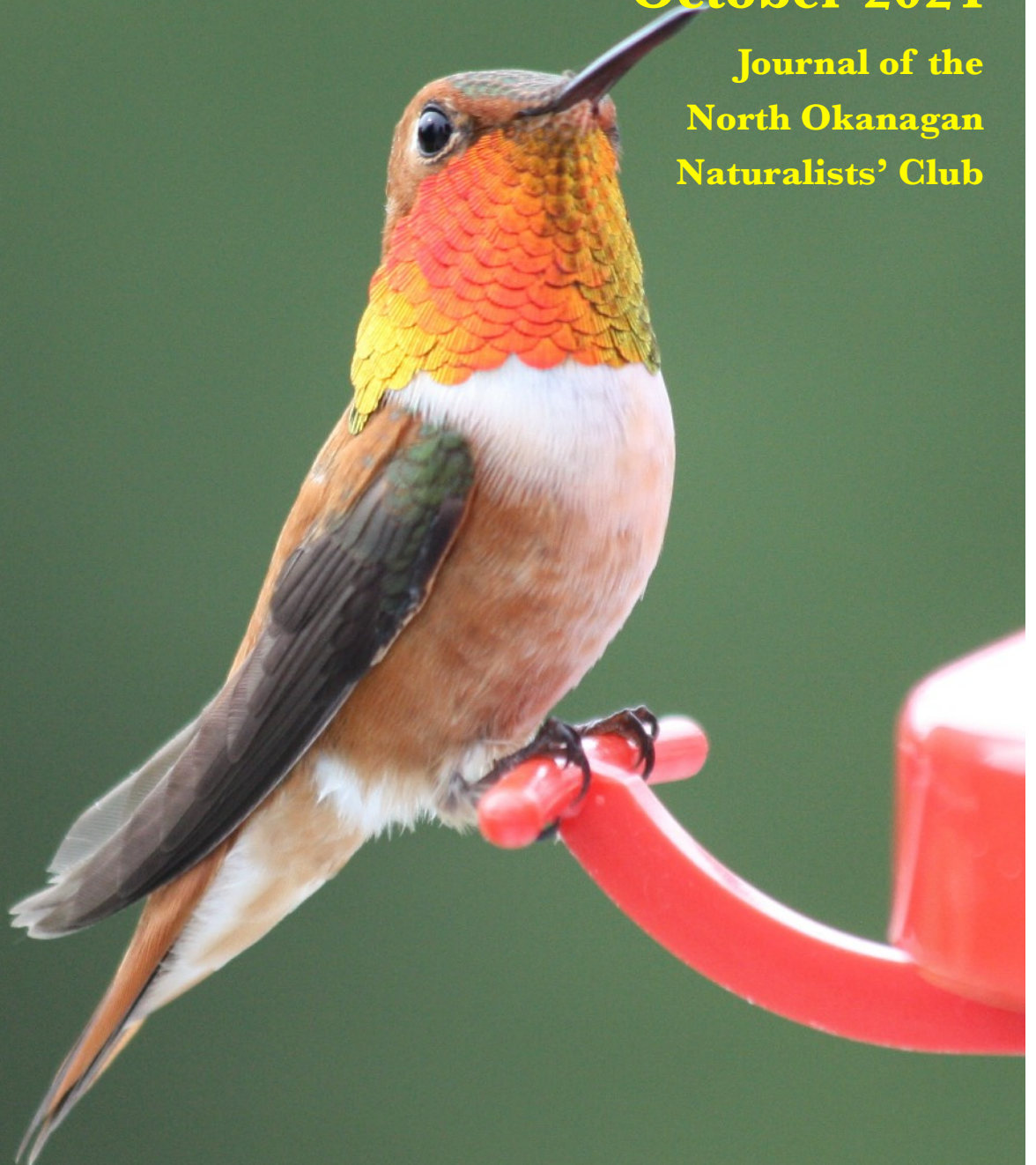


NEWSPACKET

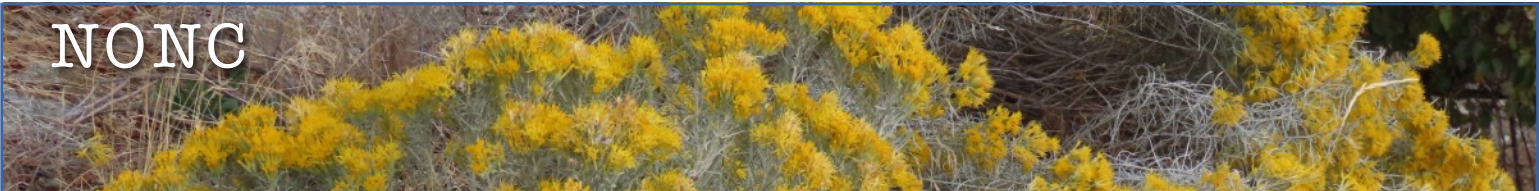
October 2024

Journal of the
North Okanagan
Naturalists' Club



Male Rufous Hummingbird
photographed by Sue Elwell

NONC



North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC)

P.O. Box 473

Vernon, B.C. V1T 6M4

Email info@nonc.ca

Website www.nonc.ca



EXECUTIVE

- President Harold Sellers
 250-307-3543
- Vice-President Eric Kowalski
 604-600-6725
- Secretary Rod Drennan
 250-545-4999
- Treasurer Marnie Williamson
 250-545-4743
- Directors Stephen Brown
 250-589-5009
 Susan Ghattas
 250-550-7063
 Robert Hettler
 250-309-7794
 Pam Jenkins
 250-545-0490
 Eric Kowalski
 604-600-6725
 Pat McAllister
 250-540-6284

LIFE MEMBERS

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

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
 250-545-4999
- Newsletter Harold Sellers
 250-307-3543
- Speakers Bruce Tattersall
 778-874-4614
- Swan Lake Joyce Heard, Robert Hettler,
 Margaret MacKenzie, Chris
 Siddle, 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 \$50
 Single \$35
 see nonc.ca

NONC

North Okanagan Hummingbird Banding Project - 2024 Report

by Louise Breneman

Lumby

Lumby is a monitoring site as part of the Hummingbird Network of North America (HMN). We have been monitoring and banding at this site for 14 years starting in 2010.

According to the protocol, 5 feeders are put up and we have 5 hour sessions every 2 weeks from 0600-1100. As a HMN site, the primary goal is to count birds as they approach the traps or enter the traps to access the feeders which are hung inside the traps. We also band the hummingbirds that are captured while feeding.

