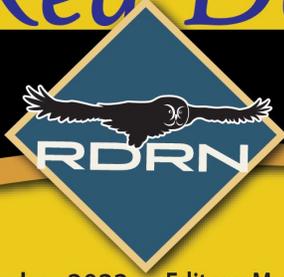


# The Red Deer River Naturalist



November 2022 Editors: Myrna Pearman & Susan van der Hoek



## Danika Schramm presents The Birds and The Genes: How events of the past and present shape the genetics of bird populations

**November 24, 2022  
7:00pm**

**Kerry Wood Nature Centre  
6300 -45 Avenue, Red Deer**

Danika Schramm is a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge working under Dr. Theresa Burg. Her primary research investigates how contemporary and historical processes influence the genetic makeup of Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet populations. Understanding the population genetics of a species can be critical for developing conservation efforts. In addition to her genetic research, Danika is an experienced Bird Bander, having spent time in both Belize and western Canada catching and banding passerines. You can often find her outdoors photographing birds and other wildlife.



Photos by Danika Schramm



Non-members are welcome!

HOSTED BY



# Board Notes

## Rick Tallas, President

- Our thanks to Chris Olsen for continuing to lead the popular Bird Focus walks every Saturday morning. This is a wonderful opportunity to view birds and walk through nature at a variety of locations.
- The Flower Focus group led by Don Wales continues to offer wonderful presentations.
- Sally Stuart, our Speaker Coordinator, has lined up some excellent speakers for the coming months.
- A big thank you to Susan van der Hoek for handling our social media, and to the Communication Committee for spearheading our new website initiative. We look forward to its launch in December.
- Thank you to Myrna Pearman and Susan van der Hoek for doing such an outstanding job on the monthly newsletter, and to Doug Pedersen for designing our posters.
- Dr. Natalia Lifshitz has continued as our Education and Program Coordinator, working with Joey Temple and Myrna Pearman. Check out the website for updated information. [www.naturecentral.org](http://www.naturecentral.org)
- We continue to look for Board members, committee members, and volunteers to help us set up at our regular monthly meetings.

*Feel free to reach out to us at [rdrn.nature@gmail.com](mailto:rdrn.nature@gmail.com) if you have any questions or comments*

**UPCOMING TALKS:** Cliff Wallis, well known Naturalist, Biologist and Director of the AWA, will be giving a presentation about preserving our Grasslands at Sunnybrook United Church on **Saturday, November 26**. Please register by calling 403-347-6073. Doors open at 9:30 AM, with the presentation running from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Please bring a bag lunch.

**Myrna Pearman** will be giving a presentation, *Beauty Everywhere: The Sequel* at the Rimbe Library on **Thursday, November 10** at 7:00 PM. Free and registration is not required.

## RDRN IS HIRING

### 1. Education and Program Coordinator:

January 1, 2023 to September 15, 2023: 37 weeks/16 hrs per week @\$26/hr

#### Job Description:

Under the direction and supervision of the RDRN Engagement Committee:

- promote the Nature Central program
- promote the Habitat Steward program
- develop and lead outdoor education/engagement programming that supports the RDRN strategic plan
  - lead at least one outdoor event at a rural protected area each month
  - promote RDRN and RDRN events/activities to the wider community
  - conduct other educational programming as directed
- assist with content management and maintenance of the Nature Central website
- post regular Nature Central-related updates on social media
- assist with content management/updating the ArcGIS Story Map
- encourage public input (stories, data, observations, images, video footage) related to protected areas
- assist with the documentation and delivery of Habitat Steward signs
- assist with grant writing

Please send resumes and inquiries to [rdrn.nature@gmail.com](mailto:rdrn.nature@gmail.com). Application Deadline: November 30, 2022

### 2. Recording Secretary

RDRN is looking to hire a Recording Secretary, starting January 1, 2023. Duties will include attending the AGM as well as monthly board meetings, taking minutes, distributing minutes in a timely manner, assisting the President in drafting the agenda, and assisting with other administrative tasks as time permits. Website content management experience is an asset. Please send resumes and inquiries to [rdrn.nature@gmail.com](mailto:rdrn.nature@gmail.com). Application Deadline: November 30, 2022



**BUFFALO LAKE NATURE CLUB: ROBERT EDWARDS—BUSHCRAFTING**

Thursday November 17 @ 7:00 PM

St. George's Anglican Church 4817-51 St, Stettler



# BIRD FOCUS GROUP

By Chris Olsen

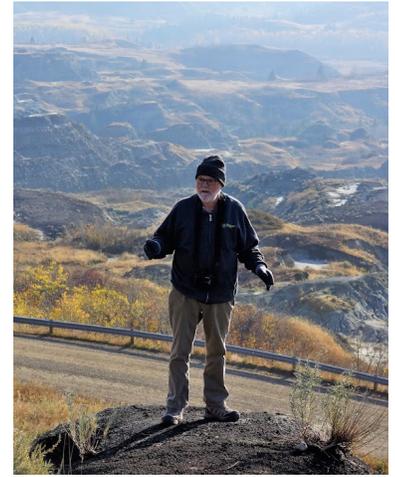
November 5 – Riverbend Upper trails – meet in the main parking lot  
November 12 – Bower Woods – meet on the street across from 37 Selkirk Blvd  
November 19 – Crimson Lake Amerada Trail – meet at the parking lot  
November 26 – McKenzie Trails – meet in the main parking lot  
December 3 – Riverbend Perimeter Trail – meet in the main parking lot  
December 10 – Gaetz Lake and wind-up – meet at Kerry Wood Nature Centre  
December 18 – Central Alberta Christmas Bird Count

