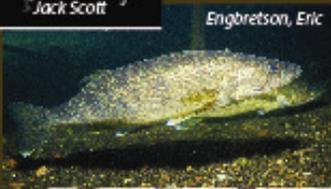


## Using DNA to Study the Ecology, Conservation and Management of Alberta Wildlife

**Thursday, October 23**  
**Kerry Wood Nature Centre**  
**Red Deer 7:00pm**



David Coltman's research group has used the analysis of DNA, the blueprint of all living things, to address a wide range of biological questions in Alberta wildlife. David will describe how we have used modern DNA fingerprinting methods to study a number of topics that have very clear relevance for conservation and management. This includes analysis of the mountain pine beetle and host pine trees, predicting the spread of chronic wasting disease in wild deer, the use of DNA to better manage freshwater fish, and new insights into the ecology and evolution of mountain sheep and goats.

Dave Coltman is a Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta who specializes in wildlife genetics. Dr. Coltman and his students use the analysis of DNA to better understand the life-history, ecology and evolution of a wide range of wild plants and animals. Dr. Coltman received his PhD from Dalhousie University and completed his post-doctoral training at the University of Edinburgh. After four years as a lecturer at the University of Sheffield in England, Dr. Coltman returned home to Canada and joined the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta in 2004. He now also serves as the Associate Dean for Research for the Faculty of Science.



SPONSORED BY



- Admission free and open to the public

# HOARY MARMOT

Story and Photos by Bonnie Mullin

On many of our Rocky Mountain hikes, we are greeted by the “whistling” of the marmot. They call out to each other warning that those “human beans” are here again. On most of our hikes, we usually see and hear marmots once we are among the big rocks above treeline. They are very curious and entertaining.

Information from Ben Gadd’s *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*: “Common in alpine meadows from the Bow River north, less common to the south. Length 72cm with a tail of 21cm, weight up to 5.8Kg. ‘Hoary’ refers to the long, coarse, white-tipped coat. They whistle a long note, in some places called whistlers. They are a close relative to the groundhog.”

I love Ben’s comments: “Marmots live an enviable life.

They seem to have little to do in the summer except loll about in lush alpine meadows, eating anything green.” They have few predators: golden eagles, grizzly bears and wolverines. They squirrel away some food for early spring and hibernate from late September till late April or early May.

They may have four to five young in a year, usually seen poking their noses out of the burrows in July.



Photo by Judy Boyd

***Speaking of Marmots!*** From the Medicine River Wildlife Centre’s website:

Two little stowaway marmots hitched a ride on a van to Caroline from Limestone Mountain last summer, unbeknownst to the driver. It took a lot of time and patience from our staff, but eventually the Marmots were retrieved from the vehicle.

A few days later, after being pronounced fit and healthy, the two were returned to Limestone Mountain. Interestingly, this is not the first time MRWC has had to rescue a hitchhiking Marmot from a vehicle!

# 2014 OWL AWARD

## KEITH KLINE

By Phil French

This year's Owl Award recipient is Mr. Keith Kline. Keith grew up on the prairies of Saskatchewan in an area that contained a great deal of the native grassland that he grew to know and love. It was his mother who initially introduced him to and inspired his interest in nature - specifically birds. He also recalls a special teacher who took him and his classmates outdoors to learn about the natural world around them. There was also a short nature-based radio program that he got in the habit of listening to featuring Kerry Wood

As a young man, he became a teacher and taught in Canada's Arctic region for five years, where he was exposed to more natural wonders and many new creatures (such as beluga whales) and plants that were so different than the ones he grew up with.

Keith first became aware of the RDRN when he left the Arctic and moved to Red Deer in 1969. He later became more involved with the organization largely due to the influence of Michael O'Brian and has served on the Board for the past 10 years.

