

# THE EVOLUTION OF PARENTAL CARE IN BIRDS



Photos by Wikimedia Commons

**Thur., Nov. 27 • 7:00pm**  
**Kerry Wood Nature Centre**  
**Red Deer**

The benefit to birds in providing parental care is that it greatly increases the chances that their offspring will survive the egg, nestling and fledgling periods. However, parental care is not cheap. The time and energy spent looking after these offspring mean that there is less time for other activities, such as defending territories, preening, feeding and producing another clutch of offspring. This conflict between the needs of the offspring and the impacts on the caregivers has helped shape mating systems in birds and has resulted in fascinating alternative reproductive strategies.



Dorothy Hill

Dorothy Hill is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Mount Royal University in Calgary. She holds a PhD in Ecology from University of Calgary, an MSc in Zoology from University of Manitoba, and a BSc in Zoology from University of British Columbia. Her Red Deer connection is that her mother, Shirley Hill (nee Nash), grew up on a farm just north of Red Deer (now within city limits) and Dorothy was named after her mom's best friend and Red Deer River Naturalist member, Dorothy Hazlett.

- Admission free and  
open to the public

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*Lauren Pearman took this picture of a Steller's Jay in their family's yard northeast of Rimbey on September 30. It stayed only a short while.*

## ORDER OF THE BIGHORN

Albertans have a very long history of exemplary stewardship of our fish and wildlife resources and are deserving of our recognition.

The Government of Alberta established the Order of the Bighorn Awards in 1982 to celebrate the outstanding contributions to fish and wildlife conservation by Albertans.

The last awards were held in 2008. These awards will again be presented, with an Order of the Bighorn Award Ceremony planned for early spring, 2015. Here, several Albertans will be honoured for their volunteer stewardship contributions. Any deserving Albertan is eligible to receive this award, based on volunteer contributions to fish, wildlife or habitat conservation.

You are urged to please take the time to nominate someone who is deserving of this award. The deadline for nominations is November 24, 2014.

The nomination form and instructions for nominators can also be downloaded from the Order of the Bighorn website. Click on the link on the left that says "Order of the Bighorn Criteria" at:

<http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/alberta-order-of-the-bighorn-awards/default.aspx>

Please feel free to pass this information along to others who may be interested in making nominations. Contact Ron Bjorge or Sue Cotterill at [ESRD.OrderoftheBighorn@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ESRD.OrderoftheBighorn@gov.ab.ca) for more information.

## WINDOW KILLS

Each year 22 million birds die from colliding with residential windows across the country, concludes a University of Alberta survey. The study says poorly placed bird feeders lead to more collisions with windows. (Canadian Press)

The study, published in the journal *Wildlife Research*, also suggests bird feeders and large bird-friendly trees compound the problem. "In many cases people who go out of their way to help birds by putting up feeders and bird friendly plants are unwittingly contributing to the problem," said researcher Erin Bayne. The research showed collisions were not random, with the highest collision and mortality rates at rural residences with bird feeders followed by rural residences without feeders. In the city, yards with feeders claimed the most bird lives as well, especially in older neighbourhoods where there were older and larger trees. Bayne and a University of Alberta biology class used an online survey to recruit 1,700 homeowners in the Edmonton area.

While many people recalled bird strikes at their homes, there is little awareness of how residential window deaths might affect bird populations, he said. The data projects that about 180,000 birds die each year after crashing into windows of homes in the Edmonton area. Applied to national housing statistics, the research suggests 22 million birds are killed each year across the country. Moving feeders closer or further from windows may help, said researchers. "A feeder three to four metres from a window is bad because the bird has space to pick up lots of speed as it leaves the feeder," said Bayne. Fast-flying birds like sparrows and chickadees and aggressive birds like robins are apt to collide with windows placed too close to free food, he said. Researchers believe many window collisions are caused by in-flight mistakes. "It's called a panic flight; a bird startled by a cat or competing with other birds at the feeder may suddenly take flight and doesn't recognize the window as a hazard," said Bayne. Canadian homes kill 22M birds yearly, says U of A survey Bird feeders, treed yards compound problem, research suggests.

