

The Red Deer River Naturalist



September 2023

Editors: Myrna Pearman & Susan van der Hoek



September 28, 2023

7:00 PM KERRY WOOD NATURE CENTRE, RED DEER

Nature Central Summary

With Cathy Steele



Cathy, the RDRN Liaison for Nature Central, will summarize the activities and successes of the 2023 Nature Central Program.

Cathy is a RDRN board member and keen naturalist who enjoys hiking, birding, kayaking and photographing the great outdoors.



Exploring Svalbard

With Myrna Pearman



In May 2023, Myrna Pearman spent 10 days aboard a ship exploring Svalbard, Norway. Hear about her adventures above the Arctic Circle, photographing dramatic landscapes, polar bears, seabirds and other wildlife.

Myrna, a RDRN board member, is an enthusiastic wildlife photographer and nature writer.



SPONSORED BY



All are Welcome

JUDY BOYD'S MAY 27 & 28TH SPECIES COUNT SUMMARY Our thanks to Judy for overseeing both the Christmas Bird Count and the May Species Counts. Welcome to Shelley-ane and John Goulet, our new compilers.

23 Snow Goose	3 Lesser Yellowlegs	136 Black-capped Chickadee	4 Tennessee Warbler
906 Canada Goose	4 Bonaparte's Gull	1 Boreal Chickadee	1 Nashville Warbler
2 Trumpeter Swan	13 Franklin's Gull	5 N. Rough-winged Swallow	23 Common Yellowthroat
431 Blue-winged Teal	28 Ring-billed Gull	188 Purple Martin	2 American Redstart
16 Cinnamon Teal	98 Black Tern	525 Tree Swallow	162 Yellow Warbler
226 Northern Shoveler	5 Common Tern	46 Bank Swallow	1 Blackpoll Warbler
278 Gadwall	7 Common Loon	82 Barn Swallow	34 Yellow-rumped Warbler
20 American Wigeon	1 Double-crested Cormorant	1259 Cliff Swallow	1 Wilson's Warbler
805 Mallard	47 American White Pelican	8 Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1 Western Tanager
12 Northern Pintail	6 American Bittern	4 Red-breasted Nuthatch	28 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
32 Green-winged Teal	8 Great Blue Heron	23 White-breasted Nuthatch	
59 Canvasback	2 White-faced Ibis	126 House Wren	
104 Redhead	11 Turkey Vulture	4 Marsh Wren	
21 Ring-necked Duck	11 Osprey	451 European Starling	
343 Lesser Scaup	12 Northern Harrier	12 Gray Catbird	
216 Bufflehead	1 Sharp-shinned Hawk	22 Mountain Bluebird	
48 Common Goldeneye	3 Cooper's Hawk	1 Veery	
2 Hooded Merganser	4 Bald Eagle	1 Swainson's Thrush	
3 Common Merganser	14 Swainson's Hawk	277 American Robin	
125 Ruddy Duck	69 Red-tailed Hawk	1 thrush sp.	
39 Duck Species	7 Great Horned Owl	73 Cedar Waxwing	
5 Ruffed Grouse	1 Great Gray Owl	283 House Sparrow	
4 Gray Partridge	2 Northern Saw-whet Owl	5 Evening Grosbeak	
7 Pied-billed Grebe	15 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	27 House Finch	
39 Horned Grebe	35 Downy Woodpecker	21 Purple Finch	
52 Red-necked Grebe	23 Hairy Woodpecker	187 American Goldfinch	
528 Eared Grebe	11 Pileated Woodpecker	51 Chipping Sparrow	
2 Western Grebe	23 Northern Flicker	119 Clay-coloured Sparrow	
161 Rock Pigeon	1 Woodpecker sp.	2 Lark Sparrow	
12 Eurasian Collared-Dove	8 American Kestrel	9 Dark-eyed Junco	
42 Mourning Dove	1 Merlin	6 White-crowned Sparrow	
22 Ruby-th. Hummingbird	1 Peregrine Falcon	90 White-throated Sparrow	
15 Sora	1 Prairie Falcon	37 Vesper Sparrow	
90 American Coot	13 Western Wood-Pewee	2 LeConte's Sparrow	
1 Yellow Rail	2 Alder Flycatcher	80 Savannah Sparrow	
5 Sandhill Crane	91 Least Flycatcher	69 Song Sparrow	
5 Black-necked Stilt	6 Eastern Phoebe	6 Lincoln's Sparrow	
34 American Avocet	4 Western Kingbird	2 Swamp Sparrow	
39 Killdeer	49 Eastern Kingbird	11 sparrow sp.	
11 Marbled Godwit	35 Warbling Vireo	208 Yellow-headed Blackbird	
2 Least Sandpiper	38 Red-eyed Vireo	25 Western Meadowlark	
57 Wilson's Snipe	1 Loggerhead Shrike	39 Baltimore Oriole	
74 Wilson's Phalarope	35 Blue Jay	1148 Red-winged Blackbird	
38 Spotted Sandpiper	164 Black-billed Magpie	108 Brown-headed Cowbird	
2 Solitary Sandpiper	266 American Crow	225 Brewer's Blackbird	
3 Greater Yellowlegs	140 Common Raven	46 Common Grackle	
9 Willet		5 Ovenbird	