Our season started on May 3 with the hummingbirds just starting to arrive. We counted 44 birds at the traps and 6 birds were banded (2 Calliope - 2 adult males; 4 Rufous - 1 adult male & 3 adult females).

We believe the hummingbirds migrate through Lumby and by our next session on May 19 the birds had arrived in greater numbers with a trap count of 1,503.

Due to the influx, Susan put up 7 feeders to accommodate the increase in numbers - 26 birds were banded:
0 Black-chinned, 18 Calliope (1 adult male & 17 adult females) and 8 Rufous (2 adult males, 6 adult females Rufous).

There were 14 birds that were previously banded as adults between 2021 and 2023: 13 Calliope (6 adult males & 7 adult females) and 1 adult male Rufous.



*above: male Calliope Hummingbird
photographed by Sue Elwell*

The end of migration appeared to be around May 26th when the numbers were decreasing and Susan went back to 5 feeders. On the next session on June 2 the trap count was only 22 birds with 4 adult male Calliope banded with the numbers continuing to fluctuate over the season. This also coincides with the low numbers of honeysuckles which are the preferred flower for hummingbirds, resulting in a trap count of 0 on June 13 when they were in full bloom. The numbers at the feeders continued to be low until we had a count of 16 on July 27, 18 on August 10.

continued on page 4

NONC

Hummingbird Report continued

Our last banding session was on Friday, August 23, with 3 birds counted and 2 birds banded (1 juvenile female Black-chinned and 1 juvenile female Rufous).

