

# MUSKRAT EXPRESS

WILLIAMS LAKE FIELD NATURALISTS  
APRIL 2010 NEWSLETTER



SATURDAY MAY 8  
SPRING YARD + GARDEN SALE  
DONATE GOODS FRINITE





The newsletter for the:  
Williams Lake Field Naturalists  
1305A Borland Road, Williams Lake BC, V2G 5K5

**Membership fees:** Family (\$30), single (\$25) or student (\$10) memberships can be mailed to the above address. Please complete the membership and waiver forms available at the Nature Centre (250) 398-8532, [muskrat@midbc.com](mailto:muskrat@midbc.com) or the web site below. For more information about the club please contact Fred McMechan at 392-7680 or e-mail [Fred\\_McMechan@telus.net](mailto:Fred_McMechan@telus.net)

**Williams Lake Field Naturalists Web Site** <http://www.williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca>

**Executive of The Williams Lake Field Naturalists:** president Fred McMechan, vice-president Jim Sims, secretary Bev Frittenburg, treasurer Katharine VanSpall and directors Nola Daintith, Ordell Steen, Rob Higgins, Rick Dawson and Cathy Koot

**Editors:** If you have comments, suggestions or articles for the Muskrat please contact Margaret Waring (398-7724), Jim Sims (296-3638) or e-mail us at [muskrat@midbc.com](mailto:muskrat@midbc.com)

### **Annual General Meeting Report**

This year's Annual General Meeting was well attended. Thank-you to all who attended and brought your delicious additions to the pot-luck supper. All of last years executive let their names stand for this year and they were all declared elected by acclamation. We thank the executive for all of their efforts last year and for letting their names stand again this year. Your 2010 executive is listed above. We extend a very big thanks to our Nature Centre staff Sue Hemphill, Mary Forbes, summer student staff, Margret Onneken, Barb Langford, Jenny Noble and Sandra Stuart. As you can see from the Nature Centre Report below, they have all been very busy during the past year. Also thanks to all of the volunteers that continue to be a valuable asset to the operation and maintenance of the Nature Centre.

Mary Forbes and her crew provided the entertainment with the debut performance of, "**Raven-Fire-People**", a comedic skit about the moral of living in a landscape where fire is your neighbour. This is part of the "Spawning Stories, Hatching Change" program that Scout Island Nature Centre is providing. See more about this in Sue's report below.

### **Scout Island is Looking Up...at the Stars April 17<sup>th</sup> 8pm-10pm**

by: Mary Forbes

Space...the final frontier... these are the voyages of the Young Naturalists' Club and Family Explorer Events at Scout Island. Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 8pm join local community astronomers Steve and Lynn Capling at the Scout Island Nature House for stories and stargazing until 10pm.

This is the first nighttime event for the Young Naturalist Club this year and so far the response to this topic has been fabulous, we're expecting 20 families or more to attend. Bring warm clothes, binoculars if you have them and your imagination for a night under the stars (some

binoculars will be available to borrow).

If you have a telescope and are willing to bring it along, please let us know ASAP, more telescopes would make this event even better! April 17<sup>th</sup> promises a crescent moon and stellar stuff to gander at with your naked eye and with a telescope, but is weather dependant. If it is raining that night, the event will be rescheduled for another time, please call the Nature House to register for this special event 250.398.8532

### **Be an Earth Day Participant April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Be a part of the solution this Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Come to the lowest River Valley parking lot between 5:00 – 8:00 pm to help plant trees around the newly fenced ponds in that area. We provide the trees; you bring work gloves, good walking and digging shoes, drinking water, and if possible a shovel. (A few shovels will be provided, but we'll need more.) Call Scout Island if you have any questions 250.398.8532. See you there!

Join in a fun community bike ride to promote petroleum-free transportation for Earth Day. We'll meet Thursday April 22nd between 5:30-6 at the old courthouse square (1<sup>st</sup> & Oliver) then ride through the city to raise awareness for others and re-discover the streets for ourselves (about one hour), ending at the Gibraltar Room. Squeaky Wheel is an active group of Lake City cyclists promoting safe and healthy transportation, and combating the Big Issues of climate change and peak oil with our own two legs.

### **Spring Yard and Garden Sale (Sat. May 8<sup>th</sup>)**

by: Margaret Waring

It is that time to year to gather some unused treasures from your basement and share some of the plants you are starting for your garden. Try some new recipes for the goodie table, sort through your winter stack of pocket books, take some cuttings from your favorite house plants and add a few more bits of junk to your collection boxes!

