



**Red Deer River Naturalists
Annual Banquet**
Friday, October 27th
Doors open 6:00; Dinner 6:30 pm
Pioneer Lodge, 4324 46a Ave, Red Deer
 Tickets \$30 each available at Kerry Wood Nature Centre

ENCOUNTERS WITH WOLVES AND SWIFT FOXES

Lu Carbyn has many years of experience working with wolves around the world and has studied Swift Foxes in Western Canada. Dr. Carbyn will draw on some of these experiences and explore the many fascinating aspects of the biology, management and conservation of these species. Promising to be an interesting evening, he will be challenging some often widely held modern myths about several controversial topics.



Myrna Pearman

Dr. Carbyn is an internationally recognized wildlife biologist specializing in the ecology, conservation and management of mammalian carnivores and their prey. He is an Emeritus Research Scientist with Science and Technology (Dept of Environment, Ottawa) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. He became a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service in 1967 and a research scientist in 1974. Carbyn has published and edited five books and also published over 100 scientific papers on general ecology, canid ecology, conservation and natural history. He has been a member of the (IUCN) Wolf and Canid Specialist Groups since 1978. In retirement he has pursued his interests in teaching, wildlife research, conservation and nature education. Recent awards include the Distinguished Service Award (2015) from The Wildlife Society and Queen's Medal (2013) for significant achievements by Canadians.



Colleen Gara/CanGeo Photo Club



Lu Carbyn

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SEASONAL SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF ALBERTA: MICROCHIROPTERAN STATUS, ONE YEAR LATER

Dr. Sally Stuart

In late June of last year, I began audio recording bats. Unfortunately, this date was too late to document the first arrivals in Central Alberta. This year, I was eagerly out recording in early May. I detected the first bat, apparently a lonely Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), on May 4. The following evening, both Little and Big Brown Bats were present. On May 7, the continuous recorder registered 36 bat calls: the bats were back! Unfortunately, the software is unable discriminate between bat species because, unlike birds, most bats do not produce identifiable songs. The equipment can detect the high frequency sounds they use to navigate their environment and to locate and capture prey, but not identify them to species. However, despite such limitations, it is still fascinating to use these detectors to learn more about our local bats.

During the summer months, bats are active from dusk to dawn. They commence their activities about 9.30 PM and return to their roosts about 5:30 AM.

On July 28 2016, 744 calls were recorded. Astoundingly 745 calls were recorded one year later on the same date! It was on this date, for both years, that the number of recorded calls peaked. Although they remained high throughout early August, by mid-August call numbers were starting to decline.

I placed the recorder in different habitats on our acreage and noted the following:

- Little Brown Bats were ubiquitous and found in large numbers in all habitats.
- The greatest species diversity was found in open areas close to water. Species recorded included many of the larger bats such as Silver-haired, Hoary and Eastern Red Bat.
- Treed areas were favoured by the smaller *Myotis* species and fewer larger bats.
- Fewer Big Brown Bats were recorded in 2017 than in 2016. It is not possible to determine if there was an actual decline, or if the difference was due to the inability of the software to differentiate between this species and the Silver-haired Bat.

Environmental factors—especially temperature, rain and wind speed—play a critical role in determining how many bats are out foraging on any particular night.

Weather can be a problem for bats, especially during May when the weather can be uncooperative at a time when their energy requirements are high.

Bats, like all mammals, are endothermic. They require a high-energy diet due to their small size and to the tremendous number of calories they burn while flying. Additional demands are placed on female bats, which give birth shortly after they emerge from hibernation or migrate north to Alberta.

Different strategies are used by different bat species to conserve energy. Little Brown Bats give birth to a single pup (unusual for a small mammal) and roost together in colonies (a strategy to help retain heat). They have to consume large quantities of food during the four to five summer months in order to gain sufficient fat to see them through their winter hibernation.