Birds counted after Friday were casual observations by Susan with 0 birds on Saturday, 1 on Sunday, 1 on Monday, 0 on Tuesday and 4 on Wednesday. It did appear that there was a group that migrated through with 10 on Thursday, 20 on Friday and 10 on Saturday, August 31. None have been observed since September 3rd and Susan has 1 feeder up just in case more birds come through.



starting to arrive. We have 2 hour sessions every 2 weeks.

Our trap count was 55 birds and we banded 4 birds: 0 Black-chinned, 1 adult female Calliope and 3 adult male Rufous.

By our next session on May 22 the birds had arrived in greater numbers, with a trap count of 595. We only had 1 bander at this session with 4 birds banded: 2 adult male Rufous & 2 adult female Rufous. 54 birds were counted on June 5 and 18 were banded 5 Black-chinned (2 adult male & 3 adult females); 1 adult male Calliope; 9 Rufous (4 adult males & 5 adult females).

*photo: a male Rufous Hummingbird
photographed by Sue Elwell*

2024 Total – 87 birds banded

- 16 Black-chinned banded (2 adult males, 2 adult females, 6 juvenile males, 6 juvenile females)
- 34 Calliope banded: (4 adult males, 22 adult females, 5 juvenile males, 3 juvenile females)
- 37 Rufous banded (7 adult males, 20 adult females, 6 juvenile males, 3 juvenile females, 1 juvenile of unknown sex)

Westside Road

This is a banding site under the Hummingbird Project of BC. We have 2 hour sessions from 0700-0900 every 2 weeks and our first banding session was on May 8 as the hummingbirds were

Our host has noticed that the hummingbird numbers have declined over the years. He has also noticed a decline in the swallows. There are fewer insects and this is a large portion of a hummingbird's diet. We decided to have a session every week during July in order to count the birds and get an idea of how many birds are coming to the feeders. The count for the year was 836.

2024 Totals – 51 birds banded

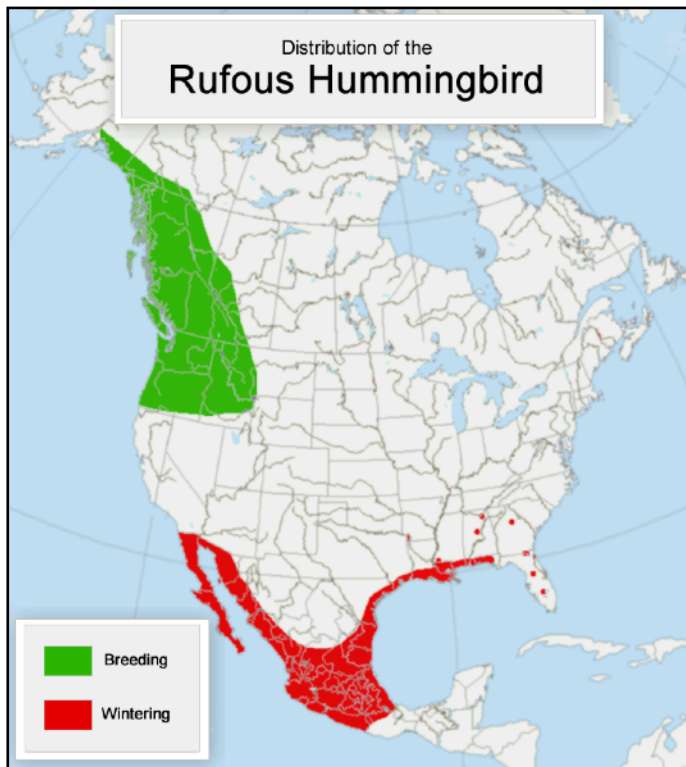
- 7 Black-chinned (2 adult males, 2 adult females, 0 juveniles)
- 18 Calliope (1 adult males, 16 adult females, 0 juvenile males, 1 juvenile female)
- 26 Rufous (11 adult males, 13 adult females, 0 juvenile males, 2 juvenile females) 🌿

NONC

Migrate, Estivate or Spawn*by Roseanne Van Ee*

IT'S autumn! Kids are back in school while we prepare our yards and freezers for winter and plan to vacate south. Okanagan wildlife tend to migrate, estivate or spawn.

