

MUSKRAT EXPRESS

WILLIAMS LAKE FIELD NATURALISTS
MARCH + APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

We have gathered
our Easter Treats



Now off for
a Covid. Shot

Time for a
nap for me!



Some open water
but lake still
covered
with ice.





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

Membership fees: Family (\$35), single (\$30) 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, muskratexpress@shaw.ca 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

Williams Lake Field Naturalists Website <http://www.williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca>
Scout Island Nature Centre Website <http://www.scoutislandnaturecentre.ca>

Executive of The Williams Lake Field Naturalists: presidential Team Margaret Waring (Chairperson), Don Lawrence (Scout Island affairs) and Ordell Steen (Communications/liaison), secretary Nola Daintith, treasurer Katharine VanSpall and directors Peter Opie, Ray Hornby, Francis McCoubrey, Jean Oke, Cathie Hamm, Don Lawrence, Sean Donahue, Vanessa Robinson and Fred McMechan



Editors: Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Please expect your next edition of the newsletter in late May. If you have comments, suggestions or articles for the next Muskrat Express please contact Margaret Waring (398-7724), Jim Sims (296-3638) or e-mail us at muskratexpress@shaw.ca



From the editor's desk by Jim at Eagle Lake. The most exciting news from the birds out here has come from Tatlayoko Lake again this winter. Starting back at Christmas I have been locating Yellow-billed Loons on the lake. I've tried to get down there every week or 2 with the scope and camera ready. Unfortunately, the loons have never been close and most often are not visible without the scope. The Loons have all been juvenile birds with light coloured bills held angled upward. The brown backs have been strongly marked and there have been no obvious markings on the very light neck. On one occasion I observed 3 loons and on most of the visits I have seen 2. I have made 2 recent visits and have not been able to locate one, perhaps they have moved down the valley to the ocean where they are more likely to be found. This is the second year I have found them wintering on Tatlayoko Lake. I found them there for the first time in the winter of 2019. I did not locate any in 2020. This year I was a lot more thorough with my observations, sometimes spending more than a couple of hours before I could find them. Often they were just barely identifiable as they were so far away. I could easily have missed them in 2020.

I also had a single observation of a very rare Clarke's Grebe on the lake during one of my visits. This grebe can be distinguished from the very similar Western Grebe by its lighter coloured back and the white that completely surrounds the eye. It was also on the far side of the lake so there are no photos.

The Social Insects of BC

A presentation by Rob Higgins on May 6, 2021

Join us on Thursday, May 6 for a virtual presentation by Dr. Rob Higgins entitled "The social insects of BC: Order thriving in a world of chaos". Rob is well known to the Field Naturalists, especially for his presentations, both indoors and in the field, on ants of BC and on other insect groups such as bees and wasps. We have many times enjoyed his wealth of knowledge and the intriguing facts he has shared with us on insects of BC and elsewhere. Rob is currently a biology professor at TRU in Kamloops, but is a former resident of Williams Lake and member of the Field Naturalists. This will be a virtual (Zoom) presentation starting at 7:00 p.m. on May 6. Don't miss it! A link to join the presentation will be sent out to all Field Naturalist members closer to the presentation date.

Keep your Fir Trees Healthy

Peter Opie has some MCH double-bubble caps of MCH anti-aggregate pheromone for Douglas-fir beetle available. Although the fir beetle cycle seems to be ebbing generally, it is always a prudent to protect any valuable, mature Douglas-fir trees in this environment, particularly any on one's property. Call Peter 250 392-1440 or email peter&skye@telus.net if you are interested.

Plant Sale

A plant sale is being planned for late May. We are considering options of taking some orders ahead for pick-up which would be minimal or no contact. We are also thinking about a couple of smaller sales over a few different days.

Keep watching for plans! There will be a variety of tomato plants that have been planted at Columneetza Campus of Lake City Secondary School. These include Roma, Early Girl, and a variety of Cherries.

Happy Gardening.



