

Mirjam Barrueto

## Wolverines....

...shrinking spaces for a wilderness wanderer

©highwaywilding.org

**Thursday, November 28, 7:00 pm**  
**Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Red Deer**



They are famous long distance runners, mountaineers and survival artists. They are adapted to solitude, long winters and sparse food. Their territories equal those of grizzly bears and they prefer to stay away from people. What kind of an animal is the wolverine? How do they fare in the busy, highly fragmented, highly developed southern part of their North American range? How can we help them survive the 21st century? How do we even study this elusive species?

Mirjam Barrueto is a research associate working in partnership with Tony Clevenger of the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University, the Miistakis Institute for the Rockies, and Parks Canada (Banff National Park). Her work is focusing on wildlife monitoring along the highway corridor in Banff National Park, specifically exploring the influence of wildlife crossing structures. As part of this project, Mirjam is involved with an assessment of the wolverine population in Banff, Yoho and Kootney National Parks. Originally from Zurich, Switzerland, Mirjam holds a master's degree in zoology from the University of British Columbia.



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This event is free, all are welcome

## ALBERTA NATIVE PLANT COUNCIL

### Call for Photos

Do you have any great plant species photos you'd like to share? ANPC needs a bank of plant species photos that we can switch out seasonally for the *Feature Plant* series on the ANPC website. The photo needs to look good at a width of 200 pixels and be accompanied by a little write up about what makes the photo interesting. Please send your photos and text to [s.mcandrews@shaw.ca](mailto:s.mcandrews@shaw.ca)

### Volunteer Call-out

ANPC is currently looking for volunteers for:

- Reclamation/Horticulture Members
- Conservation Committee Members
- Rare Plant Committee Members
- Project Outreach Team Members
- Booth Volunteers
- Botany AB 2014
- Workshop 2014

If you think you might be interested or have questions, please contact us at [info@anpc.ab.ca](mailto:info@anpc.ab.ca), with [volunteer opportunities](#) in the subject line

### ANPC Board Meetings

Board meetings are held 4 times a year between September and March. If you think you might be interested in becoming more involved in ANPC, maybe as a volunteer for a committee or as an elected board member, these meetings are an excellent way to learn more about our organization and meet some fellow botanists.

Meetings are held in Red Deer at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre  
Noon to 5:00 PM

#### Dates:

Saturday, November 16, 2013  
Saturday, January 18, 2014  
Saturday, March 15, 2014

## INTERESTING BIRD SIGHTINGS!

By Judy Boyd

**Barn Owl:** On Oct 8 one of Medicine River Wildlife Centre's volunteers went out to the Edberg area to pick up an owl that had been caught on barbed wire. We were all really excited when we realized that this was a Barn Owl, the first one to ever be treated at Medicine River. To our knowledge, there has only been one other Barn Owl that was brought to a rehab centre and that was a DOA that came into the Birds of Prey Centre in Coaldale. According to Dr. Gord Court with Alberta Fish and Wildlife, this is only the third Barn Owl sighting in Alberta.

Being our first, we were learning all kinds of new things about this breed of owl. My first impression was amazement at how small it is. It came in weighing 370 grams. Sibley's Guide gives the average weight of a barn owl as 460 grams. So this guy was underweight and very weak. He was barely able to stand.

I've always found that different species of owls react differently to rehab. Snowy Owls always bite. Great Gray Owls always clench their beak shut so in order to get any medicine down their throats you have to pry their beak open. If you have a Great Horned Owl with attitude, you have a female. The males are much more mellow. This Barn Owl tended to hold any medicine or fluids in his throat and wouldn't swallow. Because we've only dealt with the one, we don't know if this is typical when rehabbing this species. Unfortunately, this owl never made it. His body was sent to Dr. Court but as of yet, we haven't gotten a report back from him. We weren't sure if this guy was male or female, adult or juvenile. It would be nice to know.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** It was hard for me to decide which bird that the Monday Birders have seen over the past little while to be "Bird of the Month." We have seen so many good birds lately - Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, Wood Ducks, Greater White-fronted Geese, Belted Kingfisher, Hooded Merganser. But the Parasitic Jaeger seen at Gull Lake on September 23 has to be the best choice, mainly because it was a first for me, a bird I got to add to my life list.

At Aspen Beach at Gull Lake that day we were watching the terns. We had seen Forster's Terns then we saw a larger tern carrying a fish being chased by Bonaparte's Gulls. We figured out that the tern was a Caspian Tern then this really dark gull-like bird with a pointy tail started chasing it. We saw the dark bib on its breast and the light colour at the tips of its wings. When the two birds disappeared ( unfortunately we never saw the end of the drama so don't know who wound up eating the contested fish) I ran for my Sibley's Guide and we all agreed that the chasing bird was a Parasitic Jaeger. Both of the other people with me had seen these birds elsewhere in the world so they were only a smidge less excited than me.

So naturally I had to learn more about these birds. First off, what was it doing here? Sibley's tells me that this bird nests on the Arctic tundra. It winters on the open ocean mostly within a few miles of land and frequently seen from land. The IBird Pro app says they spend the winter on tropical oceans of the Southern Hemisphere. So obviously it was headed in that direction.

