

# NATURE BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society

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Fall  
2014



## President's Message

My husband and I recently returned from an extended holiday. I'm always surprised how quickly we get on our hiking shoes and head for the foreshore in Salmon Arm. We are always amazed at the beauty of our lake and foreshore area.

Our Board Members are constantly monitoring the

trail, fixing boards, trimming bush, building a bridge, tracking down memberships, writing newsletters, installing signs or putting wire on the trees to save them from the beavers. We also appreciate the trail steward volunteers who have assumed responsibility for caring for a section of the trail.

**Rotary** and **Steve Genn** have generously supported our efforts to reconstruct a bridge on Christmas Island. **Salmon Arm Ready Mix** provided the concrete supports below the beams, and provided a load of gravel to level the concrete patio blocks that support the stairs at both ends of the bridge. **Duncan Morris (Traditional Log Homes)** generously lent us his large circular saw and **Wagner Rentals** lent us a generator. All these items were provided at no charge. Many of our board members helped, driven by **Gary Lomax** and **Ed Dahl**. Thanks also to **Greg Diepdael**.



**We're almost there!** The Bridge on Christmas Island is almost finished and will have a ceremonial opening next Spring.

We appreciate the generous grant of \$6000. from the **City of Salmon Arm** to fund a student for the summer to work in the Brighthouse Nature Center. The **Shuswap Community Foundation** also provides grants for special projects that are beyond our financial means. Our current project, supported by a \$3,000 grant is to develop plans for a viewing platform at Peter Jannink Park. **Friday AM** and **Lorne Reimer** keep our news in the headlines. We appreciate all your efforts. Thanks also to the **Salmar Association** for a grant of \$500 to purchase a microscope for the Nature Centre. As the year is drawing to a close, please consider a donation to **SABNES** or to 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.



Thanks to a grant of \$6,000 from the **City of Salmon Arm** we hired **Janell Bawtree** for 13 weeks to staff the Brighthouse Nature Centre



The **Young Naturalists** enjoyed a terrific day on the Foreshore Trail on Sunday Nov 23rd. **Geoff and Emily Styles** led a group of enthusiastic ornithologists for an adventure around Christmas Island.

They saw an amazing number of birds for this time of year!

A **Northern Shrike** was perched high in a tree with a **Red-tailed Hawk** nearby. A **Bald Eagle** was flying over the open water while **Hooded Merganzers** and **Bufflehead** ducks swam cautiously below.

In all, 18 species of birds were spotted. We even saw a **Robin!**

**Emily Styles** commented that no matter what time of year you visit the foreshore, there is always something exciting going on.

**Hanne MacKay**

Western Grebe Report for 2014 - *Good News* from Monica and Ed Dahl

Western Grebes were a bit slow to arrive in spring 2014, but on May 1st we had counted 208. Monica and I counted more near Sandy Point and Appleyard than at the wharf. None were seen from Peter Jannick Park. The numbers fell to 42 on May 27th, likely due to migration. By June 3rd there were 43 Western Grebes at the wharf and 10 sighted at Peter Jannink Park. The gathering off the wharf was suggestive of previous years when the grebes tried to build nests east of the Brighthouse Nature Centre. Shuswap Lake water levels peaked around June 4th at 348.624 meters above sea level. The grebes looked to be having difficulty maintaining their nests due to wind action. One nest was seen on June 11th and 15th. On June 18, we counted 49 Western Grebes evenly distributed over the Lake, but no nests. On June 25 we counted 87 adults and 19 young. That caused us to smile. On July 4th, families were widely distributed, most being west of the wharf. We counted 136 adults and 60 young comprising 40 families. The miracle continued and by July 9th there were 200 adults, 122 young and 76 families. On July 12th we counted 191 adults and 159 young. On July 23 there were 212 adults, 139 young and 86 families, although the number of families was likely high because the young were becoming spread out from their parents. Some of the youngsters may have looked like adults by that time. Shuswap Lake water levels stayed higher this year than usual, at 346.389 m. on Aug. 12, compared to 346.162 m. on the same day the previous year. According to records, the lake had exceeded this depth in only six other years.

