

NATURE BAY



SALMON ARM BAY
**NATURE
ENHANCEMENT
SOCIETY**

NATURE BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society

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Fall 2021



In Salmon Arm, even the Herons practise Social Distancing

President's Message

It has been an eventful year. Once again, support for SABNES has been overwhelming.

Last spring, we received a grant from the **Shuswap Community Foundation** to begin work on replacing our bird viewing platform near Christmas Island. We removed the existing walkway and salvaged some of the timber. We now have a detailed plan developed by **Marc Lamerton**, Architect. It's a slow process, but we are **determined to complete it with structural integrity**. A special thank you to the Shuswap Community Foundation and their donors for providing the initial funding.

Melissa LaRiverie, our part-time summer Interpreter, created some beautiful new signs for the Brighouse Nature Centre exterior. Watch for them in spring 2022. In her 'spare' time, Melissa also created numerous botanical markers for the plants around Marine Park. We appreciate the grant from the City of Salmon Arm that provided additional funding for her.

Our goals are as relevant today as they were when developed in 1986, the year SABNES was established.

Our mandates are to:

- assist the provincial government (FLNRO) with the development and operation of their management plan for the Salmon Arm foreshore as a Nature Conservancy and viewing area.
- develop and oversee a system of walkways, viewing areas and interpretive facilities for public use.
- promote environmental awareness that will further interest in science and environmental education and to assist in projects meeting that goal in the Salmon Arm area.

In order to be an integral part of the community, we work to improve our role and seek the public's assistance in accomplishing our goals. We strive to create new opportunities to enhance the public's experience while preserving the unique resources on the foreshore.

We value our partnership with the Shuswap Trail Alliance, the City of Salmon Arm, FLNRO, Nature Trust and the Shuswap Naturalist's Club. We also sincerely appreciate the ongoing support from the community. Our membership is at an all-time high, and we welcome newcomers.

As you wander the trails and beyond over the holidays, please consider renewing your membership and becoming an active participant, if you aren't there already.

Thank you.

Janet Aitken, President



15/01/2021
Foreshore trail walkers will be happy with the improvements made by the **City of Salmon Arm** and **Shuswap Trail Alliance** to the section of the foreshore trail between the Bird Tower and the trail boardwalk. That section was often flooded by water draining from the CP Railside to the Lake. The City has added gravel and raised the height by approx. 2 ft and built a series of small bridges and culverts to keep the pathway from flooding.

Bravo!

Birding in the Bay—2021

Birders around Salmon Arm Bay have found it to be an average year. A **total of 198 species** have been recorded since January 1, including 38 species of waterfowl, 26 species of shore birds and seven species of gulls, all with a slightly higher count than last year.



Ruddy Turnstone. So-named because they often flip over stones to get at prey living underneath .

Although no new species have been added to our checklist, several rarities are noteworthy: - On August 6 a **magnolia warbler** was spotted on the spit alongside the wharf. This small migratory bird is easy to miss as it feeds in thick bushy areas. - In the same general area on August 14 a **ruddy turnstone**, more commonly



Magnolia Warbler. Males court females with song and show off the white spots on their tails.

seen on the Coast, was seen feeding on the mudflats. - On October 24 a couple of **gray-crowned rosy-finches** appeared in **Peter Jannick Nature Park**. These mountain finches may have come to the valley bottom because of inclement weather higher up.



Long-eared Owl. This nocturnal bird has the ability to fly silently and enjoys a diet of small critters such as mice and voles.

- Four **long-eared owls** were seen in trees near the Salmon River on November 6. Because they hide themselves in bushy habitat, these shy slender owls are likely present more often than realized. **Western grebes** successfully nested again, although numbers were down. They raised about 125 young to maturity. One **Clark's grebe** mated with a western grebe and had young. A dozen **American white pelicans** arrived in mid April. Their numbers varied over the summer but at one point there were about 100. Although it's doubtful that they nest in this area, their



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch This songbird is exceptionally hardy. It usually nests in the highest mountains in North America. The one seen near Salmon Arm seems to have had a GPS issue!