*All walks start at 10:00 AM and usually finish between noon and 1:00 PM*

## DRY ISLAND TRIP REPORT

We started with a cool, foggy morning, but Dry Island Buffalo Jump Park was still spectacular in the morning light, and the day soon became fine and warm - perfect fall walking weather for an extended outing. Special thanks to our most excellent guide for the day, Tim Schowalter! Our 11 km walk took our group of 20 along the river and full circle around and over the 'Island'. We visited some of the Tyrrell Museum dig sites and other more recent fossil beds. While the geology, paleontology and natural history of the Park were the focus for the day, we managed some birding along the way, picking up 15 species. The Common Ravens harassed both a Red-tailed Hawk and a Golden Eagle overhead, and we also saw our first Northern Shrikes and American Tree Sparrows for the year. A late Mountain Bluebird, a Boreal Chickadee, and some Golden-crowned Kinglets were other notable in this most remarkable mixture of habitat and terrain.

*Photos by Lynette Eileen*



## FLOWER FOCUS

**NOVEMBER 16 @ 10:00 AM, KWNC**

### *Plants and Flowers of Kilimanjaro with Don Wales*

Join Don as he explores the five ecological zones of Africa's highest peak, Mt. Kilimanjaro (while trying to breathe!).

*Photos by Don Wales*

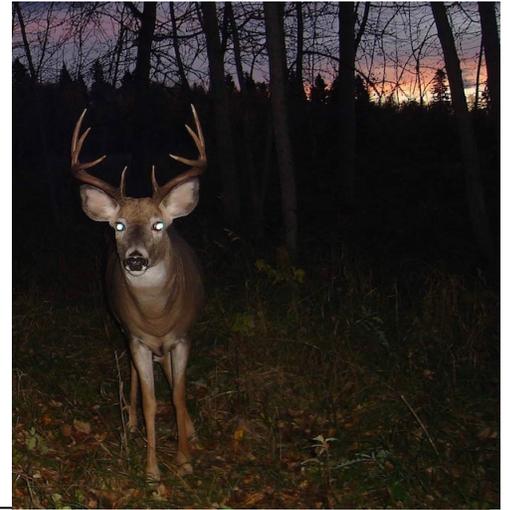


# IN THE ALBERTA WILDERNESS: THE SUNRISE BUCK!

By Don Auten

The start of November brings on the Whitetail rut, an exciting time of year for the deer and for me.

My trail cameras started showing an increase in buck activity about mid-October. I've captured some nice video of the bucks scent marking and polishing their antlers on tree rubs. I've also been fortunate to get some great photos, such as this Sunrise Buck.



## DID YOU KNOW *By Susan van der Hoek*

A group of snakes is called a bed, den, pit or nest, but a group of rattlesnakes is referred to as a rhumba or rumba. There are six snake species in Alberta: Prairie Rattlesnake



(*Crotalus viridis*), which is venomous (bottom right); Bullsnake (*Pituophis catenifer sayi*), which is non-venomous but uses constriction; Western Hognose Snake (*Heterodon nasicus nasicus*), which is venomous to prey (bottom left); and three species of garter snakes, which are also venomous to their prey: Wandering Garter Snake (*Thamnophis elegans*), Plains Garter Snake (*Thamnophis radix*) and Red-sided Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) (top right).

In the fall, snakes move to dens called hibernacula. Prairie Rattlesnakes, Bullsnares, and Wandering and Plains Garter Snakes often hibernate together in communal hibernacula. (No, they do not eat each other!) Hibernacula, which are essential for their survival, are typically located along river valleys, coulees and within transition zones between riparian and upland habitats. Snakes always return to the same hibernaculum year after year, so it's crucial they are not disturbed or destroyed by human activity, at any time of year.



**Social Media: 713 Facebook Members 305 Twitter Followers 380 Instagram Followers**

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 PM on the fourth Thursday of most months at Kerry Wood Nature Centre. Non-members are welcome.

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

Box 785 Red Deer, AB T4N 5H2 Phone/Fax: 403.347.8200

rdrn.nature@gmail.com  
www.rdrn.ca  
wearenaturalwise.blogspot.com  
Facebook  
Twitter #RDriverNats  
Instagram @RDriverNats

*Our thanks to ABACUS Datagraphics for generously donating the printing of this newsletter and NOVA Chemicals for covering postage costs.*

Cover Poster by Doug Pedersen

Photos, unless otherwise noted, by Myrna Pearman