**SABNES ENDOWMENT FUND CREATED—NOW IT'S UP TO YOU**

At the last AGM a motion was passed to create this fund under the agency of the **Shuswap Community Foundation**. In June, SABNES made an initial deposit of \$10,000. From now and into perpetuity, this fund will provide SABNES with an income source. **We invite all lovers of the foreshore to make a donation.**

To do so, send a 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.

**A Special Thank you to SABNES from Wes Grebe**

**Wes** is the **chief spokesperson** for **FFF** (*Feathered Friends of the Foreshore*). He is currently snowbirding at his coastal retreat.



Clive Bryson

**Thanks, SABNES!** Our members think it's **FFFantastic** that you guys have created a golden nest-egg for us, which will grow and feather generations of nests in years to come. Expect to see more of us on the foreshore in future.

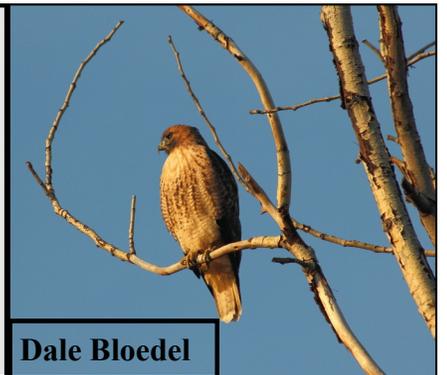
Yours in birding,

Wes Grebe



Polecats, **Ed Dahl** and **Mike Saul**, have cleared the Osprey platforms near the wharf and Prestige. Great job guys!

**Red-tailed hawk on Christmas island. Nov 18.**



Dale Bloedel

## 2014 Birding Highlights in the Salmon Arm Bay

2014 was a great year for Salmon Arm Bay birders. Two-hundred and nineteen species were reported, including five new species never recorded here before. This brings the number of confirmed sightings in the Salmon Arm Bay to 274 species. It is truly an amazing number for any spot in the interior of British Columbia.

The first new species was a **White-tailed Kite** flying at the land end of the wharf on May 3. This had been previously reported in the **SABNES** spring Newsletter.

The second new species was a young **Blackpoll Warbler**. It spent 2 – 3 days with a flock of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** feeding in the shrubs and small trees just to the west of the sign at Peter Jannink Park. Although a common summer resident in northern B.C., it was a first for the Bay area.

On September 21, **Don Cecile** photographed a **White Wagtail**, an outstanding sighting. It is a Siberian summer resident seen on occasion in coastal Alaska and even more rarely along the coast of B.C. It was flying and feeding with a large flock of **American Pipits** on the mudflats near the mouth of the Salmon River. This is the first confirmed sighting ever in the interior of B.C.

A month later, on October 13, five juvenile and two female **Black Scoters** were seen swimming just north of the cement breakwater at the end of the wharf. These sea ducks were probably blown in by the strong westerlies which caused so much havoc in Metro Vancouver. A couple of days later, on October 15, and in virtually the same place, a female **King Eider** was spotted swimming. Some of these Arctic birds winter along the coast and this one was probably blown inland by the same storm which brought us the **Black Scoters**.

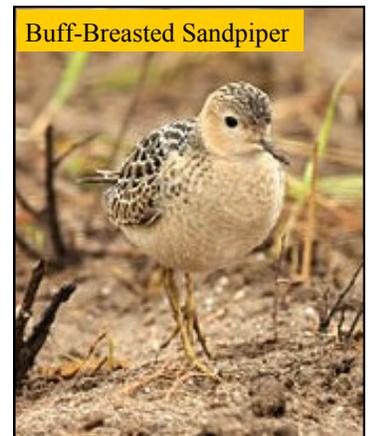
With the addition of these two new species, a total of 41 species of waterfowl have been reported to date in the Bay, up one from last year. Some of these birds nest along the shoreline, but the majority are migratory. A pair of **American White Pelicans** entertained tourists along the waterfront for most of the summer. They were gone on September 11, but a week later they were replaced by a single pelican. This bird hung around for so long that people were beginning to wonder whether it might get frozen in the ice. It finally left on November 3.