Williams Lake Field Naturalists Annual General Meeting

By Ordell

The 2021 AGM of the WL Field Naturalists was held on Friday, March 26 as a virtual (Zoom) meeting. Although we missed having the always great pot-luck meal, we were treated to a presentation by Don Lawrence on construction of the new Nature House entrance and, after the AGM, a presentation by Vanessa Robinson on her on-going search for interesting alpine and other plant species. Don's Powerpoint presentation clearly showed the significant effort and many volunteer hours that went into the new entrance, including the high-quality wheel chair ramp, and the new metal roof. Thank you to the many volunteers, too numerous to mention here. Vanessa gave a very enjoyable presentation on her plant searching travels and photography, especially in the West Chilcotin alpine.

Twenty-one participants participated in the AGM. Thank you to Katharine VanSpall for her Treasurer's report on the WL Field Naturalist and Scout Island Nature Centre finances, Joyce Lawrence for her membership report, Sue Hemphill for her Scout Island Nature Centre report, and Margaret Waring for the Presidents report. Income from SINC program fees are down due to the Covid related restrictions but revenue is slightly higher than last year. Executive director wages were donated to SINC in 2020. Bill Gilroy, the current Education Coordinator, will be retiring in June and we are advertising for a new coordinator. Bill will be greatly missed. Sue noted that SINC vandalism and garbage has increased with the new bridge. The Presidents report made special reference to the on-going efforts to repair the damaging effects of 2020 flooding. Thank you to the many volunteers who have spent many hours on this work. Written AGM reports are available to members upon request.

The AGM approved a motion from the out-going board of directors for a bylaw change to increase the maximum number of directors from 12 to 14. Because no one stood for either president or vice-president of the Field Naturalists, the AGM again approved a motion instructing the new board of directors to elect three directors as temporary co-presidents at their first meeting. Thanks to all of last years directors for letting your names stand for re-election again this year and we also welcome the new director Vanessa Robinson.

Although a list of potential field trips has been prepared, they will be held only if acceptable under current Covid restrictions. Members will be informed by email if and when trips will be held.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT for the Year of 2020

Presented at the Williams Lake Field Naturalists Annual General Meeting via Zoom on 26 March 2021

This past year of 2020 was a unique year that started out typically with planning for upcoming events and a January winter potluck gathering. Our next potluck gathering and Annual General Meeting (AGM) was the last large social indoor gathering most of us attended this year as it occurred just before Covid 19 pandemic. As Directors we made difficult decisions to cancel events such as the banquet, yard sale, and field trips. The Nature House was closed and

education programs and activities were changed and adapted. We worked to follow Covid19 regulations.

The Scout Island Story, an excellent book outlining the history and development of Scout Island was published and released. It is available at Scout Island Nature House, Open Book and Station House Gallery. Thank you to Ordell Steen, Anna Roberts, Fred McMechan, Jean William and others for creating this valuable publication.

Nekw7usem, New Pedestrian Bridge built by the city stretching from RC Cotton site to Scout Island was opened for use and has been well used by walkers this year. Many thanks to Ordell Steen and others for their ongoing meetings with the city to protect Scout Island from unwelcome guests and weeds and to finalize finishing the details of the project.

Don Lawrence takes the lead for infrastructure on Scout Island. He and his crews have done a phenomenal amount of work. This included **updating the front entrance** and reroofing, removing and replacing shakes and plywood soffits which is part of the overall **Fire Smart Plan** that was set up for us by Ken Day.

Spring Flood of 2020 with record high water levels happened quickly. Damage to trails and bridges occurred and Don Lawrence and his very dedicated, hard working crews deserve thanks for all they have done and need our encouragement to continue on. Sean Donahue took on a project to organize cleaning the board walks and considering repair and replacement options for the boardwalks and the trails.

Our Newsletter titled Muskrat Express was published 6 times this year. Thanks for many interesting contributions from members and for the work of the editors, Jim Sims and Margaret Waring. We would like to acknowledge the long-term contributions “Our View of the Night Sky” by Steve Capling and that he will be missed and remembered following his sudden passing in June this year.

We had two in person **presentations**: In January Lubna Khan entertained us with amusing stories about learning to be a member of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and in March we learned about “What is a Jokulhlaup?” from Sage Birchwater. We then switched to Zoom sessions. Thank you to Connie Haeussler and Leo Rankin for being our first Zoom presenters, sharing birds from their Australian travels.

