

The Red Deer River Naturalist



April 2025

Editors: Myrna Pearman & Susan van der Hoek



Join us for Jody Allair's Talk: The State of Canada's Birds:

How Data Can Inform Conservation Action



24



April 2025

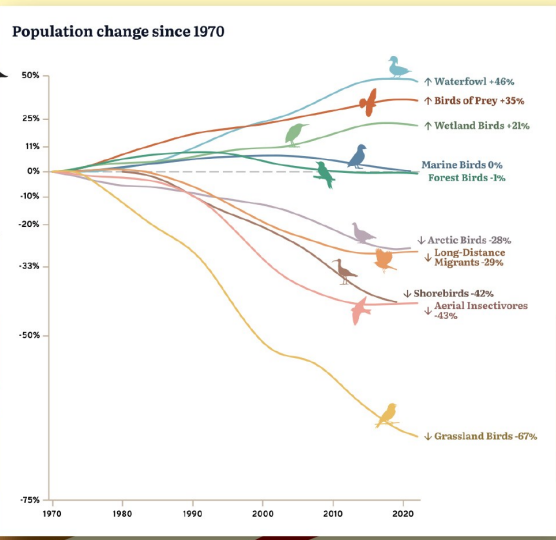
7:00 PM



Kerry Wood Nature Centre Red Deer

Developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Birds Canada, The State of Canada's Birds 2024 report summarizes bird population trends between 1970 and 2020. It also provides accessible, scientific insight into the population status of 463 Canadian bird species.

Jody Allair is an avid birder and naturalist who enjoys sharing his enthusiasm for the natural world. He is the Director of Communications at Birds Canada, where he manages the organization's public relations and media. He is the co-editor of *BirdWatch Canada* magazine, producer of The Warblers Podcast and a coordinator of eBird Canada. In addition to his 20+ years at Birds Canada, he has been leading birding tours with Eagle-Eye Tours since 2008.



All Photos by Jody Allair

All are Welcome

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BY RICK TALLAS, PRESIDENT

April showers bring May flowers. That has a nice ring to it!

I would like to say a big thank all the volunteers who helped us with the recent casino: Daryl Beck, Dennis McKernan, Shelly-anne Goulett, Richard Lemke, Rhian Engel, Dan duRet, Arwell Evans, John Goulet, Bob Kruchten, Don Wales, Rod Trentham, Keith Kline, Susan van der Hoek, Todd Nivens, Anto Davis and Judy Boyd. We appreciate your support!

On behalf of the board, I would like to thank Abbey van Heuvel for her work on Nature Central over the past months. She is now finished her contract. She has updated the website, kept up on social media, led trips and has been working with Ed Karpuk to update our Story Map. We are fortunate that Ed has been willing to share his expertise with us!

Each March, RDRN is pleased to host students from Red Deer Polytechnic for a special evening of student research presentations. Despite the weather, the March meeting was well attended and everyone was impressed by the students' research and professional presentations. Thank you students and their profls!

RDRN continues to strive to educate, raise awareness and take action to protect our environment. We write letters and support other nature organizations. I hope everyone has a wonderful April.

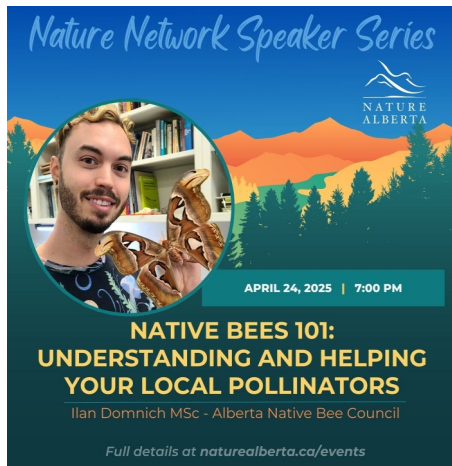
Board Notes

RDP Presenters, from left: Campbell Skelton, Kiara Micky, Ariana Dahmer, Joyce Agot, Jessie Thompson
Photo by Rod Trentham



UPCOMING EVENTS

<https://naturealberta.ca/events/>



BUFFALO LAKE NATURE CLUB

Finding and Tracking Alberta's Secretive Owls

Lisa Priestly, Strix Consulting

April 17, 7:00 PM

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

buffalolakenc@gmail.com

BIRDING TRIPS WITH CHRIS OLSEN

Outings start at 10:00 AM unless otherwise noted. Directions, maps and travel details (including schedule changes or destination updates) are posted on the RDRN website Calendar of Events. Birders of all skill levels are welcome!