**Our annual Spring Yard and Garden Sale will be held on Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 am until 1:30 pm at the Scout Island Nature House**

The proceeds from the sale provide a bursary for a graduating secondary student who will continue further education in a field of biology or earth sciences. Any extra earnings are donated for education programs at Scout Island.

Please drop sale items off at the Nature House on Friday May 7th. It would be helpful if you could price your items before you drop them off. Areas where help will be needed are pricing and set up on Friday night, at the sale on Saturday morning and for the early afternoon clean up. Of course most needed are your donations. Items that are not sold and collected are taken to the Salvation Army, Library, Share Shed, etc.

I (Margaret Waring) will be coordinating the sale again this year. If you have questions or would like to help please call me at 250-398-7724 or email at [muskkrat@midbc.com](mailto:muskkrat@midbc.com)

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## Growing succulents and Maintaining a Collection in the Harsh Climate of South Cariboo

By: Ewa and Voytek Foik  
June 12, Saturday at 1:30 pm

Ewa and Voytek's passion, for the last thirty five years has been a love of succulents; contorted, dwarf survivors of the harshest environment on earth - The Desert. The study of plant adaptations took them to distant lands; Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, South Africa, Namibia . The harsh deserts far away, became their home for weeks at a time. This eventually led to the publishing of articles and photos in internationally recognized professional journals on the subject of cactus and succulents.



Both dedicated nature photographers, traveled extensively documenting the habitats of desert dwellers, as well as broad vistas of British Columbia. As their recognition grew, invitations to do photographic presentations and lectures at Conventions and Conferences took them to various locations throughout North America as well as Europe, with most recent presentation in Monaco.

## Science World in Williams Lake, Scout Island has a great booth!

by: Mary Forbes

When Vancouver's Science World came to Williams Lake March 27<sup>th</sup> at TRU, Scout Island and the Young Naturalist Club were ready with a booth full of water critters, a giant water beetle, a live frog, toad & salamander and other natural treasures that amazed young and old alike. A big thank you to a February Family Explorer participant who suggested the next Young Naturalist Club event have a scavenger hunt. The Scavenger Hunt in March was an amazing success with over 80 participants, the prize draw went to Alex Airey being one of the many kids who successfully visited all the booths at the science fair and asked good questions to local scientists. In the last 10 minutes Mary tipped over the Water Beetle and he nearly escaped from his travel box, but was scooped up and put to rights by a quick 9 year old girl who modestly accepted our thanks for the rescue with only a "I pick up bugs all the time, this just happens to be a big one. Touching it was cool; I liked to be the only one who got to."



## Field Trips

You will find the list of the 2010 field trips at the end of the newsletter. Please keep the list handy so you will not miss a favorite outing.

**Scout Island Nature Centre Report April 2010**

by: Sue Hemphill

The first thing I want to do is thank all of the volunteers who have put in long hours working on the renovation and getting the things ready for spring. To lead a group of volunteers including: Fred McMechan, Rodger Hamilton, Jim Sims, Ray Hornby, and Ron Scheck. It was amazing how fast the porch was enclosed and the painting got done. It is not quite complete but will be for the start of the May programs. Still inside, Jurgen Hornburg built a couple of cabinets to help us set up new work stations so that all the staff have comfortable places to work. Jim worked on hiding all of the camera wires and hooking up these cameras to the bird boxes. Outside, a crew came in to fix the new boardwalk (a cottonwood came down and smashed one section), put in the river dock, and put the solar pump back in the water. This place truly couldn't run without all the volunteers. And I don't want to forget our Katimavik

volunteers. Brad Clarke (who just finished) helped put several important teaching charts together as well as organizing all the

bones and skulls so that they can easily be used.

There do not seem to be any quiet months at the Nature Centre and March was no exception. We led more classes on field trips and story writing (see Spawning Stories Hatching Change below). Patricia Spencer and I shared the fun of mentoring 14-16 children every day of the Spring Break Program. The days focused on exploring using many of the ideas from Coyote's Guide. Finding Owl pellets and opening them up was really exciting. I can't say enough about this way of guiding people into nature. If you would like to learn more go to their website [www.Wildernessawareness.org](http://www.Wildernessawareness.org) or come and borrow the book "Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature." Mary and Breanne were run off their feet helping children (of all ages) get up close to vertebrates and invertebrates at the *Community Science Celebration* that took place at TRU March 27. It took the two of them 11 hours that day to set up, take part, and clean up. It was a long, exciting day for humans and non humans (perhaps a bit stressful for the non humans).