Some people think that hummingbirds catch rides on the backs of geese for their migratory trip down south. Truth is hummingbirds are well on their way to Mexico when the geese are just taking their "practice flights" for migration to the coast or just into the warmer US.



*above: Rufous Hummingbird migration, courtesy
<https://journeynorth.org>*

Physics gives hummingbirds an advantage with a smaller, light body weight. They just need to refuel

all along the way to maintain their energy. That's why all hummingbird feeders should always be taken down by mid-August. If the "hummers" stay too late, they could succumb to freezing. Big Canada Geese, on the other hand, store fat for their trip. That's why they've adopted the energy efficient "V" flight formation.

Our Great Blue Herons (that nest on 24th St.) have already dispersed to various open-water lakes for the winter. Some have migrated to the coast to winter on good fishing grounds.

Most birds migrate at night, following the stars (like sailors) along migratory pathways (usually air currents of least resistance). Some of our birds migrate all the way down to South America. I love sitting back on mosquito-less, moonlit September and October nights with binoculars in hand to spot flocks passing in the night sky. If you're in a quiet spot: listen. Could it be the calls of migrating flocks or the rustle of dry leaves in the breeze? You might even see bats migrating to their winter colonies further south. Their "flutter" of wings distinguishes them from birds.

Don't go to the Allan Brooks Nature Centre looking for the Yellow-bellied Marmots now. These large rodents, like the Columbian Ground Squirrels on Silver Star, have gone underground for an early rest to "estivate" while they're still fat from summer's seed bounty. They remerge with young in April.

Snakes, frogs and other reptiles and amphibians are moving towards their wintering grounds now, too.

Watch for late emerging Mourning Cloak and Tortoiseshell butterflies in the fall. They'll overwinter here tucked behind bark or in tree

continued on page 6

NONC

Migrate, estivate or spawn continued



*above: Columbian Ground Squirrels estivate under ground on Silver Star September to May
photo by Roseanne Van Ee*

grooves. The large yellow and black butterflies are non-migrating Swallowtails, often mistaken for the orange and black migrating Monarchs.

*at right: Kokanee spawning on Coldstream Creek
photo by Roseanne Van Ee*

Don't miss watching the Kokanee spawn on Coldstream Creek in early October. The best spawning beds for viewing are in Creekside and Coldstream Parks (behind Coldstream School). These Sockeye Salmon descendants became "land-locked" as the glacial-produced massive waterways, which once connected to the Pacific, drained and evaporated into separate lakes. For thousands of years Kokanee annually spawned to lay eggs in gravel creek beds and shorelines. Until the early 1900's, almost every major creek flowing into

Okanagan Lake supported thousands of spawning Kokanee each fall. I've seen a sharp decline in spawning numbers in the last 25 years. Get out there with your children and friends to enjoy this miraculous phenomena before it dies out (or can we save the Kokanee?). Walk gently by the creek, and please leave your pets at home!

Fall is a marvellous time to observe nature. Thankfully Vernon has many opportunities to enjoy:

- * Visit the Allan Brooks Nature Centre
- * Join NONC's Saturday morning nature hikes
- * Join the Vernon Outdoors Club
- * Swan Lake Nature Reserve Park hosts many migrating waterfowl.
- * Lumby's Salmon Trail and Kelowna's Mission Creek Greenway are two favourite hiking trail



- * Hike Kalamalka Lake, Sovereign Lake
- * Camping and hiking is lovely and quieter in the fall at Ellison, Kekuli Bay, Mabel Lake, Fintry and Bear Creek.

PS - if you missed my latest column in the Morning Star - Fire! Understanding how wildfires impact us in the Okanagan - it's posted on my Facebook August 18 and September 14. 🌿

NONC

Birding Notebooks*by Chris Siddle*

This article was first published in "Gone Fishing", Chris' column in BC Birding. Reprinted here with permission.