April 5: Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary – meet in KWNC

April 12: McKenzie Trails Park to Riverbend – meet in the main parking lot at Mackenzie (shuttle as required)

April 19: Maskepetoon Park – meet in the playground parking lot (Kerry Wood Drive/Oak Drive)

April 26: Wainwright Sharp-tailed grouse Watch*

April 26-27: Tofield Snow Goose Festival (registration required for bus tours – see the Tofield website)

May 3: Heritage Ranch – meet in the first parking lot

May 10: Raven Brood Trout Station – Central Alberta Birding Trails map – meet at the picnic shelter

May 17: Alix Lake Nature Trail – meet at the municipal campground

May 24 -25: RDRN May Species Count – see the RDRN website for details

May 31: Kuhnen Park trails (Blackfalds) – meet in the main parking lot

June 7: Riverbend upper trails – meet in the main parking lot

June 14-15: Medicine Lake camping (Jun 13-15) and birding (kayaking circuit and walking trail** options)

June 21-22: Ferry Point/Bjorge Family Farm (camping weekend and/or Sat/Sun day trips - see RDRN website)

June 29: Radar Hill (meet at the end of the RR 260 access)

* Contact Chris for updated information (780-581-4430—olsencdel@gmail.com)

** Walking trail options (10:00 AM) at Medicine Lake (Saturday) or Crimson Lake (Sunday). Paddling in the afternoon and/or evening at Medicine Lake.

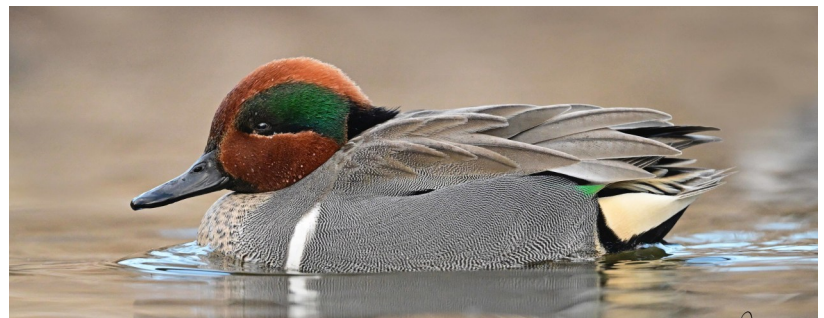
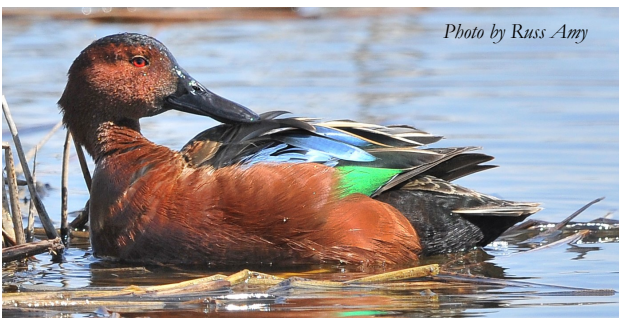
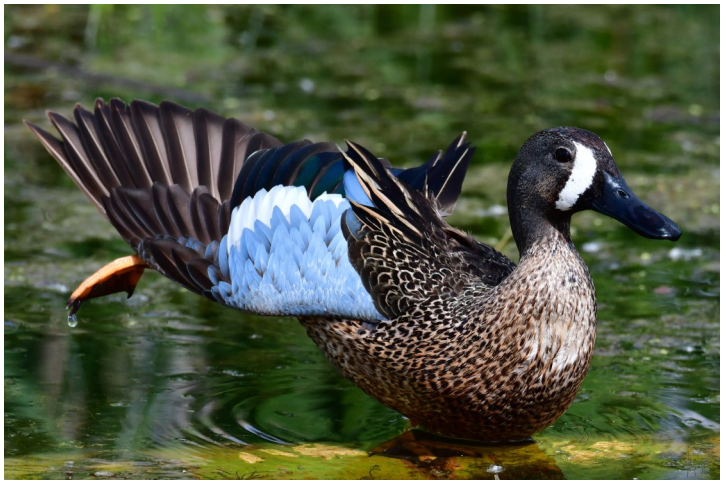
DID YOU KNOW? WITH SUSAN VAN DER HOEK