28 species of shore birds were reported this year. These included a couple of **Upland Sandpipers** and a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** in September, one or two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** arrived mid-September and stayed for a month. There were nine species of gulls including a **Sabine's gull**, which was first seen on October 3 and was still here on November 9.

The **Bald Eagles** nesting to the west of Peter Jannink Nature Park successfully raised a family of at least two young. **Ospreys** were seen nesting in a variety of locations. In the Salmon Arm area, 13 nests were counted and most successfully housed two young. Unfortunately, a couple of the adults were electrocuted while nesting on power lines. B.C Hydro did a good job relocating nests to safer places, including one nest containing eggs and another which had two young.



Summer Male Blackpoll Warbler



Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Rear of Prestige Hotel -April 2012



Both **Red-winged** and **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** nested this year along the foreshore. It was good seeing the yellow heads back in numbers as most of their habitat had been washed out in previous years. The numbers of swallows still appear to be declining; fewer **Tree** and **Violet-green Swallows** were reported in the nesting boxes and only a few **Cliff Swallows** at the end of the wharf, but a large colony of **Barn Swallows** nested under the wharf.

Peter Jannink Park-June 2009



Salmon Arm Bay continues to amaze both locals and tourists with its spectacular bird life. To have the Bay so close at hand, and so relatively unspoilt, is a gift never to be taken for granted.

**Ted Hillary**

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

**Appointed Directors**  
 Pat Mearns, **Shuswap Naturalists Club** ;  
 Councillor. Ken Jamieson, **City of Salmon Arm**;  
 Hank Shelley, **FishNGame** ;  
 James Cowling, **DowntownImprovementAssn**

**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**

Bowers Funeral Service Limited  
 Browne Johnson Land Surveyors  
 Dr Lyle A Martin  
 Gentech Engineering Inc.  
 Hub International Barton Insurance  
 Prestige Harbourfront Resort and Convention Centre  
 Shuswap Acupuncture and Laser Therapy Clinic  
 Terratech Consulting Ltd  
 Bernd Hermanski Architect Inc.

**GRANTING AGENCIES**

City of Salmon Arm  
 Salmon Arm Rotary Club  
 Shuswap Community Foundation  
 Salmar Community Association

**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)  Please check

to help with trail clean-up and maintenance

Nature Bay Society (**SABNES**) is a Charitable Organization. Most of the Membership Fees are tax-deductible. Receipts for Income Tax purposes will be mailed out.

**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)**

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



**THOSE DAMMED UP-PITY BEAVERS!**



The beavers continue to be a big draw along the Nature Reserve trail. Most people never have the chance to observe beaver in a working lodge, and visitors and locals alike have had many photo opportunities at dusk when the animals are most active. An area of cattails was cleared so that they could be observed

and photographed more easily from the boardwalk.

Water continually flows into the beaver pond through culverts beneath the CPR track and then under the trail. The water level of the main pond is continually monitored to ensure there is enough depth to allow the beavers to use their lodge during the winter when the pond freezes over, but also to keep it at a level that will not flood the trail during the rest of the year.

This summer the beavers constructed a canal to connect the pond with the copses of willow trees to the west, as can be seen by the trees that have been felled. We will continue to protect the trees alongside the the trail as much as possible to provide shade and to retain the beauty of the path, but will allow the beavers to work on the trees in the marsh by the lakeside.

The large trees at the boat basin have been protected, as beavers were living under the opposite bank, but it has not been determined if this is a permanent home.

Last summer people were thrilled and excited to see up to eight river otters swimming and playing in the boat basin and around the wharf.

**Mike and Pam Saul**