TO a small, probably very small, number of birders, keeping a notebook of bird sightings is as automatic and as necessary as breathing. I carry a notebook with me every time I go birding and I note down almost every bird I see or hear at certain locations. The only time I don't note down a bird is when it's a reasonably common species and I am driving and there's little possibility of pulling over safely. These days I enter most of my lists into eBird, the online citizen science database.

This is not a Notebook vs eBird article. eBird serves well as an index to my lists and through the lists to my notebooks. If you took eBird away from me I would miss it. But eBird for me is just a tool with many limits to its usefulness, while writing or drawing in a notebook is an exercise in setting your own limits. Re-living days afield by paging through old notebooks is a joy, each notebook a chapter and a detailed record of my birding life.

I started filling notebooks when I was in my early teens. I'm in my early seventies now. The notebooks have been of various sizes, different binding, and paper quality ranging from near-pulp to archival. Their covers are different colours. A few have shed their covers long ago. The notebooks are mounting up. The last time I counted I was entering sightings into Notebook #143. I have kept all of them except for a few from my teens which in a temporary fit of lunacy I donated to a museum. That turned out to be a bad decision. Those notebooks from 1965-1968 disappeared into the museum's collections long ago. No matter how hard or often I pleaded for their return, no one could find them. With those notebooks

went details of four of my teenage, very active birding years. What a loss! However, all my other notebooks survive and if I lined them up on a very long shelf they would measure several feet in length.

In mid-August of this year [*This article was written in 2023. - editor*] a wildfire roared down a ridge in West Kelowna, jumped Okanagan Lake and burned its way northwards through parts of Winfield toward Vernon where my wife and I live. Given the extremely dry conditions of the past few months and the chance of a strong wind rising, Sonja and I anticipated the worst, imaging the fire spreading to the North Okanagan. We had our GO bags packed: necessities for a life on the road, and personal treasures. Then I regarded the several shelf-feet of my nature notebooks. If I packed them all, they would fill several boxes for which there was no room in the car. I decided to take the 5 notebooks I had filled in our three trips to Australia, simply because we might never make it back to the island continent.

It turned out that the fire stayed in Winfield. The Aussie notebooks resided in the unused GO bag well into the autumn and then I returned them to their proper chronological order on one of the notebook shelves. But the incident, like the loss to the museum, made me realize how much I love my notebooks, all of them, a life time's collection.

I open one at random and I am transported to a very specific time and place. It's not just the lists that are important. It's all the other things that pages have allowed to intentionally and accidentally collect. The value resides in the seemingly casual note that on 7 July 2003 I heard wolves howling in chorus in the wilderness somewhere between Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge, the only time in my life I have heard

continued on page 8

NONO

Notebooks continued

this awe-inspiring sound. The value is the mosquitoes that were so thick in the spruce woods near Fort St. John that when I closed a notebook after describing the singing habits of a Cape May Warbler I crushed a few that are preserved to this day in the margins. Drawings of animal tracks, orchids, the arrangement of Great Blue Heron nests in a snag make for my personal history as a naturalist. Hastily drawn maps and scribbled tips for locations of "hot" birds, phone numbers of birders met in the field, grocery lists for supplies needed for camping meals, flower and butterfly lists and mammal sightings, photos glued onto the pages and where photos were not valuable postcards bought from little country stores or from museums. Each notebook is a source of memory.

I hope this column has inspired birders to try notebooks for themselves, or if they have notebooks of their own, to treasure them as never before. To conclude I have selected more or less at random some entries I encountered and enjoyed as I wrote this piece.

July 24 1977 – My first trip to eastern North America. Hall's Lake, Ontario. 5:45 a.m. Female Scarlet Tanager; 3 juvenal Evening Grosbeaks fed by an adult; my lifer Field Sparrow; my lifer Blackburnian Warbler, an adult male.

July 1, 1983 – My first birding trip to Vernon, B.C. Being shown special birds by Jim Grant. 12:40. Black-chinned Hummingbird male bathed in cold, steady rain off Kidston Rd. Perched on a shrub's dead twig on about 14 feet from the ground. Tilted tail slightly above the horizontal; spread tail to the maximum, opened wings slightly and fluttered them

rather slowly. Bill tilted upwards. Head turned from side to side.