All of April we will be busy setting up the spring displays and organizing for the summer staff to do the spring school programs. The programs for High School science have already started. Each is designed with the teacher to meet their curriculum needs using the natural history that is on display at Scout Island. If you enjoy working with this age group, please give me a call and you can help mentor the students. Extra help means we can have the students in smaller groups.

You don't need to be an expert as I will train you. We have hired two high school students, Jenna Lawrence and Celine Connly who will be Nature House Hosts on the weekends (and help with the summer programs). This means the Nature House will now be open weekends 1-4pm. Melana Cecco is joining Monica and Ian as summer staff that will lead the school and summer programs. Ian and Monica are already busy working with Mary and Jenny on a digital story telling project. You will be hearing a lot more about that.



Scott Zimonick finishing interior of new "Activity Room"

Our project “Spawning Stories, Hatching Change” is nearly wrapped up, and we’re thrilled with the results. The stories have spawned in the hearts and brains of dozens of people, from Jean Wellburn’s elementary class to mature, established writers. They’ve exuded joy in nature, both fear and hope for the future, and overall an enhanced connection with the natural world. Sue is still hard at work on the final product: a downloadable template that will enable other rural communities to develop their own local stories and inspire human behaviour change. This package will soon be accessible from the WLFN website, so you can read selected stories. Meanwhile, here are some samples:

**Eagle**

by: Parker

*Mighty, wise, unwavering, diving, twirling, flapping, grabbing, clutching, loving.  
An eagle is like a beautiful blanket of death from above.  
You only need to take what you need and to be watchful.*

**Laughing Loon**

by: Montana Reid & Sissy

*Elegant, swift, smart  
Swimming, hunting, laughing, playing, diving, fishing  
Racing through the water like a black and white shooting star  
Sharing secrets under the moon*

You can read more on the Earth Day page in the April 22 issue of the Tribune. Those of you who were lucky enough to watch the play “Raven Fire People” at the AGM in March know what a treat that is. The package also contains a delightful story by our own Sue Hemphill with illustrations by Tom Godin about a little girl who learns about ecological footprint from a kindly moose. This story will be available as a stand-alone bound book for little kids. Many thanks to all the teachers who worked with us to mentor their budding story-tellers, to the writers of all ages who shared their talent with us, and especially to Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program of the Pacific Salmon Foundation for having the faith to encourage and support this experimental project.

**Attention Weed Warriors-** It is spring and the weeds are showing. We have a couple of new “weeds” along with the old standbys that we will be tackling this year. If you would like to adopt a section of the Nature Centre to work out your frustrations by digging weeds, please contact me.

**What Went on at Scout Island Nature Centre in 2009**

- Provided year round natural history educational programs for School District 27 and other schools in the region (3300 students), a spring break program, a summer nature program (392 children ages 3-13), and summer programs for 141 children from three community groups. Programs are free to schools and for a very low fee to community groups.
- Provided high school science enrichment programs (300 students)
- Worked with the University of Northern BC and the Quesnel River Research Centre to provide a mentoring program for high school science students. These students took part in a

2 day program at the Horsefly and Quesnel Rivers, helping with research, collecting Chinook gametes, and learning about these watersheds.

- Worked directly with schools and community youth programs to help them provide environmental education
- Delivered the Salmonids in the Classroom Programs for Fisheries and Oceans Canada to 14 classes
- Provided a nature-oriented preschool (September –June serving 60 children a week)-costs to parents kept low because of the volunteer administration, maintenance and support given by the WLFN directors
- Provided evening and weekend family outdoor programs goal is to get people of all ages outdoors
- Maintained the Nature House as a premier interpretive centre with trained staff to meet with visitors from all over the world (4000 visitors) Open to the public 7 days a week from May-September Open for nature programs 5 days a week all year round
- Maintained, walkways and bridges so that people could explore a variety of habitats at the Nature Centre ---everyday of the year
- Constructed a new boardwalk on the Willow Trail, planted new areas with native plants and shrubs, fenced to protect from deer and installed a water wise irrigation system for these new areas
- Began enhancement of wildlife habitat on North Marsh including planting, fencing for protection and weed control
- Provided information materials on natural history in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region
- Supported the restoration and enhancement of natural habitats in and around Williams Lake including fencing the lower marsh in the River Valley Trail to protect it from cattle
- Raised native trees and shrubs and provided them to the City for restoration in the River Valley and to The Land Conservancy of BC for restoration in the Horsefly River Riparian Conservation Area
- Supported natural history research in the region (working with Ministry of Environment and others)
- Took an active role in committees and processes developing a plan for a sustainable future for this region
- Provided a place for community groups that want a natural setting for their meetings and workshops to gather
- Employed 7 youth (5 university students and 2 high school students) who not only helped to provide our excellent programs but each gained important knowledge and employment skills
- Worked with a number of youth programs including Katimavik, high school horticulture class, and youth at risk program
- Supported the 2009 Horsefly Salmon Festival with staff, funding and materials (1000 students for school program and 700 visitors for Labor Day Weekend)

