WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

BOW VALLEY NATURALISTS
BOX 1693, BANFF, ALBERTA, T1L 1B6

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Shelley and Michael

Aileen Harmon 1912 - 2015
Sunset Lookout, Banff National Park
Photo Courtesy Carole Harmon

LET THEM KNOW YOUR MIND…

Contact information for letting politicians, governments and land managers know what you're thinking.

COMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

BVN meetings and natural history presentations take place on the 4th Tuesday of every until through April and begin again in October.

JANUARY 27 - WOLVERINES: Persisting on the Edge of Our National Park Boundaries?

The expansive home range size and elusive nature of the Wolverine *(Gulo gulo)* has made this medium-sized carnivore one of the least understood mammals in North America. Research conducted over the past two decades show wolverines avoid human-impacted areas and prefer mountainous landscapes protected from human influence. Locally, wolverines prefer the more remote and mountains areas located in the heart of Banff National Park. While wolverine numbers are high within our national parks, only a few wolverines seem to persist just outside of these protected areas boundaries. For example, remote camera images of unique wolverine pelage/ fur patterns found only one male to range throughout a vast area along the west side of the Kananaskis Country region. Learn more about this elusive predator on Tuesday January 27, 7:30 pm at the Banff Seniors Centre when the Bow Valley Naturalists host an evening with Banff-based wolverine researcher Nikki Heim.

Niki on the trail.

In collaboration with Dr. Tony Clevenger and as part of her M.Sc. in Environmental Science, Nikki Heim has been working to better understand the spatial distribution patterns of wolverines along the Canadian Rocky Mountains, inside and outside of our nationally protected areas. Prior to her research efforts on wolverines, she has 10 years of experience working as a wildlife research assistant on cougars, bears, badgers, and lions.

FEBRUARY 24 - MUSSELS AND MUTTS: The Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program

Invasive species are one of the largest threats facing our biodiversity. The threat of a zebra / quagga mussel introduction to Alberta could cost the province $75 million annually should an introduction occur. Once mussels are introduced to our waters there are no feasible control options, and at present only British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the 5 states to the south are considered mussel free. The Province of Alberta is establishing a prevention program to protect Alberta's waters from this threat. Program elements include education and outreach, monitoring, rapid response, policy and legislation, and watercraft inspections. As part of the inspections program Alberta is also implementing a canine or "sniffer dog" component. This session presented by Cyndi Sawchuk will provide an overview of the issue and what is being done to keep the mussels out.

MARCH 24 - Meteorology and Hydrology Behind the Floods of 2013 - What We Have Learned

In late June 2013, approximately 250 mm of precipitation over a large area of the Canadian Rockies, causing the largest recorded flood in the region and the most expensive natural disaster in Canadian history. The event was recorded at a research site in the Kananaskis Valley, Marmot Creek Research Basin, which is well-instrumented, with 12 meteorological stations and 5 stream gauging stations and forms part of the larger Canadian Rockies Hydrological Observatory – the high density of hydrometeorological observations there permits a detailed analysis of this event. The six-day precipitation primarily occurred over 2.5 days and was remarkable in that similar depths fell at all elevations from forest-grassland valley bottom to mid-elevation montane forest to alpine ridge-top. Precipitation started with relatively warm conditions even at high elevations, turning to snowfall at the highest elevations towards the end of the event. The snowmelt of 120 mm during the heavy precipitation period enhanced water delivery to alpine and subalpine surfaces from rainfall by 50% and

runoff to streams by 30%. Snow drifts on alpine slopes, gullies and treeline forests were 'hot spots' for high runoff generation during the flood. This fascinating interaction of vegetation cover, topography and meteorology in generating the flood will be presented by Professor John Pomeroy from the Centre for Hydrology, University of Saskatchewan.

APRIL 28 - A DAM GOOD STORY: Shelley Humphries will drop by for an interesting evening of updates on national park aquatic systems. Shelley will be joined by Chad Townsend to tell the story of decommissioning the Forty-Mile Creek dam with words, pictures and video

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NEWS AND ISSUES

AILEEN HARMON: May Her Legacy Continue

Mike McIvor

The Bow Valley Naturalists received the news a few days ago from Carole Harmon that her aunt, Aileen Harmon, a key person in the original formation of our organization in 1967, died on January 9th, five days before her 103rd birthday. She was born and raised in Banff and lived here until 1981 when she moved to a place she loved on Vancouver Island to enjoy the rest of her long life.

