

CENTRAL ALBERTA May Species Count 2021 Saturday May 29 and Sunday May 30

We invite you to help us document spring in Central Alberta! Count what you see—including flowering plants, insects, spiders, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals—in your own backyard, neighbourhood, park or natural area.



Tally sheets with submission instructions can be downloaded from <https://rdrn.ca/programs/species-counts/>



The May Species Count is a family friendly event!

To register, contact Judy Boyd at 403-358-1098



Photos by Doug Pedersen, Rick Tallas and Myrna Pearman

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RDRN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are dedicating this newsletter to the many good people who share their time and talents to make RDRN such a great organization. RDRN is entering a new era, as we welcome our first-ever paid staff person. We are also launching a new program that will encourage appreciation of our beautiful parklands, and will make our organization more vibrant and visible in the community.



President: Tony Blake: My hobbies are botany, fly-fishing and building barbed wire fences. I'm a retired CPR conductor but I still work every summer as a vegetation manager, treating everything from oil refineries to nature reserves. I have a long history with conservation NGO's including Trout Unlimited Canada, Nature Alberta, the Alberta Native Plant Council and the Ellis Bird Farm. I'm passionate about sustainable development (a.k.a. intelligent land use planning), preserving native biodiversity, protecting intact watersheds full of native trout, and keeping our existing wild habitats healthy and connected.



Vice President I - Myrna Pearman: I have been involved with RDRN since the early 1980s. Now that I'm retired from Ellis Bird Farm, I look forward to dedicating more of my time to this great organization. I have been RDRN President, chaired the speakers committee for about 10 years, and have been the newsletter editor for about 15 years. It is my great pleasure to now be the RDRN liaison for a wonderful initiative that we are spearheading: *Nature Central—Celebrating Our Wild Alberta Parklands*.



Vice President II - Rick Tallas: I have been with the RDRN for three years. I help with newsletter distribution and membership lists, and have recently overseen our computer upgrade. RDRN has a wonderful history and I am looking forward to helping RDRN continue to make a difference. I enjoy walking, hiking, golfing, the outdoors, gardening, birding and photography. I also enjoy doing volunteer work. I focus on lobbying the government to protect more of nature, to promote regenerative agriculture, to reduce pesticide use, and to promote the protection of our environment.



Treasurer - Bob Kruchten: I have been an RDRN member since 2000 and, for ten years, was the RDRN rep on the Board of Alberta Ecotrust. I am currently the Treasurer. After retiring as a school principal, I became the Bookstore Manager for the Friends of Kerry Wood Nature Centre, a position I retired from in 2018. I have been an advocate for conservation all my life and feel that it is important to hear both sides of all issues.



Dean Baayens: I am a new member on the RDRN board. I am a pharmacist and live with my family in Red Deer. My hobbies are fishkeeping, fishing, writing, tying flies, camping and hiking. I worked for Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC) for six years and have done projects/advocacy with Alberta Fish and Game Association and TUC. I am currently working on advocacy about gravel extraction in the headwaters of the North Raven River/Clear Creek. I'm a fish nerd who cares about wild places. I hope that I can help RDRN educate people about nature and conserve natural areas.

WELCOME TERESA NEUMAN ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER



I am excited to be part of the RDRN team for the next few months. Born and raised on a small mixed farm in the Horn Hill district, I have always had a deep connection to nature and specifically to the Parkland ecology of Central Alberta. As a naturalist, I consider myself to be an eager enthusiast. My formal training is in music, and I have spent many years working part time as a self-employed performer while working day jobs in arts administration.

Over the years, I have worked in various capacities with the Red Deer Museum and Archives, RDC Arts Centre, Red Deer Public Library, Kerry Wood Nature Centre and most recently spent 13 ½ years as Community and Program Facilitator for the Performing Arts, City of Red Deer.

I was a founding member of Citizens Action Group on the Environment, a grassroots initiative here in Red Deer in the 1990s, which sought to educate and empower citizens to reduce their ecological footprint through everyday living. This group's *Trees by 2000* project set a goal of planting one tree for every citizen of Red Deer (at that time 60,000) by the year 2000 through direct community planting bees, and the documenting of private plantings by individuals and groups. We also organized the used Paint Exchange, operated a Greenline, wrote regular articles for the *Red Deer Advocate* and did advocacy work throughout Central Alberta.

I took a voluntary retirement package from the City of Red Deer in the fall of 2020 to gain more balance between work and time spent with family, especially my three grandchildren, and to devote to other passions like growing and preserving food and being out doors. I am very pleased to be working with RDRN to help build sustainability for an exciting future for the organization.

Continued on page 3.

NATURE CENTRAL: CELEBRATING OUR WILD ALBERTA PARKLANDS



The Red Deer River Naturalists and Nature Alberta are pleased to introduce a new program: *NATURE CENTRAL: Celebrating Our Wild Alberta Parklands*. The program will be delivered by RDRN Naturalist in Residence, Shaye Hill, and RDRN Assistant Naturalist, Sherry Scheunert.