Funding for school and interpretive programs and for up keep of the Nature Centre is dependent on local donations from individuals and companies. The Nature Centre also received grants over the year from a variety of sources including the City of Williams Lake, Province of British Columbia-Gaming, Human Resources Skills Development Canada, School District 27, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, The Nature Trust of BC, W. Garfield Weston Foundation, Stewardship

Council of BC, Fraser Salmon and Watershed Program, TD Friends of the Environment, Evergreen, and local businesses and organizations. The success of the Nature Centre is dependent also on consistent volunteer efforts (over 4000 hours a year) on the part of the directors, members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, and community members and youth groups like Katimavik.

### **Scout Island Nature Centre Is Important to the Community**

Participants in Imagine Williams Lake (2007) overwhelmingly chose SINC as the most desirable asset of our community. They appreciate that the Field Naturalists' decades of labour gives them extraordinary access to diverse aquatic, riparian and upland ecosystems within city limits.

The "Profile of Visitors to Williams Lake Summer 2008" done by Tourism BC states:

*Over three-quarters (79%) of respondents reported spending time in the Williams Lake region. While in the region, one in four respondents visited the Scout Island Nature Centre, 23% visited the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin and 15% visited the Station House Gallery whereas only a handful (4%) reported visiting the Williams Lake Stampede. ...60% of respondents felt no changes were needed to these facilities/activities. The remaining 40% provided a range of responses that included better staff services and extended hours of operation.*

### **Book Review:**

New member Glenna MacKenzie has volunteered her professional expertise and considerable writing skills to familiarize us with the SINC Nature Library. Here is her first book review.

Welcome, Glenna, and thanks for getting involved!

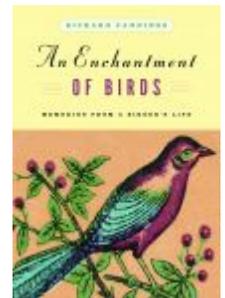
by: Glenna MacKenzie

### **An Enchantment of Birds: Memories from a Birder's Life**

Richard Cannings, illustrations by Donald Gunn

Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2007.

Dick Cannings' lifelong love of birds comes shining through in this homage to thirty of his favourite species. He relates memorable experiences since childhood in the south Okanagan, where the whole Cannings family enthusiastically pursued their passion. Now a biologist and author, he has decades of birding experience and innumerable bird counts under his belt, so there is no shortage of engaging stories. These anecdotes offer great insight to anyone interested in learning more about the birds in their midst.



The thirty chapters include some of the more commonly found species, as well as a few more elusive species, such as White-headed Woodpeckers and Flammulated Owls. Most (but not all) species are present in the Williams Lake area. Whether watching Crows playing games, freeing a Pygmy Owl from a block of ice, or witnessing golden eagles chasing tundra swans, his accounts are never dull. The stories are personal and the information is abundant. Cannings describes their anatomy, behaviour, habitat, and other characteristics, and discusses ecological changes challenging their survival. But mostly the anecdotes are just fun to read. Here he relates

how he helped Bohemian Waxwings with a problem of fermenting berries:

*“I remember looking out the kitchen window once to see a small flock of waxwings lolling about on the lawn, clearly inebriated. We brought the drunk birds inside to protect them from the neighbourhood cats while they sobered up.” (p. 25)*

Here he recounts a hike in the Chilcotin where he observes dozens of white-tailed ptarmigan:

*“Ignorant of the curse of Mount Tatlow, or Ts’il?os as it is known to the Chilcotin people, we descended with contented hearts. Looking back on that day, I can say that the only bad luck we encountered was the snowfall that delayed our ascent, and even that provided the opportunity to see more ptarmigan than I’m likely to ever see again.” (p. 136)*

Dick Cannings could easily fill another book with such charming tales. Meanwhile, “An Enchantment of Birds” demonstrates how fulfilling bird watching can be.