Aileen was an ardent naturalist - to put it mildly - and a fervent conservationist - to put it mildly. Those of us who had the opportunity to go on field trips or hikes with her learned a great deal about mountain landscapes, especially vegetation, her primary interest. Those of us who participated alongside her in conservation battles learned a lot about standing up for what you know is right. She was a regular participant in our Christmas Bird Counts, sharing her knowledge with whoever was out with her. And during her career as a Park Naturalist in Banff National Park she shared her knowledge about the human and natural history of the park with countless visitors.

> "Some of us recognized the need for a natural history organisation in the park for some time. I think it would have happened anyway, but at the psychological moment (guess who) Tim Myres pushed me into doing something. We advertised a public meeting that was well attended, and the club was organised then and there: March 22nd, 1967. Our first president was Hugh Green. Since then Muriel Gratz, Lorne Cooley, and Gerry Wilkie have held the chair."
>
> Aileen Harmon: A Brief History of the Bow Valley Naturalists, Federation of Alberta Naturalists Vol. 2 #4, 1972.

Perhaps the most significant legacy Aileen could leave for BVN is what she demonstrated by example. She taught us that not only is it extremely important to explore and experience the natural world, learning from it and about it, but an accompanying commitment must be made to fight for its protection. That is a task for all of us.

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FIS SPECIAL EVENT TAKES OVER DECLARED WILDERNESS

Adapted From BVN Correspondence

The Bow Valley Naturalists expressed deep concerns with the 2015 NORAM test race held at Lake Louise. In a five-page letter to Parks Canada detailing our concerns it was recognized that "proposed" was an extremely poor choice of words to describe the event given that the race unquestionably was already approved prior to the release (for comments) of the Basic Environmental Impact Analysis. Previous newspaper articles announcing the event, the completion of basic clearing in November and the long lead-time required to put on an international event such as this makes a farce out of Parks Canada's environmental assessment process, meaningful public participation, and the FIS guidelines

for environmental responsibility. For the record, here is just one of the FIS' own environmental guidelines:

> *"The goal is not to plan any installations that may affect areas which are of great value for animals and vegetation. Planning in National Parks must be avoided."*

Greenwashing? Given a perfectly good venue in Canmore was built for this purpose there was no need to hold this event in a declared wilderness, within a national park.

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ECHO CREEK SPILL - In a Special Place

Peter Duck

Bow Valley Naturalists are disappointed that the, perhaps inevitable, train derailment has occurred in the Vermilion Wetlands. We extend our gratitude to the response crews who answered the call with quick response, long hours and who sacrificed their holidays and family time to undertake the cleanup process and monitoring. We dip our binoculars in their honour.

A pileup of rail cars in Echo Creek brought the experience of the rail safety issue in Canada into our back yard. This is an event that no ecosystem, let alone a special national park wetlands, should endure and it occurred in a local stream and ecosystem that is very close to the hearts of our members. It occurred in spite of efforts in recent years to adapt rail infrastructure in the Vermilion Wetlands to reduce the risk of derailment.

This incident happened in the Vermilion Wetlands which are given special status in the Banff National Park Management Plan as the Vermilion Wetlands Environmentally Sensitive Site and are identified as the Park's largest and most diverse wetland complex including being recognized by Parks Canada as the most productive bird habitat in the lower Bow Valley. The latter quality is not just about birds. Bird diversity and productivity serves as an indicator of a very complex system affected by this and future destructive incidents. According to the management plan "This designation applies to areas with significant and sensitive features that require special protection measures." As we continue to expand our types of use, intensity of use and redevelop infrastructure in this special area a rail incident reminds us it is time to think about cumulative effects and to develop a detailed plan to protect its ecological integrity.

Forty-Mile Creek joins Willow Creek flowing from First Vermilion Lake and the combined stream is then known as Echo Creek as it wends its way into the Bow River.