Sibley's also says that they feed mainly on fish stolen from other seabirds which is exactly what the Gull Lake bird was trying to do. Besides chasing gulls or terns to force them to drop their food, they also will hunt cooperatively. Jaeger, by the way, means hunter. One jaeger will chase a bird near the ground with another jaeger flying above it to intercept any dodges. Sometimes one will distract an incubating parent bird while the other makes off with an egg. Sneaky, eh?

But don't go rushing out to Gull Lake expecting to see this bird. A friend went out there a few days after we'd been there and no Jaegers could be seen.



Photo by Judy Boyd

## BIRDS AND WINDOWS PROJECT

The University of Alberta has developed the Birds and Windows Project to study bird window collisions at your home. We encourage everyone to take a look at our website and participate in the study.

### What is the issue?

It has been estimated up to 1 billion birds are killed in North America each year as a result of bird window collisions! This is one of the largest threats to bird populations, with residential homes representing the majority of building-related mortality.



### Get involved!

To better understand what can be done to reduce bird window collisions, the University of Alberta has developed this project to actively involve YOU in data collection. We are asking you to think about bird window collisions you have observed in the past and would like you to regularly search around your residence for evidence of bird window collisions in the future. By collecting this data we hope to identify the factors that make some windows more risky for birds than others. For more information: <http://birdswindows.biology.ualberta.ca/>



## SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN REGIONAL PLAN

The Government of Alberta has recently released the Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. The draft plan proposes “new conservation areas and environmental limits, protects our water supply and provides clarity about land use and access.”

We encourage you to read the plan, come out to the consultation sessions and to go to [www.landuse.alberta.ca](http://www.landuse.alberta.ca) to complete the on-line workbook. The workbook will be available until January 15.

As the Red Deer workshop is on the same day as the next RDRN evening meeting, those wishing to have input can register as a ‘stakeholder’ for the workshop earlier in the day.

The daytime stakeholder session runs from 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Lunch will be provided. All registrants are asked to RSVP so that they can ensure there will be sufficient room, food and facilitators. Please RSVP to [ssrp@stantec.com](mailto:ssrp@stantec.com) or call 403-716-8325. The evening session runs from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM

This is your chance to have a say in the future of this very important region!

## RDRN DONATIONS

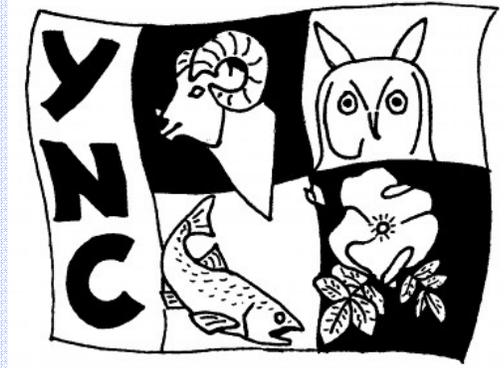
*By Phil French*

This year, the RDRN received a \$10,000 donation from OMERS Energy to be used for habitat preservation. We have split the money and moved it on to assist two very different organizations. Five thousand dollars has been donated to the Medicine River Wildlife Centre to help with the purchase of some very pristine land adjacent to the centre. The other half of the money has been designated for the Environmental Law Society <http://environmentallawcentre.wordpress.com/tag/land-reclamation/> to help them with their crucial work on pressing for higher standards, quicker reclamation, and better compliance with regulations on the thousands of abandoned pipelines, roads and well sites left behind by the oil and gas industry in the Province of Alberta.

The next YNC Explorer Day will be at on November 17. Check the website for the topic and other details or call Judy Boyd (403-342-4150) for more information.

*The Young Naturalist Club is for youth and families who like to learn about nature and have fun at the same time! We provide educational materials and organize field experiences to enhance nature appreciation and foster attitudes that benefit our natural world.*

<http://naturealberta.ca/alberta-natural-history/ync-young-naturalists-club>



If you care about the (mis) treatment and (mis) management of wolves in Alberta:

[www.wolfmatters.org](http://www.wolfmatters.org)

## FLOWER FOCUS

### AQUATIC PLANTS

Don Wales will be describing some common submergent, emergent and floating plants in the central Alberta area as well as plants that like to have their feet wet.

**November 20**  
**KWNC 10:00 AM**

For information,  
contact Don Wales  
403-343-2937



## BIRD FOCUS

The Bird Focus group meets every Monday from September to May (not holiday Mondays) at noon at Kerry Wood Nature Centre. Be prepared to car-pool and bring your own snacks and beverages. Sometimes the group hikes although most birding is done from cars. Everyone is welcome.

### UPCOMING SCHEDULE

(Subject to change depending on the weather and if there are interesting bird sightings elsewhere!)

November 4: Gull Lake

November 11: Dickson Dam

November 18: Alix and Haunted Lakes

November 25: hunting for Snowy Owls south and east of Red Deer.



Photos by Myrna Pearman

The Red Deer River Naturalists, the first natural history organization to be established in Alberta, was incorporated as a society in 1906. The objectives of the society are to foster an increased knowledge, understanding and appreciation of natural history, and to support conservation measures dealing with our environment, wildlife and natural resources.

Annual membership is \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families.

Regular meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of most months at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, 6300-45 Ave., Red Deer, AB. Non-members are welcome.

Members are encouraged to contribute to this newsletter. Deadline is the last Friday of the month.

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