Scout Island Nature Centre is operated by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. We continued to operate and offer programs with required Covid19 regulations under the Direction of our very talented, dedicated Executive Director Sue Hemphill and skilled Education Coordinator Bill Gilroy. The Nature House was closed but we still were able to employ students and offer a variety of outdoor programs. We are looking toward future directions for Scout Island Nature Centre with the Strategic Planning Committee and also what paths to follow regarding an Education Coordinator and Executive Director when Sue and Bill retire.

We provided our \$1000. **yearly Bursary** for a student graduating from Lake City Secondary School.

Congratulations to our hard working **Past President Fred McMechan** who was recognized as a “Distinguished Naturalist Mentor” and received the “BC Nature Volunteer Regional Award” this year.

Activities of the year ended with the annual **Christmas Bird Count** on December 20th and we thank Phil Ranson for organizing this popular ongoing event.

Even though it was a very different year this provides a picture that the Williams Lake Field Naturalists participated in many activities and projects. To end this report we need to recognize all the skilled, hardworking, dedicated Williams Lake Field Naturalists (Directors and Members), School District and other Community programs and supporters, everyone and so many people who support, enjoy and take care of the natural environment in our community and in our world.

Respectfully submitted Margaret Waring, Don Lawrence and Ordell Steen

Field Trips for 2021

The following is a list of possible field trips that the Williams Lake Field Naturalists would like to offer to our members in 2021. Whether or not these trips occur depends on timely changes to Covid-19 restrictions. It is our hope that the Covid situation will improve sufficiently that these restrictions can be altered and we will be able to set dates for the trips. If a date is selected, the list will be re-published in either an email or a future edition of the Muskrat Express. Timing might not make it possible to have the list in a newsletter. Therefore, for the few members who do not have email if you are interested in participating on any of these trips you should contact the trip leader at the phone number or email address provided. You will be contacted by phone if and when a date is set.

Please note that none of these trips will occur unless it is safe to do so therefore the field trip must meet or exceed provincial Covid-19 restrictions.

Alkali Lake

This field trip is our annual first field trip of the year. This field trip will not be held this year, however we encourage you to enjoy a great spring drive out the Dog Creek Road to Alkali Lake and beyond. Here is a bit of encouragement from Lloyd taken from his posting to “Cariboo Chilcotin Birding Google Group” *This afternoon would be a wonderful time to visit Alkali. There is plenty of open water in the right places, bringing (dare I say) well over a thousand birds together. Although a little rough in places, the road is dry. But who's in a hurry, eh? And--best of all--it will be sunny and warm (not HOT) ALL afternoon.*

Pack a lunch and your binoculars and enjoy a great tour.

Chilanko Marsh Bird Count

(leader Jim Sims (778) 764-2752 or smedleysims@gmail.com)

This annual field trip is offered on the Victoria Long Weekend and includes an invitation to stay at Jim’s Eagle Lake home “Tern Inn”. The count at the marsh may still take place but the option for the extended weekend at Tern Inn will most likely not happen.

Upper River Valley Birding Field Trip

(Leader Phil Ranson 398-7110)

Phil hopes to be able to hold this popular trip to the valley early in June. This is the peak of the nesting season and the valley provides some of the best birding in the region.

Russet Bluff

(Leader Peter Opie 392-1440)

This will be a June Wednesday evening hike to the top of the bluff. Peter may have another forestry related walk in May or June so watch for details in the next newsletter or via email if covid allows it.

Grasslands and wetlands on Becher’s Prairie

(Leader: Ordell Steen 398-5017)

Becher’s Prairie is one of the most ecologically important grassland landscapes in the Cariboo-Chilcotin because of its unique grasslands and large number and diversity of wetlands. The wetlands and associated riparian areas are provincially significant habitat for migrating waterfowl. Recent wildfires burned most but not all of this landscape. In this trip, we will explore burned and unburned grasslands and wetlands to examine recovery of vegetation and wildlife habitat. The trip will include vehicle travel on rough grassland trails combined with short walks to wetlands and grasslands.

Junction Sheep Range

(Leader Fred McMechan 392-7680)

This is our annual final field trip of the year usually offered in the last half of October. Meet at Scout Island at 8:00am. Bring a lunch, water bottle and your 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.