increasing numbers may pose a problem. Their food supply is the same as that of the western grebes, and one has to wonder whether there will be enough to sustain both species. (In the Creston Valley, where western grebes used to nest, a large colony of cormorants has decimated the food supply.) Christmas Island continues to be home for **ring-**

billed gulls. Once again, over **500** nesting pairs raised over a **1000** young. Among them were a pair or two of nesting **short-billed (mew) and herring gulls**. Two pairs of **bald eagles**, nesting on the south side of the Bay, successfully raised five young. Not so successful were the osprey. No nests occupied the wharf area. A pair spent all summer building a nest on Lakeshore Road near the Credit Union but don't appear to have laid eggs – perhaps next year, if the Canada geese don't get there first. The **swallows** also did not fare well. Vandals destroyed most of the nesting boxes along the Foreshore Nature Trail in April and May, including both eggs and birds. Even after



Cliff Swallow. Typically will build its nest from mud collected using its beak.

replacement boxes were put up, the extremely hot weather in late June proved detrimental to both adults and any young there might have been. Under the end of the wharf, between 25 pairs of **barn swallows** nested. Above them,

attached to the washrooms, six or seven pairs of **cliff swallows** nested, their numbers in the wharf area being much lower than usual. Continuing to decline are the numbers of insect-eating birds, namely **swallows, nighthawks, swifts and flycatchers**. The continual destruction of habitat and the increased use of insecticides will cause a further decline. Perhaps because of late high lake waters fewer **coots** and shorebirds made an appearance.



Northern Pintails. These dabbling ducks are widely spread over all the earth. A Pintail skeleton was found at 16,400 ft on the Khumbu Glacier during the first ascent of Mount Everest in 1952



American Wigeons. These diving ducks are known to follow other migrating ducks and steal food from them.

© Terry Sofill

Orioles and robins were also scarce. In contrast, the Bay continues to attract high numbers of migratory waterfowl. On March 23, 2,800 **northern pintails** arrived and on March 30, 800 American widgeon.

Enjoy birding around the Bay in all seasons. Every walk invites new and interesting surprises

Ted Hillary, Shuswap Naturalists

(photographs with comments compiled by Geoff Benson)



Juvenile Northern Harrier



Rough-legged Hawk Nov-2021

Salmon Armchair Birding

It's over a year now when we moved to a house in Heronview in Salmon Arm. We have a wonderful view of the wetlands, the lake and the mountains. From our armchairs or our deck, we can observe the birds and their antics and group behaviours. Since April on most days we have seen sometimes one, sometimes two, juvenile **Northern Harriers**. They are remarkable birds to watch. They often fly about ten ft. above the ground. When they see possible prey, they turn through a right angle and drop to the floor.

We give thanks this holiday season, not only for our snug abode and friendly neighbours, and also for the ever-active resident herons, pheasants, swans, hawks, flickers, song sparrows, ducks and geese. Yes, even the Canada geese have been a gift!

Geoff and Judith Benson

SABNES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected Directors

Janet Aitken, President.

Geoff Benson, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor.

Mona Broad, Hanne MacKay, Carla Kirkpatrick, Sid Visser, Debbie Noakes, Di Wittner, Mitch Olineck, Cory Day, Don Derby, Jon Mills

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 Brighouse, Advisor

We greatly appreciate the financial and service support from the following companies:

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Sustaining Individual..... \$50

Sustaining Family..... \$100

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5-10 Employees..... \$100

+ 10 Employees..... \$150

Life Membership..... \$2,500

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(If you have been a member, we only need you to enter new information
If you are sending your subscription by e-transfer, please separately e-mail us the contact information asked for below)

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

Email: sabnes.org@gmail.com

Make an Everlasting Contribution to SABNES

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 mark 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.

SABNES Improvements and Accomplishments

Brighouse Nature Centre - New lights and a new paint job. Two new large signs for the exterior were created by our summer interpreter, **Melissa LaRiviere**. The one shown below was installed to the left of the entrance. All of our directors have participated in making substantive improvements to the Nature Centre this year.



Red Alert!

On Sep 5th, **SABNES** received an e-mail from **Richard Rolke** with a photo taken on Christmas Island looking East from the bridge. Something had turned the lake water a deep red. Within a few days, however, it became clear. It was probably algae of some kind, but the true cause was never established. Thanks to Richard for blowing the whistle!