A group of teal is called a “spring” or “string.” There are three species of teal in Alberta: Blue-winged Teal (*Spatula discors*), Cinnamon Teal (*Spatula cyanoptera*) and Green-winged Teal (*Anas carolinensis*).

Teal are quite small dabbling ducks. When referring to ducks, "dabbling" describes a feeding behaviour where ducks tip their heads underwater to graze on vegetation, insects and larvae.

Compared to diving ducks, dabblers have more compact and rounded bodies, their legs are positioned towards the middle of their bodies for stability while floating, and they have longer, more flexible necks.

The Blue-winged Teal (right) breeds throughout much of Canada, with its core breeding range located in the Prairie Potholes region. The Cinnamon Teal (bottom left) breeds in low densities in the midcontinent Prairie-Parkland Region in southern Alberta. The Green-winged Teal (bottom right) is a widely distributed and relatively abundant species in Canada. Unlike the other two Alberta dabblers, the core breeding range of this species is in the boreal forest.



NATURE CENTRAL WITH ABBEY VAN HEUVEL



FINAL REPORT: Thank you to all who participated in our outings! We regret that a medical emergency necessitated cancelling the last outing of the season.

Significant contributions were made to the Nature Central program, including updating the Story Map by identifying an additional 38 properties and connecting with a GIS expert from Olds College to support the long-term goal of digitizing sites for easier visualization. Our internal database was updated with seven new properties and improved records, including GPS coordinates, bringing the total to 205 protected areas within a 100 km radius of Red Deer.

To boost public awareness, the “Site of the Week” feature was reintroduced with 18 social media posts, and several guided nature walks were organized to locations such as Burns Nature Park, Radar Hill and Kinvig. Additional efforts included contributing to the RDRN newsletter, improving website content, expanding the photo collection, and implementing site visit safety protocols.

Collectively, these initiatives have strengthened Nature Central’s ability to engage the public, improve access to conservation resources, and promote long-term environmental stewardship.

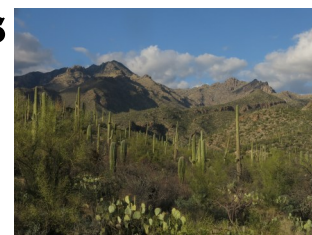


FLOWER FOCUS WITH DON WALES

Flowers of Ajo, Arizona

Presented by Caroline and Brian Harris

10:00 AM • Wednesday, April 16 • KWNC



IN THE ALBERTA WILDERNESS WITH DON AUTEN: DUCKS

Spring is here and the ice is slowly melting on rivers and lakes. A fun thing for me to do in the spring is to mount a trail camera on a float and poke it out into a lake. I have an amazing collection of trail cam duck photos collected over the last few years. Waterfowl waste no time migrating back to their nesting grounds. They travel north as fast as the melting ice reveals some open water. It's important they nest as early as possible so their young will be old enough in the fall to start the long journey back south to their wintering grounds.

This pair of Buffleheads were some of the first to arrive at my lake just after the ice went out last year and probably had to endure more than one of these spring snowstorms. Buffleheads nest in tree cavities, usually in holes that have been excavated by Northern Flickers.



Social Media: 3265 Facebook Members; 303 X Followers; 513 Instagram Followers

The Red Deer River Naturalists, the first natural history organization to be established in Alberta, was founded in 1898 and incorporated 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.

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Photos, unless otherwise noted, by Myrna Pearman



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