

BIRD FOCUS GROUP 2026 - SPRING SCHEDULE WITH CHRIS OLSEN

After our winter break, we'll return to weekly outings in the third week of March. The start of this new season takes us to some open waters with a Bow River (Calgary) excursion. Other spring activities will include the Sharp-tailed Grouse Watch (Wainwright) and Snow Goose Festival (Tofield), and some boreal birding walks, paddling and camping experiences.

Outings start at 10:00 AM unless otherwise noted. Directions, maps and travel details are posted on the RDRN website (rdrn.ca). Be sure to check the website (News and Events) calendar for schedule changes or updates. We're an inclusive group that learns from each other and birders of all skill levels are welcome!

March 21: Bow River, Calgary – Carburn Park, 0900-1200; Fish Creek Park, 1300-1700

March 28: Riverbend Park perimeter trail – meet in the main parking lot

April 4: Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary – meet in the Nature Centre

April 11: McKenzie Trails Park to Riverbend – meet in the main parking lot at Mackenzie (shuttle as required)

April 18: Maskepetoon Park – meet in the playground parking lot (Kerry Wood Drive/Oak Drive)

April 25: Wainwright Sharp-tailed grouse Watch – Advance registration required – call or email Chris to book

April 25-26: Tofield Snow Goose Festival – Advance registration required for bus tours – see Tofield website

May 2: Heritage Ranch – meet in the first parking lot

May 9: Raven Brood Trout Station walk, 0900-1200 from the picnic shelter; Beaver Lake Kayaking 1300-1600

May 16: Alix Lake Nature Trail – meet at the municipal campground

May 23-24: RDRN May Species Count – see the RDRN website for details

May 30: Kuhnen Park trails (Blackfalds) – meet in the main parking lot

June 6: Riverbend upper trails – meet in the main parking lot

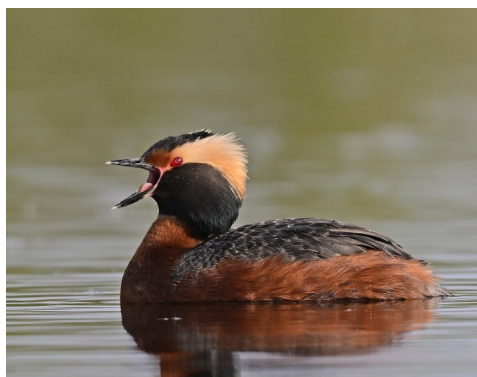
June 13-14: Medicine Lake camping (Jun 12-14) and birding (kayaking circuit and walking trail options)

June 20-21: Ferry Point/Bjorge Family Farm (camping weekend and/or Sat/Sun day trips - see RDRN website)

June 27: Radar Hill (meet at the end of the Rge Rd 260 access)

Navigation: Use the Alberta Discover Guide (app or free magazine), the Birding Trails Alberta website, or your favorite mapping app on your mobile device. Call Chris (780-581-4430) if you have questions. Participants are encouraged to carpool, but you are responsible for your own arrangements.

Safety: Wear sturdy, water resistant hiking footwear. Carry ice cleats as required by the season. Some trails are on rough or steep terrain. Carry water and an energy snack. Wear layers and carry rain gear, a hat, insect repellent, sunscreen and bear spray as required by season and site conditions. Let your group leader know if there are any potential medical issues. Unless otherwise noted, we leave our meeting point at 10:00 AM and local trips usually finish by about 1:00 PM.



EAST LINCOLN VICTORY!