16 July 1989 – South-east Arizona. Cloudy. We (Gary Davidson and I) take Guy Tudor and Michelle to the Patagonia Rest Stop and show them the male Rose-throated Becard and a Thick-billed Kingbird, a Rufous-crowned Sparrow and hear a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

[Guy Tudor is a highly respected artist who painted the dozens of colour plates for the groundbreaking *The Birds of South America* by Robert Ridgely (2 volumes, 1989 and 1994).

Audubon magazine called him "one of the most skillful hands in the bird-painting business." He and his companion, Michelle, were touring south-east Arizona at the same time Gary and I were. We kept encountering each other at various hot spots. Cursed by a rental car with tissue thin tires, Guy and Michelle had flat after flat, so we ended up giving them rides.]

27 Jan. 1991 – Vernon. Cloudy. Birded in p.m. along e. shore of Okanagan Lake from Landing to Ellison Prov. Park with Phil Ranson. [Excerpts from list of 20 species] PBGR-45; HOG-105; WEG-10; GBHE -2 immobile and unhappy; COME-20m, 5f; RBME-f, my first for the Okanagan Valley; GRPA: 6-8, Paddlewheel Park; TOSO-1, whisper-singing in low bush.

11 Sept. 2005 – Vernon. Overcast. MacKay Reservoir, Vernon Commonage. 1136-1215. The police firing range nearby is very busy, Sounds like the cops are marking the anniversary of 9-11 by firing off every bullet they possess! Birds are few: PIWO-1; RCKI-1; LBDO-20; PESA-3; RNDU-3m.

continued on page 9

NONO

Notebooks continued

Today I carry a small, well-bound notebook. It fits easily into most of my coat pockets or even the back pocket of my jeans. Its small size is a blessing and a curse. Though it's very portable it's also restrictive how much I can write or draw on one page. I try to add more information than there is space by adding tiny writing in its margins. The result is usually a bit of a mess. However, neatness is not the point. I had that notebook with me on Nov. 11 of this year when I was scoping a section of the east side of Swan Lake, Vernon. I was counting grebes when a small gull riding the choppy water caught my attention. Holy moly! I knew what this gull was the instant I saw it but doubt set in. Out came the notebook and I drew a small circle and a larger oblong shape to represent

the gull. Then I sketched in the bird's field marks, black spot behind its dark eye, big, wide black band across its nape and down its "shoulders" and a longer, narrower black line across its lower back. I noted the colour of its mantle, and the white edge of its tertials and when I looked up, the bird had disappeared. The drawing is rudimentary, the notes scrawled outside the lines messily, but the sketch is proof that I really did see a Black-legged Kittiwake in the Okanagan Valley.

The awful little sketch will become more than an example of how challenged I am artistically. It marks the day for me as special, the cloudy, windy day when I saw a very rare bird for the area on the tossing water. 🌿

BirdWeather PUC [from www.birdweather.com]

We're excited to introduce PUC (Portable Universe Codec), our AI powered bioacoustics platform. Packed with dual microphones, WiFi/BLE, GPS, environmental sensors, and a built-in neural engine, all in a weatherproof enclosure, PUC is ready to capture all that nature can throw at it!

BirdWeather is a pioneering visualization platform that harnesses the BirdNET artificial neural network to monitor bird vocalizations globally through 2000 active audio stations (and growing). BirdWeather facilitates easy recording and automatic cloud processing of bird sounds, aiding conservation efforts and ecological studies.

BirdNET is a research platform that aims at recognizing birds by sound at scale. We support various hardware and operating systems such as Arduino microcontrollers, the Raspberry Pi, smartphones, web browsers, workstation PCs, and even cloud services. BirdNET is a citizen science platform as well as an analysis software for extremely large collections of audio. BirdNET aims to provide innovative tools for conservationists, biologists, and birders alike."Read more about BirdNET at: <https://birdnet.cornell.edu/>