Number of Species: 148

Number of Birds: 12,629

Highlights: Highest recorded numbers since 2000: Snow Goose, White-throated Sparrow, House Wren, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Least Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Pileated Woodpecker (tied with numbers counted in 2013 and 2019). First recorded sighting since 2000: Nashville Warbler. Second recorded sighting of Yellow Rail since 2008.

The number of participants was down from last year's 90 to 68. The number of bird species went down from last year's 151 to 148. (The highest recorded number of species since 2000 was in 2008: 153.) The count of individual birds was down from last year's 24,016 to 12,629.

Mammals: Richardson's Ground Squirrel, Mule Deer, Coyote, Pronghorn, Snowshoe Hare, Red Squirrel, Red Fox

Amphibians: Boreal Chorus Frog, Wood Frog, Canadian Toad

Insects: Mourning Cloak, Tiger Swallowtail, Bumblebee, Spring Azure, Alfalfa Butterfly, Cabbage butterfly, Blue Damselfly, Sphinx Moth, Pearl Crescent, Common Alpine, Mustard White, Boreal Blue, Red-winged Clickhopper, Water Strider, Whirligig Beetle, Red Ant, Black Ant, White Admiral

Details:

Start Time: 7:00 AM
End Time: 9:00 PM
Total Mileage: 1,214.5 km
Total Hours: 164.5
Hours Feeder Watching: 71.25

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 4 to 26°C; Wind speed: 5 to 40 km/hr.; Wind direction: variable; Cloud cover: 05-80%
Day 2: Temp. 10 to 27°C; Wind speed: 1 to 40 km/hr; Wind direction: variable; Cloud cover: 0-100%



RDRN Social Media:

971 Facebook Members

311 X/Twitter Followers

433 Instagram Followers

Board Notes

By Rick Tallas, President

- I have seen a flock of Canada Geese flying south, some warblers moving through my back yard, the poplars are starting to colour up, and darker nights and frost warnings are a few signs that summer is ending. I hope everyone had a great summer.
- Fall is a wonderful time of year, and I am looking forward to RDRN's monthly newsletters, speaker series and gatherings.
- Chris Olsen continues to offer the weekly birding events. Don Wales will continue doing Flower Focus session but is looking for someone to take over leading this group. We will have more details in the October newsletter.
- As always, I would like to thank our wonderful volunteers and board members for their continued dedication. Please contact us for any suggestions or if you would like to volunteer. We are always looking for new board and committee members.

Nature Central 2023 was a success! Abbey van Heuvel, our Naturalist-in-Residence, worked hard to visit sites and promote the program. We were hoping that she could give a summary at the September meeting, but she will be leaving beforehand for a field course in Costa Rica, so Cathy Steele, RDRN Liaison for Nature Central, will be delivering the presentation.