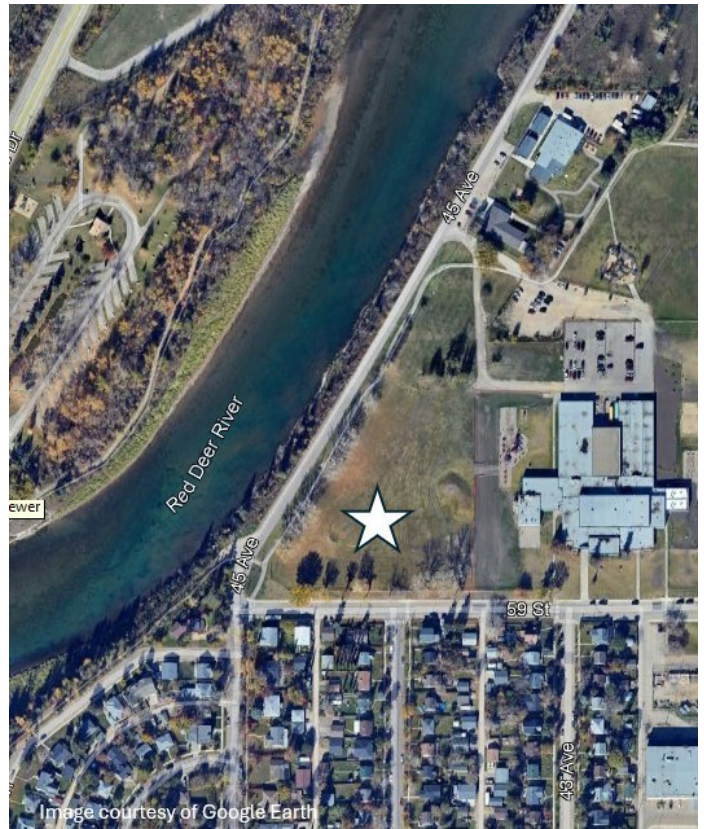
BY BRENDA GARRETT

On February 19, the Red Deer Subdivision and Appeal Board (SDAB) upheld the Municipal Planning Commission's refusal of East Lincoln Properties' development permit application for a 48-unit multifamily building at 4240-59 St. SDAB based their refusal on the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), stating specifically that the application did not comply with two of the requirements laid out in the Area Redevelopment Plan's Environmental Character Area including (1) the development did not use permeable and semi-permeable paving surfaces as outlined in section 5.6(6) of the ARP which would impact ground water recharge, and (2) the development would adversely affect the character of the area, as outlined in section 5.6(15) of the ARP, by being too modern, excessive in mass, form, and height, and sited too close to 59th Street. The full decision can be found at [SDAB-006-2025---Final-Decision---February-20,-2026.pdf](#)

The development permit was opposed by RDRN, the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary Committee, the Waskasoo Environmental Education Society, the Waskasoo Community Association, the Red Deer Public School Board, Camille School, as well as by approximately 90 Red Deer residents who submitted personal letters of opposition.

East Lincoln Properties can appeal the decision to the Court of Appeal on a question of law or jurisdiction. They can also reapply for this or another development on this property in the future. However, this decision underscores the legality of the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan and the Environmental Character Statement's insistence on development that fits the character of the area described in the Area Redevelopment Plan as a wide open sense of space that is not common in other areas of the City; natural, native vegetation, mature trees and minimal building coverage; minimal fencing; and buildings that are typically one storey.

Our thanks to Brenda, Rod, Chris and other concerned RDRN members for working tirelessly on opposing this proposal.



EVENING GROSBEAK NAMED CANADA'S 2026 AVIAN AMBASSADOR

The Evening Grosbeak has been chosen by Birds Canada as our 2026 Avian Ambassador bird species. Found across the boreal, montane and northern mixed forests, Canada's population represents roughly two-thirds of the global population.

Rarely seen east of the Rockies before the mid-1800s, they subsequently moved eastward with each winter migration, reaching the east coast in the winter of 1910–1911. Their rapid expansion may have been facilitated by a new, abundant and secure winter food source—ornamental Manitoba maples that were widely planted in rural yards and urban subdivisions. According to Birds Canada, the population has declined since 1970, with Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data showing an 83% decline and Christmas Bird Count data showing a 94% decline.

Many factors have been implicated in their decline, including climate change, large-scale forestry operations that remove the diverse old growth forests upon which they depend for nesting (in one study, no Evening Grosbeaks were found nesting in forests that were less than 100 years old), other habitat destruction and the aerial spraying for spruce budworm.