NONC

A new trail: Coldstream Ranchlands Trail

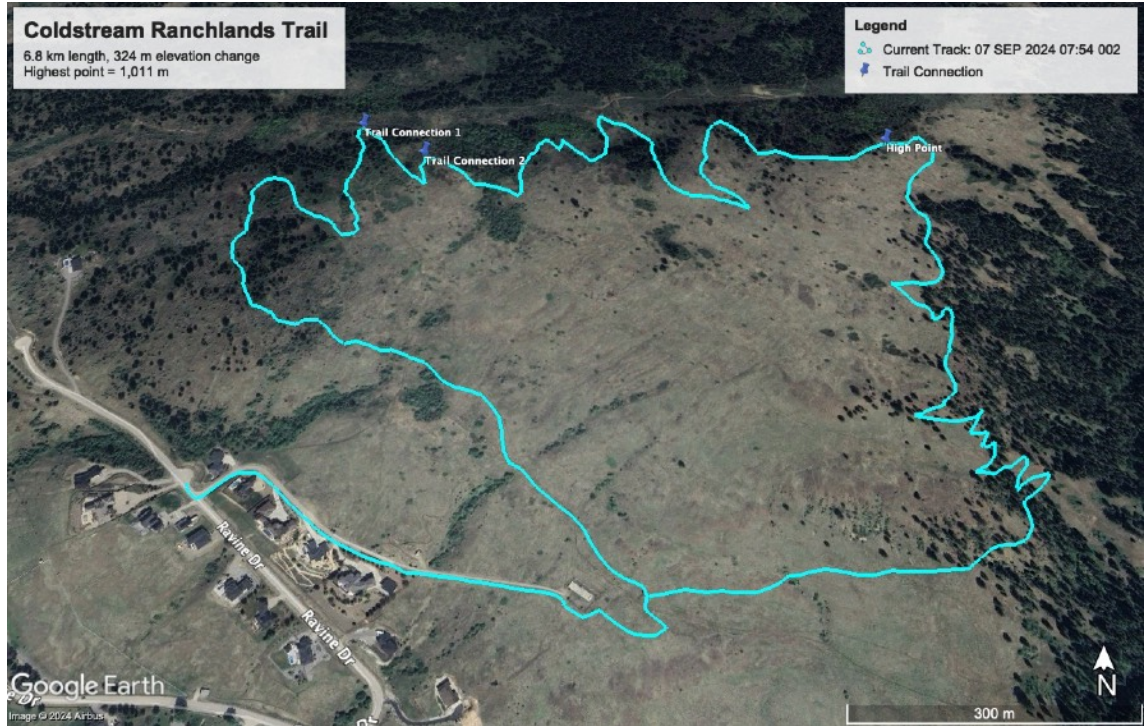
by Harold Sellers,
Editor

FROM the parking area on Ravine Drive, to the loop start, and on the loop, finishing back at the parking, the trail length is 7.5 km. Hiking along steadily, with only short rest breaks, it took me 2 hours and 45 minutes.

The elevation change is 324 meters (1,063 ft), with the highest point being 1,011 m. The Ravine Drive parking is at 687 meters.

You **MUST** park in the designated area on Ravine Drive and then walk or ride up the laneway to the

water reservoir, where the dirt trail commences. The trail is bare dirt.



I hiked the loop clockwise. The west side of the loop is the route built for mountain bikers, who can leave the trail at either of the two westerly trail connection points (2.45 and 2.75 km from the parking). This portion of the trail was built to mountain biking standards.

The remainder of the trail was built simpler and more narrow, for hikers. Bikers should **NOT** try it. At the east, the trail is built into the steep slope of the ravine. The trail is very narrow, has many rocks, exposed tree roots and numerous very tight switchbacks. The slope drops away very quickly. The eastern ravine trail is also steep. Coming downhill you still need hiking poles, good knees and no fear of heights.