This book can be purchased at the Scout Island Nature House.

Visit the Nature House Library to find other books about birds. The Library has hundreds of books on natural history, including birds, mammals, amphibians, insects, plants, conservation. These books can be borrowed by WLFN members.

## Spring Birds

By: Phil Ranson

The first birds to arrive back in spring always draw special interest which can then be quickly lost as their numbers increase and they become commonplace once again. Four Yellow-rumped Warblers had my full attention as they gleaned insects on the cottonwoods in the river valley on April 15<sup>th</sup>; partly because it was good to see them again after an absence of over 5 months but also because they are particularly late in returning.

Although it can be difficult to separate true early migrants from locally wintering birds, there was a remarkable start to the season in February and March with about 95% of the 45 or so returning species showing up ahead of their average return date and over 40% were setting record early returns.

In marked contrast, April saw a complete reversal of this trend when the longer distance migrants usually begin to return. As of April 15<sup>th</sup>, aside from the river valley birds, only one Yellow-rumped Warbler had so far been reported; a single bird in Quesnel on the 11<sup>th</sup>, where the average return date for the past 10 years has been April 5<sup>th</sup>. This has been mirrored by several other species including Cinnamon Teal, White Pelican, Osprey, Red-naped Sapsucker and Greater Yellowlegs which were, or are, either behind schedule or setting records for tardiness. Despite those early returns, the much anticipated Scout Island spring waterfowl and gull spectacle where the birds are concentrated in the bays as the ice recedes just didn’t happen this year. The ice was off Williams Lake much earlier than usual but many remarked on the paucity of waterfowl around Scout Island. That has changed of late. Perhaps a little patience was all that was needed.

What are the reasons for this divergence in migration patterns? It was easy enough to credit a mild winter, little snow cover, El



Nino and why not global warming for the early returns but speculation on the recent late returns vary from adverse weather conditions in the south-west US holding up migration, to the possibility that the mild spring and general lack of snow cover have dispersed migrants away from their usual lower elevation valley routes across a much wider front.

We don't really need to know but it's always nice to think we have the answers. I'm at a complete loss however, to explain why 3 male Rufous Hummingbirds returned to, and remained at a Big Lake feeder on March 24<sup>th</sup> and it was another 3 weeks before this species was even reported in the Okanagan. Perhaps there's something to that belief that they migrate on the backs of geese.

**Lee's Big Lake Rufous Hummingbird**

**Your 2010 Field Trip List**

**Please note that there will be additions to the field trip list. At this time we are awaiting confirmation of at least two more additions.**

**Three Wednesday Evening Recreation Trips** April 28, May 5, May 12 trip leaders Rick Dawson (392-3370) and Margaret Waring (398-7724)

Meet at 6:00 pm at Scout Island. Reviving an old tradition formerly called "hump-day holidays", these three evenings will feature easy recreational outings using three different modes of movement ..... biking for the first trip, walking on the second, and lake paddling on the third. For the April 28 bike trip, after meeting at Scout Island, we drive down to the last parking lot in the Williams lake Creek Valley. From there we will bike down to the Fraser River and back looking at the birds and trees on the way. Details of the other two trips are still to be determined. You do not need to contact trip leaders ...just show up with the obvious equipment and enjoy.

**Chilanko Marsh** May 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>  
trip leader Jim Sims (296-3638)  
Meet at Puntzi Lake Tanker Base at 9: 30 am on Saturday morning (allow a minimum of 2 hours driving time from Williams Lake) or contact Jim if you want to meet him at the marsh on Friday night and camp out for the night. This is an annual species count conducted on the marsh and the surrounding riparian zone.



**Chilanko Marsh**

The marsh provides an opportunity to see most of the water fowl that are summer residents on Chilcotin lakes and marshes. Join us for a casual day long walk around the ponds as we search out the variety of bird species around the marsh. Following the birding you are welcome to gather at Jim's Eagle Lake cabin for Saturday night. Bring a tent or camper as I am expecting my cabin partner will be there for the weekend. There will be a pot luck supper Saturday evening and a pancake breakfast Sunday morning. Please call Jim for more details if you plan on participating.