Spills into a water course immediately turn our attention to fish and in this instance to Bull Trout. Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) using the Echo Creek/Forty-Mile Creek drainage are in what is known in species at risk lingo as the "Saskatchewan-Nelson River Designatable Unit". This includes the Bow River and these fish are considered "Threatened" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. The population status of the subpopulation in the Upper Bow is "unknown" while that in the Middle Bow consists of only 10 or so fish (range 1-50!) according to the COSEWIC status report. The Government of Canada has yet to act on the Committee's research and afford local Bull Trout with legal protection under the Species At Risk Act. This protection could go a long way to stimulating better understanding of Bull Trout status and ecology. Without protection

perhaps the local Bull Trout will go the way of the Banff Longnose Dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae smithi*) across the way at the Cave and Basin Marsh and be declared extinct with cumulative effects of human interference figuring prominently in the reasons cited for its demise. Let's hope we can ensure that cumulative effects of rail operations are not part of that possible future for Bull Trout. That would be two species extinctions for the Vermilion Wetlands Environmental Sensitive Site, perhaps within only 20 years. Perhaps consistent with the current global rate of species extinction but not great news for the ecological integrity of Banff National Park. And then there is the loss of Mountain Caribou etcetera. What's really going on behind the Bison's back? (See Endangered Species List in this issue).

The Echo/Forty-Mile/Willow Creek system has a very special flow regime in Banff National Park. Through the Vermillion Wetlands complex these streams have slow flow rates compared to our typical roaring mountain streams. And this relaxed flow occurs in the special Montane Ecoregion. Only the lower reaches of Healy Creek and the Ranger Creek complex have reaches with similar characteristics. This leads to special riparian habitats on their banks, unique stream bed characteristics and a suite of wildlife that use these special habitats. With intense human activity in-stream and on stream banks this special system is already compromised compared to a natural situation. The system does not need the cumulative effects of rail disturbance to further degrade it.

Culvert restoration in the Vermilion Wetlands has reduced the potential for differential water levels on opposite sides of the track ballast that could lead to possible derailment and spills of dangerous materials. The recent derailment and spill shows that there is still more work to be done to reduce the risk of spills and other threats to the Vermilion Wetlands Environmentally Sensitive Area**.**

It will be some time before the causes of the derailment and the nature and extent of the ecosystem interactions are fully understood. BVN will be patient and allow skilled investigators, environmental monitors and regulators to do the work they are trained to do. We will hope to learn from a comprehensive investigation with full public disclosure of the facts surrounding this incident and its causes. BVN also looks forward to public involvement in finding solutions that will prevent this occurring again.

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INTRUSION OF THE DRONES

Colleen Campbell

Parks Canada and Alberta Provincial Parks are both facing a new intrusive challenge — unregulated use of drones. Of particular concern in both systems is possible harassment of wildlife.

Provincial and national parks currently rely on similar regulations that prohibit the landing and takeoff of aircraft without a specific permit. The provincial parks regulations describe aircraft as "powered or powerless" and "carrying a person or an object". Provincial park authorities are developing "drone-specific" policy, but in the meantime, feel that current regulations are sufficiently robust for them to respond to any (drone) situation that is questionable. Unregulated drone use is illegal in both parks systems. A provincial spokesperson commented that some race events may have limited (legal) drone use during an event and that such use would be addressed during individual application and permitting for a particular event. Drones are further regulated by the Canadian Aircraft Regulations and recent updates under Transport Canada. (The RCMP are regulated separately and

may use drones to investigate some situations. The RCMP are required by Transport Canada to maintain sight of any drone unit they operate.)

Parks Canada and Alberta Parks are both interested to learn of any drone activity in protected lands. Officials are especially interested if drones appear to affect wildlife behavior negatively.

Report questionable drone activity, with as many relevant details as possible, to the appropriate authority.

Add these numbers to your cell-phone contact list:
Alberta Parks Dispatch: 403-591-7755
Parks Canada Dispatch: 403-762-1470

(Editor's note: it didn't take long to find this example of a drone's effects on wildlife.)