May Species Count Participants: Thank you!

Bill Barritt, Chelsea Beach, Ngaere Blake, Tony Blake, Judy Boyd, Larry Boyd, Lois Burkinshaw, Phil Burkinshaw, Colleen Caddy, Jerry Caddy, John Caddy, Ed Cameron, June Campbell, Maureen Carey, Dave Deas, Dave Dewald, Judy Fenger, Morris Flewwelling, Eileen Ford, Estelle Froese, Sheila Gongaware, John Goulet, Shelley-Anne Goulet, Gordon Graham, Sharon Graham, Connie Haustein, Marlene Ironside, Roy Jamieson, Isabelel Kunschuh, Marion Larose, Caitlyn Lawrence, Jim Leslie, Sue Leslie, Claudia Lipski, Carol Lounsbury, Shelley Macauley, Kent Macfarlane, Gwen Marshall, Dennis McKernan, Nan McKernan, Mark Meunier, Ruby Meunier, Dorothy Murray, Sandy Murray, Greg Olson, Myrna Pearman, Doug Pedersen, Cindy Piriard, Mike Piriard, Jim Potter, Rose Primus, Linda Prockiw, Darlene Reimche, Heather Saunders, Georgi Schinnour, Becca Smith, Cathy Steele, Will Steele, Joanne Susut, Bev Thompson, Abbey Van Heuvel, Rick Varjassy, Betty Volker, Neil Volker, Gordy Waddy, Diane Wilton, Gail Wiseman, Jim Wiseman

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wilderness-wildlife-human-interaction-tickets-694979391067?aff=oddttdcreator>

IN THE ALBERTA WILDERNESS! BY DON AUTEN

This is one of the best cougar photos I have captured on my trail cameras so far. In Alberta, the cougar population has been increasing for many years and the number of captures on my trail cams have increased as well. The official Alberta population estimate is around 3,000 but I believe their numbers could be a lot higher than that. Cougars are so elusive and they leave very little sign for us to notice. We have cougars in every county in Alberta and yet very few sightings occur.



This Cougar spent a couple minutes in front of my camera and left 11 photos for me to review and enjoy. The first ten photos were of various body parts (tail, hip, etc.). Finally, for the last photo, he turned and exposed his face resulting in this great capture!

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) will be hosting a CABIN (Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network) Sampling Event on September 17 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at Fort Normandeau. The event will collect and analyze benthic macro invertebrates in order to assess water body health. RDRWA is looking for six to eight volunteers to join them to learn about invertebrate sampling and get the opportunity to try out the sampling methods. If you are interested, please contact outreach@rdrwa.ca

Register now for the ALMS 2023 Annual Conference!
September 12-13 in Sylvan Lake!
www.alms.ca/2023-annual-conference
Registration Closes September 5th

CEI Cochrane Ecological Institute
Where Ideas Become Reality

Presents
Wilderness, Wildlife
and
Human Interaction
Symposium

Bragg Creek
Community Centre
October 14, 2023
9:30 AM to 5:00PM

QR Code for Details

DID YOU KNOW: BY SUSAN VAN DER HOEK

A group (shoal, school) of trout is called a hover. There are seven species of trout in Alberta: **Brook** (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) is native to eastern Canada and was introduced to Alberta in 1903; **Brown** (*Salmo trutta*) are native to Europe, Asia and North Africa and were introduced to Alberta in 1924; **Bull** (*Salvelinus confluentus*), the official fish of Alberta, are native and have the widest natural distribution of all trout in the province. They are listed as Sensitive/Threatened and must be released if caught; **Cutthroat** (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) Westslope Cutthroat trout are native to the mountain and foothill streams of southern Alberta within the Oldman and Bow Watersheds. They are listed as At-Risk/Threatened. Cutthroat Trout have been introduced into the Ram River west of Red Deer, and a few small, cold streams tributary to the North Saskatchewan, Athabasca and Peace rivers; **Golden** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss aguabonita*) are native to Sierra Nevada, California and were introduced to Alberta in 1959; **Lake** (*Salvelinus namaycush*) are native trout found in deep cold lakes, listed as Sensitive. **Rainbow** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) are native trout originally found only in parts of the Athabasca River basin and upper Peace River basin where they may be at risk. Alberta Fish and Wildlife stocks rainbow trout in lakes across the province, which are considered Secure. The Alberta Government owns and operates four fish hatcheries. Two function as brood trout stations housing adult fish reared to produce the eggs required for spawning various trout species to stock select water bodies across the province. One of the Alberta fish hatcheries is the Raven Brood Trout Station located south of Caroline, in central Alberta.