Scout Island Nature Centre

By Sue Hemphill

The Stream to Sea program has gone virtual. Bill and Kim are not comfortable going into classes to do the second lesson about the salmon which are now hatched and being fed. So Rick Magnell helped Bill put his lesson on line. If you would like to see the lesson, go to YouTube.com and type “Scout Island Nature Centre: Salmon” in the search bar, then click on the round photo of the salmon eggs. Everything is there.

Kim is following up these virtual lessons with a trip to the school to do salmon related activities and games outside with the students.



The Lake City Enviro Club is a club at the Williams Lake campus of Lake City Secondary School. The group is composed of many unique, motivated, and passionate young people. These teenagers are working to make their school, community, and planet a more sustainable place to live. Like all of us, the club has had to adjust to Covid-19. Traditional trips have had to be cancelled, fundraisers have become complicated, and even the basic operations of a meeting have changed. Thankfully, the members persevered through these new challenges with heads held high. The members have continued to be stewards for their school, maintaining the compost program, and organizing a litter-pick for the school grounds. They have designed and hand-crafted buttons to raise funds for charity. Members have also made an excursion into the outdoors, snowshoeing, and learning about eco-systems



in winter. Finally, keeping in Covid-19 fashion, the Enviro Club decided to go online and start an Instagram page. On their Instagram, @wlenviroclub, they share pictures from events, sustainability tips, and thoughts on current topics. The Enviro Club looks forward to continued impact in the community, and to continued learning from the curveballs Covid-19 throws their way.

By Adrien Zimmerman-member of the club
Scout Island Nature Centre educator Kim Zalay mentors this club along with the sponsoring teacher Jeff Wang.

The Enjoyment of Monitoring a Bluebird Route

By Jean Oke

In 1985, when I had been a member for only a year, Anna Roberts persuaded me that I should run a bluebird line. She explained what it entailed and why the club was involved in the project.

She told me about the use of these lines to encourage the bluebirds and that the bluebirds would act as a natural control for insects over range lands. She described the lines and told me about the rivalry between bluebirds and swallows for suitable nesting sites; hence the pairs of houses at 200-meter intervals- one for bluebirds and one for swallows. The bluebirds would control the ground insects and the swallows those in the air. This has proven to be true over the years, I often find almost alternating bluebird and swallow nests as I monitor the boxes.

After the explanations, I was intrigued and agreed to join the project. We decided on a date to set up the line, the last weekend in March and invited



Jean Cleaning out a bluebird box

the Australian exchange teacher who was here to join us (Karen Stoddart). Off we went on the appointed day, on cross-country skis once we got to the site, the last fence line before Farwell Canyon. We put out 13 pairs of bluebird boxes along the fences.



A swallow nest with a single Bluebird egg

Since then, until the fires in 2017, I have monitored that line, going out to check on the nests 3 or 4 times after cleaning them in late March. It has brought me many benefits over the years. The beauty and peace of the landscape gave me refuge on weekends during the last terms of academic years. I have gone alone or taken family or friends with me to admire the wildflowers and birds. Once, early in the season, I noticed a big rock that I had never seen before. When it started to move, I realized that it was a bear, probably grizzly, and decided that I could check the boxes another day. Only once have I spotted a coyote in the area. Of course, many times the cattle are in the paddock. Surprisingly, I don't recall seeing any deer.

Over the years the fence-line has been repaired and replaced. Each time the ranch hands have carefully replaced the boxes, often taking care to orient them on the posts as they had found them. To me, this indicated that they saw the value of the birds as pest

control. And that they appreciated our efforts in maintaining the populations of bluebirds. In 2017, I cleared the old nests in March but was unable to visit the line during the Spring and then, as we all know, the fires ripped through. In 2018, again I did the early spring cleaning, finding surprisingly little fire damage. The junipers were gone and the bases of some fence posts burned through. Again, I did not make further visits due to the heavy smoke that summer. By 2019 the ranch land had changed hands and the manager of the time decided I needed to clear each visit with the office- then did not return calls or emails, not wanting to trespass, I abandoned the line. Same for 2020.

I have just received word that the land is under new management and I will be allowed to go over the land to monitor and maintain those boxes. Always, of course, respecting closed gates and the pasture lands. I am delighted and looking forward to enjoying the views from the high point of the route-looking south to the Marble Range, watching the clouds over Becher's Prairie, and enjoying the sights and sounds of the grasslands. Happy Spring!

