Langley, Chilliwack, Vancouver, White Rock and Surrey	Relevant late-successional forest features include a high percentage of old trees, uneven forest structure (resulting in multilayered vertical structure), single and multiple tree-fall gaps, standing snags, and woody debris.

Part 2 will be in the next issue.

## NONC

**In Memory****Theresa (Terry) Hurst**

April 23, 2035 – December 12, 2025

**THE** North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC) lost one of its longtime members in December of 2025. Terry Hurst worked for Dr. Douglas Ross, the NONC founder and head of the Dominion Forest Insect Laboratory, then located in Vernon in the early 1950s. When Dr. Ross decided with a few

colleagues to start a natural history club in the North Okanagan, Terry naturally came along and her association continued from that date in 1951 to 2025.

The obituary in the December 18, 2025 edition of the Vernon Morningstar for Terry notes that she lived her entire, long life in Vernon. She married and raised four children, but her outside-the-home career included at various times being a legal secretary, owning a book store, and managing the family's property holdings (an apartment block) for nearly 50 years after the death of her father.

Terry will be remembered by many in Vernon for her published works on local history. 'Vernon and District Pioneer Routes: The Stories Behind our Street Names' was published in 1997, and 'Vernon, a Brief History' was a B.C. centennial project in 1958. There have also been numerous articles researched and written by Terry for the Okanagan Historical Society's annual reports.



In her mid-80s Terry volunteered to take on the daunting project of developing an index for the extensive collection of Newspackets, the Club's journal. These were collected in tranches of 10 to 15 years and delivered to her home. Terry developed the index to allow all manner of articles, reports on Club activities, bird counts, monthly talks, walks and outings, to be accessed with the use of a creative cross-referencing system. Missing copies of the Newspacket were found in members' homes and the task was completed up to the year 2022. Terry's

unique talent, dedication and computer skills allowed her to take on this project and complete it over a short period of time - and she was in her mid-80s!

As a matter of interest this very index lists articles that Terry herself researched and submitted over the years. These include: Bats in the Belfry in April, 1994, the Brunland Report in February, 1988, six reports on specific bird species over the years 1960 to 1992, one report on easy tick removal, one on hiking in the Monashees, and another on the Eastern Grey Squirrel. One can appreciate Terry's range of interest in nature.

Theresa Hurst, widely known as Terry, passed away in Vernon on December 12, 2025. We honour her long membership and volunteer endeavours in the Naturalist Club, and

her contributions to the preservation of history in the greater Vernon community.

*Submitted by Rod Drennan. This tribute has now been included in the NONC Book of Honour, which you can find on the club website. 🌱*

NONC

## NONC CALENDAR

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

NONC monthly meetings are held in the Emerald Room at The Schubert Centre for Seniors, 30th Ave., in downtown Vernon. No entry fee. Members and non-members welcome. Coffee and cookies served!

**Next meeting : 7:00 pm, Wednesday, Feb. 4:** Lia McKinnon (Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society) - Snakes of the Okanagan

**Wednesday, March 4, 7:00 pm:** Carrie Nadeau speaking on Local Restoration Projects 2025: A peak into the science

### SATURDAY NATURE WALKS

Join us Saturdays at 10:00 am (Winter start time). Visitors welcome. Dress for the weather. Ice cleats recommended on many trails. We do a lot of birdwatching, so bring binoculars if you have them. No dogs please.

DR 1 & 2 are generally suitable for almost anyone, of any age. However, if you have issues of mobility and/or stamina, you should speak to the leader before attempting.

DR 1 Easy — Suitable for most people. Mostly paved or good-surface path, fairly level with some gentle climbs.

DR 2 Moderate — Suitable for most walkers and hikers with no mobility or endurance issues. May have longer distance with steeper hills and switchbacks, some uneven and rough path.

#### February 7 - 10am DR 2

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a walk on the Grey Canal Trail in Coldstream, between

Buchanan Road and Cypress Drive. There and back, about 2 hours, 6 km. Meet at the parking lot on the north side of Buchanan Road, east of Grey Road. Lot is between 8585 and 8467 Buchanan Road. We will walk west on the Cypress Drive sections of the trail and return. Contact Harold at [hikerharold@gmail.com](mailto:hikerharold@gmail.com)

#### February 14 - 10am DR

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a nature walk on the Grey Canal Trail in Coldstream, between Buchanan Road and Warren Road. There and back, about 2 hours. Meet at the new laneway access to the trail on the north side of Buchanan Road, east of Grey Road. Enter through an unmarked gate between 8585 and 8467 Buchanan Road. Contact Marnie/Paul at [mpw660@telus.net](mailto:mpw660@telus.net)

#### February 21 – 10am DR 1

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a walk on the trail from the Twin Bays parking lot to Turtles Head Point. Take Kidston Road to the main parking lot of the park and meet in the first lot, by the interpretive signs kiosk. Contact Harold at [hikerharold@gmail.com](mailto:hikerharold@gmail.com)

#### February 28 - 10am DR 1

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a nature walk at the Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary in Coldstream. Meet in the parking lot of Sovereign Park on Kidston Road. Contact Susan at [supepghat@hotmail.com](mailto:supepghat@hotmail.com)

**Nature walks will return to a 9:00 am start, as of March.**