Sep 18, 2012 11:35 AM MT [CBC News](#)



*Photo by Myrna Pearman*

## OPTIONS FOR CORPORATE AND AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS: NATURE ALBERTA

Nature Alberta would like all affiliate club members to be aware of changes to NA's Extended Membership fees and options. The Extended Membership provides for a \$5 discount off NA's regular \$25 membership price to those belonging to member clubs. It is now available with both E-vers and hardcopy and covers both individual and family membership categories. There is an additional \$15 charge for those wishing hardcopy. Extended Nature Alberta membership individual or family for your club members would total \$20 with E-vers and \$35 for hardcopy.

### Individual Members

- **1 year Individual Membership - \$25.00 e-version; \$40.00 hard copy**
- Individual Members will receive the e-version of *Nature Alberta* magazine or for an additional surcharge, can receive a hard copy.
- Individual Members will receive 10% off NA merchandise and books except items that are already reduced or on special.
- All Individual Members may vote at the Annual General Meeting.

### YNC Family Members

- **1 year Family Membership - \$25.00 e-version; \$40.00 hard copy**
- Family Membership includes enrolment in the Young Naturalist program (will receive an e-version *Nature Wild Magazine*, notices of all YNC events, etc.).
- Family Members will receive the e-version of *Nature Alberta* magazine or for an additional surcharge, can receive a hard copy.
- Family Members will receive 10% off NA merchandise and books except items that are already reduced or on special.
- Each Family Membership has one vote at the Annual General Meeting.

### Extended Club Membership

- **1 year Extended Club Membership - \$20.00 e-version; \$35.00 hard copy**
- Available to any individual who is a current member in good standing of a Corporate or Affiliate club of Nature Alberta. The applicant must provide the name of their Corporate or Affiliate Club.
- Extended Members will receive the e-version of *Nature Alberta* magazine or for an additional surcharge, can receive a hard copy.

## PIPER CREEK RESTORATION AGRICULTURE PROJECT

ReThink Red Deer and supporting organizations have secured funds from Environment Canada's Environmental Damages Fund to restore a 25-acre section of Piper Creek near the City of Red Deer Landfill. Over the course of five years, the "Piper Creek Restoration Agriculture Project" will repair and improve the historical impacts on an important riparian and agricultural area in the Red Deer River watershed by regenerating and enhancing Red Deerians' understanding of, and relationship, with the natural world.

Project Partners include Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, RDRN, Waskasoon Environmental Education Society, Alberta Food Matters, the Canadian Association for Rain water management— Prairie Chapter, Red Deer County, Cows and Fish, and the City of Red Deer as landowner holding observer status.

The project Steering Committee has held its first set of Field Days in mid-October to share the initial results of the Riparian Health Inventory. They also drafted the riparian restoration plan for the site. The riparian restoration plan will then be used in a spring (2015) set of Field Days to inform a "restoration agriculture" plan for the site that will establish a perennial food system (Food forest) that complements the existing community garden plots successfully operating on the site.



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :

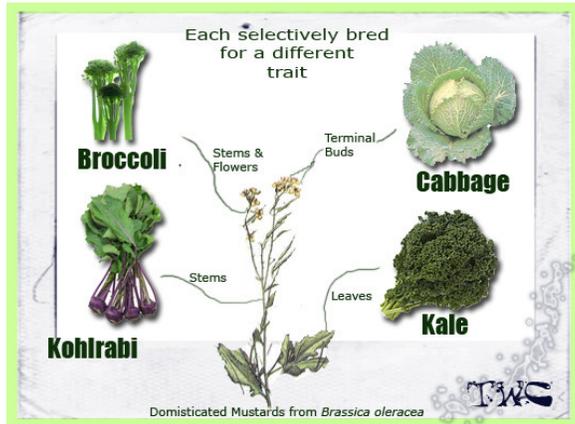


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# FLOWER FOCUS

## THE MUSTARD FAMILY



10:00 AM KWNC

November 19

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.

**November 9:** Bower Ponds to Heritage Ranch

**November 16:** Three Mile Bend

**November 23:** Coronation Park

**November 30:** Bower Woods

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

## FAREWELL BILL AND LIZ!

Longtime RDRN members, Bill and Liz Heinsen, have recently moved to Calgary. Friends gathered to bid them adieu in early October at an Open House hosted by Judy and Larry Boyd. Thank you, Bill and Liz, for all your years of hard work on behalf of RDRN!



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