Nestbox cleanout time:

Fred and Jim have been busy building new replacement bluebird boxes this past month. These are available in the storage containers at the Scout Island block house. Please use these for your Bluebird Routes. Boxes can also be purchased for personal use, please see Sue. It is time to cleanout nest boxes for the coming season and repair or replace damaged boxes. This includes the boxes you have around your home. If you will be setting out a new route and need a large number of boxes please contact Jim or Fred incase another building session is needed. You can send and email to the Muskrat.

Williams Lake Food Policy Council & Cariboo Direct Farm Market Association present:

Williams Lake SEEDY SATURDAY EARLYBIRD FARMERS' MARKET

Everything to help you grow your own food!

- Plant & Seed Swap Table
- Plants for Sale
- Vermiculture & Composting
- Local Seeds & Seedlings
- Garden Club Info Booth
- Farmers' Market Vendors
- Take-Away Food
- Arts & Crafts

May 1, 2021 | 10 AM-2 PM
Kiwanis Park

Free & Family Friendly
"Bubbles" welcome - please stay together & be aware of others

foodpolycouncil@hotmail.com
Deb: 250.303.0575

Williams Lake Food Policy Council
Williams Lake Farmers Market

"Safe Shopping" COVID-19 Protocols in effect

Please wear your face coverings!

All about Long-billed Curlews

By Courtney Jones

This spring, there is an exciting opportunity for people interested in birds or the grasslands to participate in a volunteer-based road transect survey of Long-billed Curlews that is being initiated by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. Approximately 60 volunteers are required to conduct surveys of Long-billed Curlews in the Cariboo-Chilcotin to obtain better information on the population size and distribution of this species. Volunteers are not required to have prior experience conducting surveys or identifying curlews, all that is required is that they be willing to spend a spring morning driving road-transects looking for curlews.



Photo by: Megan Cereda- Grover

Volunteers will be asked to donate approximately half a day of their time on either Saturday May or Sunday May 2 , plus their vehicle and gas, and will be asked to sign a Volunteer Waiver Form. Volunteers will drive an assigned survey route, stopping every 400 meters to look and listen for curlews. If curlews are seen or heard, the location of the observation will be noted on a map and a line filled out the accompanying data forms. Volunteers will be provided with maps of their survey route, all required data forms, instructions for completing the survey, and tips on how to identify curlews. Survey routes will be assigned to be as convenient as possible to volunteers and to minimize the distance that volunteers are required to drive to get to the start of their route. Survey routes cover low elevation grasslands along the Chilcotin and Fraser Rivers, they range from just west of Alexis Creek to just east of Lac La Hache and from Quesnel to Big Bar.

Long-billed Curlews are intriguing birds, they have several characteristics and behaviours that make them unforgettable. Curlews have a distinctive call – it is loud and not easily confused with any other bird call. The call is a clear, rising “cur-lee” often repeated. In the proximity of breeding curlews, one may also hear their song, which explains the reason for part of the birds’ name – the song is described as a trilled, liquid “curleeeeeeeuuuuuuuu”. The reason for the other half of the birds’ name is explained upon seeing its distinctive bill. The bill is extremely long (from 10 to 21.5 cm) and has a strong downward curve to it. This amazing bill is used to prey upon terrestrial insects in the breeding season and aquatic invertebrates on the wintering grounds.



Photo by: Francesco Veronesi



Photo by: Chris McCreedy

The large size and cinnamon coloration of the curlew are more telltale features of the curlew. In fact, the Long-Billed Curlew is largest shorebird in North America, measuring between 50 – 65 cm from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail. This shorebird species is unusual because is not normally associated with wet areas or shorelines at all during the early spring! In fact, during the early breeding season (mid-April through May), this species prefers to nest in large expanses of dry, open grasslands that have low-profile vegetation and few shrubs. It is not until the chicks have hatched and brood-rearing begins in the later part of the breeding season (June through mid-July) that the curlews will utilize areas of taller vegetation, including wetter meadows, seepage sites and hay fields.

And finally the breeding behaviours of the Long-billed Curlew further help to identify this species. This species is territorial, with males establishing and defending nesting territories using flight displays and vocalizations in the early part of the breeding season. Later in the breeding season, after the eggs have hatched, males and females alike will participate in cooperative mobbing of predators, which again involves flying and vocalizations. These behaviours combined with the species' physical traits contribute to making the Long-billed Curlew easy to spot and identify.