**Birds at Scout Island** May 30<sup>th</sup> trip leader Cathy Koot (392-4250)  
Join Cathy for an early morning of birding at Scout Island from 7:30 to 10:00. Scout Island is home to some of the best birding opportunities in the Cariboo so take advantage of this

opportunity to identify and learn more about our local birds.

**Alberta Lakes, Spadefoots & Badgers June 5<sup>th</sup>**

trip leader Katharine VanSpall (392-4447)

Join Katharine VanSpall and Ministry of Environment Ecosystems Biologist Roger Packham on an adventure in the pocket grasslands of the Alberta Lakes chain near 70 Mile House. The adventure will start on Saturday morning with a tour along the Alberta Lakes chain, where one can enjoy the grasslands, explore wetland complexes, and hike glacial eskers. Wildlife species to be seen in the area include mule deer, black bears, wolves, numerous waterfowl and nesting American Avocets, and hopefully we will also be able to visit the den of a radio-tagged female badger. For the truly brave who wish to stay on, the adventure will continue in the evening after dusk when Roger will take us toading in search of Great Basin Spadefoots. These curious desert-dwelling amphibians (somewhere between a frog and a toad!) call after dark to attract mates and can be surveyed quite easily by auditory methods. This trip may go into the wee hours of the morning so you may wish to camp at the nearby Beaverdam Lake Recreation Site for the night. Note high-clearance 4WD vehicles will be required. Call Katharine at 250-392-4447 evenings to sign up or for further details.



Alberta Lakes

**Birding in the Williams Lake River Valley June 13th Phil Ranson (398-7110)**

Meet at 8:00am in the lower parking lot (Frizzi Road past the transfer site and down into the river valley). Join with Phil for a morning walk in the river valley. Learn some of the bird songs of the many birds that will be nesting in the valley at this time of the year.

**Potato Range day hike July 24<sup>th</sup>**

lead by Jim Sims (296-3638)

Hike to the alpine on a cattle trail on the north end of The Potato Range overlooking Tatlayoko Lake. Please meet at the Community Park on Tatlayoko Lake at 9:00 am sharp on Saturday morning. There will be a short stretch of road that may require high clearance but will not need 4 wheel drive. The hike is on a good cattle trail that leads to alpine pastures. The trail gains over 3000 feet steady uphill grind. Bring a hearty lunch with extra snacks, good hiking sunglasses and screen as well as rain gear. Walking sticks are a great long trip down. You may want to turn it into a camping weekend. There are campsites in the area including the Tatlayoko recreation site that could camp out on Friday or Saturday nights. **Due to the difficult nature of the hike you register by phoning Jim or email the Muskrat.**



Tatlayoko Lake from Potato Range



Eureka Wildflowers

**Eureka Peak** Saturday Aug 7<sup>th</sup> Sue Hemphill and Jurgen Homburg (398-8532)

Meet at the Horsefly Bridge at 8:00am. Join Sue and Jurgen for a hike into the alpine on the north end of Eureka Peak located in the Cariboo Mountains near the headwaters of the Horsefly River. There will be an elevation gain of close to 1500 feet so be prepared for a healthy hike. This trip is planned to coincide with the peak of the alpine flower season so bring your plant book to help with identification. The steeper East side of the Eureka ridge is home to a large mountain goat herd and they can often be seen from the top of the ridge. Be sure to pack a hearty lunch and trail mix as well as good rain gear as you are in the rain belt of the Cariboo Mountains. Streams on the hike up as well as the plateau are dependent on snow melt and rain fall so you should bring a water bottle. Good foot wear is imperative and gaiters could be an asset as the vegetation will be very deep and most likely wet. The last part of the drive is over rough logging access roads so high clearance vehicles should be used. Car pooling will be arranged at Horsefly. If you wish you are welcome to camp over Saturday night but your guides will be returning home Saturday evening. **Please phone or email the Muskrat to register so you can be informed if a change must be made.**

**Thursday Evening Bats** at Scout Island Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> with Anna Roberts (392-5000)

Join Anna for an evening of bat facts and identification. Meet at 8:30 pm at Scout Island Nature House to learn about our local bat species, then at dusk watch and listen to bats as they feed.

**Junction Sheep Range Provincial Park** October 24<sup>th</sup> Fred McMechan (392-7680)

Meet at Scout Island at 8:00am. Bring a lunch, water bottle and you binoculars for this annual day long drive and hike into the park. This will be at the peak of the California Big-horned Sheep rut so look forward to seeing the sheep and perhaps you will be lucky and see or hear some head-butting.