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COYOTE AND TOO FEW QUESTIONS

Colleen Campbell

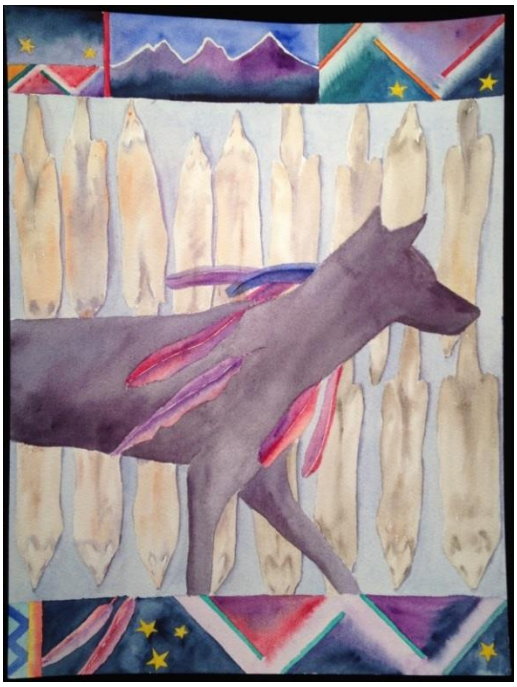
This article is my response to the shallow coverage of the coyote-killing competition recently held in Alberta. Coyotes are intelligent, resourceful, social creatures. In many jurisdictions/communities all over North America people are learning to manage attractants and invoke strategies (e.g.: use of guard dogs, electric fences, containment of garbage) to coexist with coyotes and, by default, other wild animals. Effective strategies include understanding how a species lives — social organization, habitat and resource needs.

Coyote derives from coyotl, the Aztec name for the wild canid; coyotl also completes the names of several Aztec gods. All through the lands where coyote lived before European settlement, coyote is sacred, identified with the complicated attributes of a trickster, a being who teaches us to see our shortfalls and foibles.

Currently, Coyote is reprising the trickster identity in Alberta. The "kill-for-sport" (apparently no other reason) "friendly competition" (as described by one of the organizers) held 100 kilometres west of Edmonton in mid-January is metaphorically holding a mirror to questionable human pastimes.
Coyote hunt competitions have been banned in Colorado and California where laws were changed through social pressure; citizens demanded competitive carnivore killing be disallowed. Last fall, a coalition of conservation groups in Idaho initiated a lawsuit to stop competitive killing derbies there. In some places, understanding that carnivores are important to pervasive ecological health is spreading. Here, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development considers such a contest legal, (still) classifies coyote as an agricultural pest and permits coyote hunting with few restrictions.
An unnamed Alberta organizer said that the hunt is (de facto) making a competition of what the participants do every weekend. The same individual states "most of those protesting the hunt don't understand what damage coyotes can cause to farmers, as well as other wildlife". But media have not probed for substance.

Without citing research, a professor from University of Alberta told the press that "the hunt will have little impact on coyote health, that the population is self-regulated by disease and estimates 30% of the provincial population is showing signs of disease due to high numbers." Were those comments misrepresented? As printed, they fail to recognize that, as with other wildlife species, coyote numbers are limited by habitat and resource availability. Additionally, there was no recognition of how readily coyote adapts to modified habitats, including urbanization; coyote plays well in the complex ecology of urban settings, acreages, agriculture, industry, forestry and wilderness.

Apparently natural history of coyotes is unknown or misunderstood by many: media personnel, regulating agencies, some academics and the hunt competitors. Like wolves, coyotes live in socially structured family groups that include several generations and possibly an accepted immigrant or two. They defend their territory against intrusion by other coyotes.
The dominant adult pair maintains a tight bond, strengthened by annual courtship that lasts from late autumn until breeding in February. Gestation is about 63 days and pups are whelped in early spring. All members of the family group participate to protect, raise and teach the pups, a process that lasts through summer and into the autumn when some of the young may disperse.



Colleen Campbell circa 2002
Watercolour 12" x 16"

Presence of the breeding adult pair suppresses mating and reproduction by other members of the family unit. However, if the adults are killed, especially near breeding season, all the other coyotes in the pack experience social liberation; they will all breed, causing a population spike and possible/probable stress on local resources. The resulting local population increase may also affect the general state of coyote health in the area.