A great addition to the Trails Capital of BC! 🌿

NONG

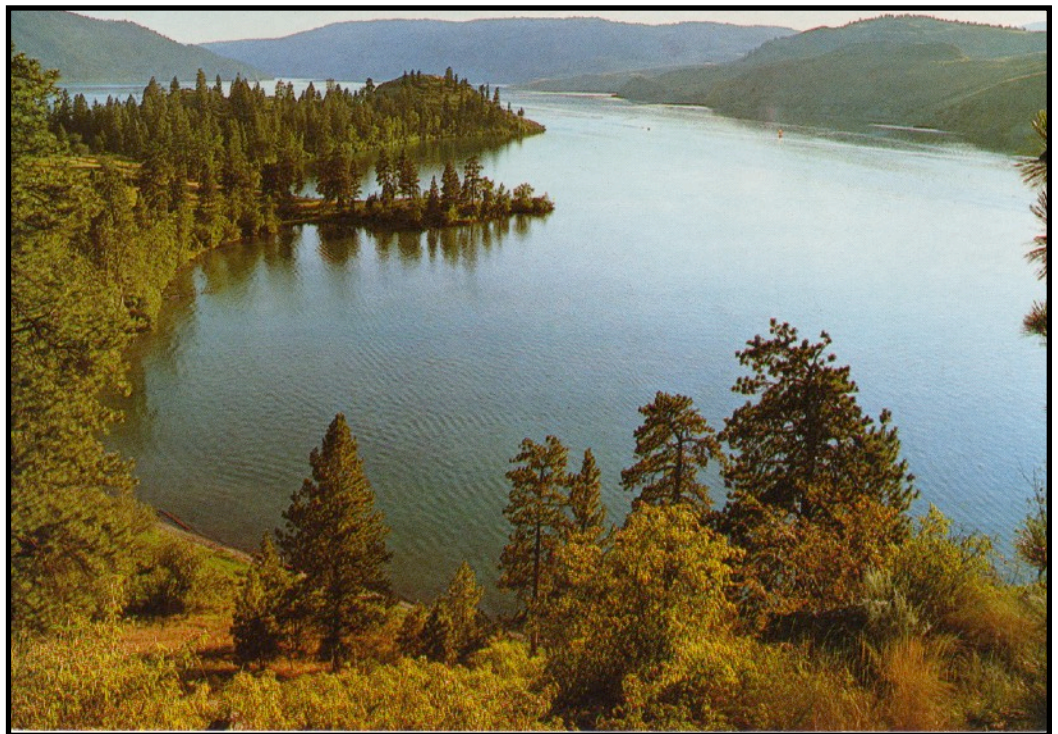
Historical Views

by Harold Sellers, Editor

This is looking towards the north end of Swan Lake in 1960.



At right is a picture of Kalamalka Lake, with Jade and Juniper bays in the foreground and Turtle's Head Point in the background. This is from a 1986 postcard.



If our readers have historical photos of nature spots in the North Okanagan, please share them with us.

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, October 2nd: our speakers will be Henry James and Abby Godden on “Monitoring the Marshes at Swan Lake”.

SATURDAY NATURE WALKS

Join us Saturdays at 9:00 am. Visitors welcome. Dress for the weather. We do a lot of birdwatching, so bring binoculars if you have them. No dogs please. See list below.

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.

Oct 5 - 9am DR 2

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a walk on the Whisper Ridge Trail, Lavington. Approximately 2 hours - the first 20 minutes is a steep uphill with switch backs on a gravel trail. Short slightly steep sections occur throughout the remainder. Proceed 2.0 km on Brewer Rd from Hwy

6 then look for laneway to trail parking opposite 6845 Brewer Rd or park on Brewer Road. Contact Marnie/Paul at mpw660@telus.net

Oct 12 - 9am DR 1

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a walk on the trails of Carlson Park on Bench Row Road. From Vernon, take Mission Road, turn right onto Bench Row Rd. Park in parking lot on the left side of road.

Contact Harold at hikerharold@gmail.com

Oct 19 - 9am DR 1

Join the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club for a walk on the Corral Trail in Kalamalka Provincial Park. We will walk about 90 minutes, to enjoy the view across Cosens Bay and then return. Meet at the Red Gate parking lot on Kidston Road.

Contact Norbert at nmaer10s@gmail.com

If you have any questions about the walk, please contact the leader or the club.

November Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, November 6, 7:00 pm at the Schubert Centre: Louise Breneman on “Hummingbird Banding”.