I have had the privilege to know and work with Keith since I first became a board member. I have seen him rise from Second Vice-President to Vice-President and serve for two years as our President. As president, his main focus was on education and the promotion of the awareness and understanding of the natural world. As Past President, he continued to provide advice and inspiration when it was my turn. That is something for which I will always be grateful. Keith could always be called the quiet voice of reason when it comes to making decisions. His advice is sage and well worth listening to. His quiet and steady manner is perhaps underestimated by the general membership, but not by the members of the board

(especially when passions are high).

Keith has taken part in the many public events of the RDRN over the years. He has helped with our public meetings and attended outings. His friendly face often greets new-comers at the door of RDRN events - perhaps encouraging them to take out a membership, answering questions or just saying hello and having a chat. Keith conducted early morning spring birding walks for several years. His love and passion for the parks in Red Deer becomes abundantly clear when one strolls with him along the pathways, even if it means rising at 6:00 in the morning. That is the "Old-School" side of Keith...

Keith has sat-on and chaired several RDRN committees. He has always been the board member who was keenest about dragging the Red Deer River Naturalists into the new Information Age. That is the "not-so-old-school" side of Keith. He has been a mover in terms of getting our social media presence going. He has acted as one of the administrators for the RDRN Facebook page. In that capacity he gives the "thumbs up or thumbs down" on people requesting memberships. I think he usually says "yes". He started an RDRN blog called "Natural Wise" and is always looking for contributors. He is an enthusiastic blogger and has encouraged others in their more intermittent attempts.



He has made his home in Red Deer for forty-five years and has always loved this city for its supportive people and unspoiled habitat. Over the years he has enjoyed exploring Kin Canyon, Bower Woods and Gaetz Lakes. He believes Red Deer's greatest asset is its Waskasoo Parks system. His hopes for the future of the community include further development of parks and preservation of this region's native habitat.

Now it is time to salute Keith Kline and recognise his long time support for the Red Deer River Naturalists and its activities by presenting him with the **2015 Owl Award**.



**THANK YOU RDRN!** Bonnie Mullin, RDRN representative on the Ellis Bird Farm (EBF) Board of Directors accepts a thank you plaque from EBF Vice Chair, Bob Winchell, at a donor recognition supper held in the new Ellis Bird Farm Visitor Centre in August.

RDRN has long supported Ellis Bird Farm by providing funds for equipment as well as various site projects and programs. RDRN donated two large TVs and supportive equipment for the new Visitor Centre. This equipment will enable EBF to offer livestreaming from nests and other points of interest around the site. Ellis Bird Farm is very grateful for RDRN's generous and ongoing support.

# FLOWER FOCUS SEED PLANT EVOLUTION VIDEO

**10:00 AM KWNC**  
**October 15, 2014**  
Call Don Wales for details  
403-343-2937

## BIRD FOCUS SUNDAY BIRDING 1:00 PM–3:00 PM

Meet at KWNC.  
Come prepared to carpool and dress  
for the weather.

**October 5:** Michael O'Brian Wetland  
and Rosedale Natural Area  
**October 19:** Maskepatoon  
**October 26:** Kentwood Natural Area

Call Judy (403-342-4150) to confirm  
attendance or for further infor-  
mation.

## FAREWELL OPEN HOUSE FOR BILL AND LIZ HEINSEN

Bill and Liz Heinsen will soon be moving to Calgary. Judy and Larry Boyd will be hosting an Open House for them on Thursday, October 9th from 4 PM—6 PM.

Please join us in thanking Bill and Liz for their friendship over the years and for their very significant contributions to Red Deer River Naturalists. Contact Judy (403-342-4150) if you need directions to the Boyd residence.

## GET WELL WISHES FOR BERTHA!

RDRN member Bertha Ford was in a car accident recently and then underwent major surgery. Here's wishing you a speedy recovery Bertha!



*Photo by Myrna Pearman*

**AGM — STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION**  
**Saturday, October 25, 2014 9:30 AM**  
**Miquelon Provincial Park Visitors' Centre**  
Contact [linda.kershaw1@gmail.com](mailto:linda.kershaw1@gmail.com) for more information

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 7:00 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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*Front cover designed by Doug Pederson*