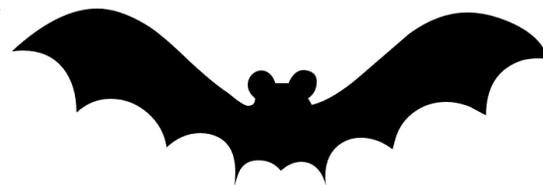
It appears that the larger Hoary Bat does not use such energy saving efficiencies. Hoary Bats roost individually in the foliage of trees (where they are far more exposed to the elements) and they typically give birth to twins. However, unlike Little Brown Bats, their young are precocial: they are born well developed and with some fur, and their full pelage develops rapidly. Apparently the fur on Hoary Bats is thick and has amazing insulating properties.

Hoary Bat research by Klug and Barclay at the University of Calgary suggests that demand for milk is low when bat pups are first born. If inclement weather hits, resulting in fewer flying insects, the females can decrease their physical activities (foraging) and enter an energy-saving state of torpor. If the mothers remain with their young at the roost site, the young are able to utilize the warmth from their mothers' bodies. Finally, since Hoary Bats migrate to Mexico and other warm places where they are able to continue feeding, they do not have the same need to gain extra fat.

By mid-September, my detector indicates that most of the smaller bats (e.g., Little Brown Bat) have left this area while other species are declining. On September 26, as I write this article, the last bat recorded at 2.55 AM was a Silver-haired Bat. On October 3 2016, the last bat I recorded also appeared to be a Silver-haired Bat.

The bats may have abandoned us for another year, but I have been left with vast amounts of sound data. I anticipate many hours of entertainment in the winter months ahead, trying

to make sense of what it all means.



SAVING THE VULTURE BABIES

Bev French

A legacy power pole adjacent to an abandoned farm house used by nesting Turkey Vultures has been a deadly hazard for the fledging chicks. Cindy Kemper, Avian Power Line Interaction Specialist with Bird on a Wire Environmental Services, informed me who to contact at ATCO. A big thanks from the Red Deer River Naturalists to John Dorn (Three Hills Division) and his crew for upgrading the old pole and transformer to current standards in May, before the nesting season began. They were supervised by a breeding pair of vultures flying high overhead.



Autumn Splendor
A WILDERNESS CELEBRATION

Saturday October 14, 2017
6:00 pm

at
**Fort Edmonton Park
Egge's Barn**
On Whitemud Dr, Edmonton

Details and Tickets: AlbertaWilderness.ca

AIA WORKSHOP: The Alberta Institute of Agrologists (AIA) Central Branch is offering a one day workshop: *Wetland Delineation, Classification, and Assessment* on Saturday, October 14, 2017.

The workshop is offered to AIA branch members in the area, and will explore methods to delineate wetland boundaries including plant identification, description of soil profiles, and evaluating hydrology through casual observation; activities will include description of landscape, vegetation and soil profiles. Contact shannon.yacyshyn@gov.ab.ca for details.

JJ Collett Natural Area
8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

BIRD FOCUS

NOTE: All hikes start at 1:30 PM.

October 7—Maskapatoon

October 14—Three Mile Bend. Meet in the first parking lot on your right.

October 21—River Bend Golf Course. Meet in the parking lot on your right at the bottom of the entrance to River Bend

October 29—Heritage Ranch

November 4—Mackenzie Trails

November 18—Bower Woods. Meet on Selkirk Drive in front of #35.

November 25—Kin Canyon. Meet at the Rotary picnic parking lot.

December 2—Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary. Meet at KWNC

December 9—Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary. Meet at KWNC

STEWARDS OF ALBERTA PROTECTED AREAS

ASSOCIATION MEETING

Strathcona Wilderness Centre

Saturday, 27 October 2017 at 9:00 AM

With guest speakers

Kecia Kerr - "CPAWS 2015 Conservation Blueprint for Northern Alberta & the Pathway to 17%"

&

Hubert Taube - "Project 85 Update and Looking Forward"

<http://sapaastewards.com>

FLOWER FOCUS

October 18 • 10:00 AM • KWNC

Flowers of the Yukon

Caroline Harris



Photo by Don Wales



A celebration of Dorothy Hazlett's life will take place on Saturday October 14 at 2:00 PM, Gaetz Memorial United Church Hall, 4758 Ross Street, Red Deer.

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 \$30.00 for families. Membership period: January 1—December 31.

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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Photos by Myrna Pearman unless otherwise noted

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