In British Columbia, the Long-billed Curlew population is estimated to be between 300 and 500 birds, with the highest concentration occurring in the Cariboo-Chilcotin grasslands. This small population size combined with the species' dependence on limited grasslands has resulted in the species being placed on the provincial Blue List of Vulnerable species.

If you are interested in participating in this COVID-friendly spring survey, whether you are a long-time fan of the Long-billed Curlew or are interested in getting your first look at one of these eye-catching birds, please contact Courtney Jones ASAP at 250-302-3554 or Courtney.N.Jones@gov.bc.ca. Your help is much needed and would be greatly appreciated!

Have you seen me? We want to know!



Photos: Roberto Glenick, Never-Speak-the-Animals Wildlife Photography.

This summer, June-July 2021, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) will be conducting a Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) survey in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Lewis's Woodpeckers are assessed as Threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), meaning that the species is likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed. The Cariboo-Chilcotin is the northern edge of this woodpecker's range, and we believe they occur here in small numbers. The last study in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region was in 2006 with 10-20 breeding pairs being identified. Lewis's woodpecker populations are more numerous in the Thompson-Nicola, Okanagan-Similkameen, Boundary and Kootenay regions with a provincial estimate of at least 371 pairs. The Lewis's woodpecker is threatened by habitat loss from human development, agriculture, harvesting, invasive species and transportation corridors. Periodic fires are thought to be important in creating suitable habitat and long-term fire suppression may be a further limiting factor. Lewis's woodpeckers are a medium sized migratory woodpecker with a distinctive plumage. They have a greenish black head, back, wings and tail with a distinctive pinkish belly. Their face has a dark red patch and prominent

silvery gray collar and upper breast. Although both sexes look similar the juvenile is distinct from the adults. The juvenile is mostly black with a brownish-black dorsal but is lacking the gray, red and pink seen on adults. Both juveniles and adults have gray legs and feet, black bills, and dark irises. The Lewis's woodpecker breeds in the southern interior of British Columbia in open forests, riparian woodlands, and grasslands with scattered trees. They nest in live or dead coniferous or deciduous trees and are not strongly territorial, meaning that individuals will sometimes share nests, or nest near one another.

When you are out exploring our beautiful region this summer, if you spot this bird, please let us know. Moreover, if you have seen this bird in our region recently (within the last 10 years) we would like to know about it. The ideal information would be a date, location (general or preferably a GPS point), number of birds seen, whether you observed any nesting activity and a photo if you took one.

Please report Lewis's Woodpecker sighting to Kristina.Cornhill@gov.bc.ca

Member's Moment from Betty and Lubna



Nature in Action at Scout island

It was a cool, windy March day, but there was plenty of activity at Scout Island. Lubna Khan and I were celebrating Kris Andrews' birthday with some socially distanced birding. The air was filled with the cacophony of red winged black birds. On the Otter Point boardwalk, we had front row seats to watch a large bald eagle stalk his lunch. For the longest time, the eagle was perched on one of the nesting boxes in the marsh. Suddenly, he was airborne and dove down on an unsuspecting Northern Pintail in the open water. I suspect he broke its neck with his strong talons, as there was no sound or movement from the duck. Landing on nearby ice, the eagle stood on the duck and feathers were flying as he plucked his meal with his sturdy beak. Within seconds, he was joined by several brave ravens, obviously hoping for scraps, but he was in no mood to share. Not a good day to be a Northern Pintail.

Article by Betty Donahue

Photo by Lubna Khan

"Member's Moment" is an opportunity for you to share a special scene, plant, animal, bird or outdoor activity that you have enjoyed and photographed here in the Cariboo Chilcotin. A chance for you to encourage other members to get outdoors and find their own special moments close to home and perhaps share them with all of us. For each newsletter the editors will select one or two photos for inclusion in the newsletter based on the quality of the photo as well as the interesting paragraph you must provide. We will save all submitted unused moments in hopes they may find a place in a future edition. Please email your full resolution photo and paragraph to the muskratexpress@shaw.ca. A special thanks to Lubna and Betty for their entry.