The goal of Nature Central is to celebrate the protected areas in Central Alberta and to increase the appreciation, thoughtful exploration, non-consumptive use and ecological understanding of these areas.

At present, there are various protected areas across the region that are owned and/or managed by different agencies, organizations and municipalities. Nature Central will provide, through a dedicated website (www.naturecentral.org), a central and publically accessible inventory of these areas. In addition to summarizing the information that has already been documented for each area, Shaye and Sherry will be conducting additional biophysical inventories of these properties and—in collaboration with the stakeholders—lead and deliver small and well-controlled public nature-based programs that are child, youth and family friendly. They will also be leading and encouraging public involvement in citizen science projects.



Funding for this project has been provided by the Janet (Jaffaray) Tack bequest, ECO Canada and through private donations (Dr. Cliff Soper, Anonymous).

Watch for website updates as well as social media posts about this new and exciting initiative!

NATURALIST IN RESIDENCE: SHAYE HILL

I was born and raised in the Lacombe area, developing a love of nature at a young age. I am taking my B.Sc. in Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George, BC.

I spent two summers at Ellis Bird Farm, leading programs, conducting bird inventories, conducting bat counts and undertaking my own research project on Mountain Bluebirds. I am excited to lead the Nature Central program.

I look forward to learning about the biodiversity of Central Alberta, and helping provide people with the opportunity to go outdoors and experience first hand the wonders of Central Alberta and to appreciate these protected areas!



ASSISTANT NATURALIST: SHERRY SCHEUNERT

I was born and raised in Huxley, AB, with Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park and Tolman Bridge as my playgrounds. I attended Red Deer College and the University of Alberta, graduating with a B.A. in Recreation Administration. My work and volunteer experiences have included leading various programs in recreation, health care and the performing arts. I still enjoy camping, hiking, biking, skiing and paddling.

My environmental activism began in 1990 with CAGE (Citizens Action Group on the Environment). I then became involved with RDRN, taking on the roles of secretary and monthly program coordinator.

I love event planning and look forward to a great summer with Shaye and learning lots more about the beauty and diversity of the Parklands of Central Alberta.



SIGNS OF SPRING WALK: MAY 19TH

Don Wales' Flower Focus meeting will be an outdoor walk "Looking for Signs of Spring." Meet at Kerry Wood Nature Center at 10:00 AM. An added bonus will be that our new Nature Central team members, Shaye Hill and Sherry Scheunert, will be joining the group. We will be distancing and masks will be available (or bring your own flower-themed mask). Should the weather be not conducive for a walk, the meeting will be virtual, to be announced three days prior. **Please register to attend this event by emailing don@hexapod.ca**

JUDY BOYD: I joined RDRN in 1998 and was on the Board until 2016. I have worked with the Young Naturalist Club, ran the Bird Focus Group, organized summer field trips and am currently the coordinator for the Central Alberta May Species and Christmas Bird Counts. I have also been the May Species Count Provincial Compiler since 2006.



SUSAN VAN DER HOEK:

I was a board member in 2017 and 2018, Co-Secretary in 2019 and Secretary in 2020. I now oversee the RDRN website, am the co-editor of the newsletter and handle RDRN social media. I am a bookkeeper, married with two grown children and two grand daughters. I enjoy watching birds and am interested in native plants, trees and wildlife.



Board Notes

Greetings from the Board - Tony, Don, Rod, Bob, Daryl, Rick, Anto, Travis, Kirstin, Christine, Dean, Myrna

- Our new Strategic Plan is now complete and we are excited to share it and move it into action. Thank you to Shari Hanson of Alberta Community Development for her excellent support with this work.
- Our committees (Finance and Planning; Policy; Human Resources; Communications; Education and Issues) continue the work of defining roles, setting priorities and put the work of the Strategic Plan into action.
- Policies and Procedures are being updated
- Nature Central staff are busy planning a summer of research and public education.
- Temporary Administrative Manager Teresa Neuman is settling into a variety of duties and projects, with a focus on organizational structure and sustainability.
- We continue to advocate for our region's ecological integrity. The Issues Committee is setting priorities and closely following and providing feedback into the coal policy consultations and other issues.
- We are working on updating RDRN letterhead, membership brochures and other communication materials.
- We are working on a financial plan that will best ensure the sustainability of the organization, invest funds including the Janet (Jaffary) Tack bequest, and manage our financial resources to achieve our objectives now and into the future.
- Meetings and programs remain online as ZOOM events for the most part, but may move into the open air as weather and health regulations allow.
- A new computer has been purchased and set up in the RDRN office that will help improve the efficiency of our administrative work.

Facebook: 504
(Milestone of over 500!); Twitter: 263;
Instagram: 206

We are looking for two new board members and we need to fill the position of Secretary. If you are interested in joining us, please email rdrn.nature@gmail.com.

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 PM on the fourth Thursday of most months by Zoom. Non-members are welcome.

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

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Our thanks to NOVA for underwriting the cost of newsletter printing



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Poster by
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