BIRD FOCUS WITH CHRIS OLSEN

Outings start at 10:00 AM unless otherwise noted. Trip schedule details and updates are posted on the RDRN Calendar of Events. Birders of all skill levels are welcome!

Navigation: Use the Alberta Discover Guide (app or free magazine), the Birding Trails Alberta website or your favorite mapping app. Call Chris (780-581-4430) if you have questions or potential medical issues. Participants are encouraged to carpool, but you are responsible for your own arrangements. **Safety:** Wear sturdy, water resistant hiking footwear. Some trails are on rough or steep terrain. Dress appropriately, and carry water and an energy snack.

September 2-16 – Fall break – no scheduled outing

September 23 – Springbrook Community Park – park in the small lot at the entrance to Tamarack Blvd

September 30 – Dry Island Buffalo Jump Park. This will be a full-day outing. Meet at the overlook at 10:00 AM; route will be set depending on moisture conditions. The full walk leads around and back over the 'Island.' It is an intermediate hike and there will be rough and steep portions. The hike will take about five hours from the day use area, so allow six hours overall (lunch and water along). If some people are hesitant about the steeper portions, they can join us for the early stages along the river and then circle back to return by those same trails (the first 2-3 km).

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

FLOWER FOCUS with Don Wales will resume in October.

ADOPT-A-STREAM: BY DON WALES

The goal of the Adopt-A-Stream program is to encourage folks to explore the riparian areas within the City of Red Deer and to possibly become stewards of sections of the river/tributary creeks.

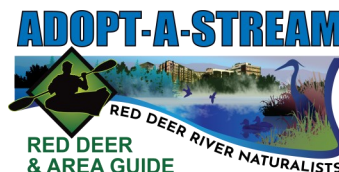
The original idea for Adopt-A-Stream came from Judy Boyd and Red Deer City engineer Gord Ludtke. The original paper manual was unfortunately lost in a file or bookshelf. We decided to go to a pamphlet format, available in pamphlet holders throughout the city.

One side of the Adopt-A-Stream guide is a map of Red Deer with the river and two major creeks divided into 11 manageable sections. Each section has information on access, trails, possible safety hazards, preferred viewpoints and the location of all aquatic and riparian interpretive signage. In addition to the maps, there is a section on stewardship and a Adopt a Stream registration contact.

The opposite side of the guide is packed with information on the origins of the creeks and river, descriptions of the plants and animals likely found in the riparian zone and information on the vertebrates and invertebrates found in the water bodies. There are links to other organizations concerned with water quality and web links to flow rates in Waskasoo Creek and the river. Throughout, there are blue "EXPLORE" boxes designed to encourage school groups, families and individuals to discover more about these water bodies and their surroundings. Almost all of our beloved parks are associated with creeks and river.

The Green Deer program at Kerry Wood has kindly offered to administer this Adopt a Stream program along with Adopt-A-Park, the Green Deer spring clean-up and the two River Clean-ups held in June and September.

We expect to have an official launch of the Adopt-A-Stream program in October but in the meantime, the guides are available at the Kerry Wood Nature Center, at the museum and will be handed out at the September 28 RDRN monthly meeting.



rdn.nature@gmail.com
www.rdn.ca
wearenaturalists.blogspot.com
Facebook
Twitter #RDriverNats
Instagram @RDriverNats

Our thanks to McElhanney 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