Coyotes are small (average 8 – 16 kilograms) and prefer small prey such as rabbits, mice, other rodents, occasionally beaver, duck, goose, raccoon or domestic cat, perhaps snakes or amphibians. Small dogs may be at risk and occasionally a group of coyotes may opportunistically kill a deer or even become specialized deer hunters. Young lambs are also vulnerable. (I know a sheep rancher who values "her" local coyote pack. Though they regularly hunt in her grain fields, the coyotes know the "rules" about her sheep; they respect her guardian dogs and do not come near her corrals. Since acquiring and training guardian dogs nearly twenty years ago, she has not lost a lamb to coyotes. She also urges others living nearby to not attract coyotes and to not hurt the local coyotes.) In some coastal cities, (urban) coyotes are praised for rat-hunting.

Media would serve us all well to focus on the effects of random killing on population dynamics, not only numbers. What happens when a (social) population is thrown into turmoil? It would also be helpful to probe the question of what damage coyotes inflict on agricultural activities. Naturally, coyotes prey on rodent populations — a benefit to both crop producers and livestock ranchers.

In ancient stories, coyote is a creator, helping and teaching humans. Simultaneously, coyote is the trickster holding a mirror to show us our greed, arrogance, lack of reason and violence. Sadly, those who extoll the "sport killing" in hunting competitions fail to realize the irony they invoke; they are indiscriminately killing an animal they claim to be a pest, an indiscriminate killer.

Certainly, media can do more than scratch the surface of a story, work harder to find substance**.**

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OF WILD THINGS

2014 BANFF CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Heather Dempsey

It was another mild Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 20th. We experienced more or less the same conditions as last year with temperatures hovering around zero with little wind, which again brought a preponderance of birders out. This proved to be a record year, at least in the amount of effort collectively spent looking for birds. Seventy-six birders took to the trails, streets and their favourite haunts to see what they could see. This year's effort went beyond average as altogether 49 species were seen with one new species, an American Coot, spotted at the Cave & Basin Marsh and a few species such as Hooded Merganser, Virginia Rail, and Harris Sparrow seen that we don't see that often. Two birds were seen the day before or after the count day. A pygmy owl hovered above Jason Rogers at Third Vermilion Lakes on the Friday, and Gareth Thomson found a lone Canada Goose at the horse barns in Canmore on the Sunday. It was also a great day for seeing wildlife. Sometimes it was easy, other times not. In fact, finding a bird in a bush MAY be easier than finding a moose sometimes.

Chuck O'Callaghan was lucky enough to spot this female moose at Rainy Bay!

Thank you to everyone who came out for the count, and especially thank you to fellow organizers Ethan and Neil Denton for taking on the Canmore Count this year. Another big thank you to Colleen Campbell for her years at that helm and for passing on such a well-organized portfolio. Please mark Saturday, December 19, 2015 for next year's Banff-Canmore Christmas Bird Count. To review past count results, go to the BVN web site.

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BANFF NATIONAL PARK'S LIST OF COSEWIC ENDANGERED SPECIES GROWS

Dwayne Lepitzki, Ph.D. (member of COSEWIC)

The Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*) was assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as Endangered, a species facing imminent extirpation or extinction, at the November 2014 Wildlife Species Assessment Meeting in Ottawa. It joins five other species living in Banff National Park that have been assessed "Endangered" by COSEWIC: Banff Springs Snail (*Physella johnsoni*, date of most recent COSEWIC assessment: April 2008), Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis*, April 2010), Little Brown and Northern Myotis bats (*Myotis lucifugus* and *Myotis septentrionalis,* November 2013), and Central Mountain Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus,* April 2014 – see Spring 2014 BVN newsletter). As previously discussed, being assessed a species at risk by COSEWIC is only the first step in being listed and protected under the Federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). As of today, only the first 4 species are listed under SARA so they and their habitat, when on federal crown land, are protected from killing, harm, and destruction.

The bats were originally assessed under the COSEWIC emergency assessment procedure in February 2012 (see Spring 2012 BVN newsletter). These procedures are supposed to be a fast-track way to get

species that are in extremely dire straits more immediate protection under SARA as the normal COSEWIC then SARA processes can take years to complete. COSEWIC confirmed the endangered status of these bats in April 2014 under the regular COSEWIC process (see January 2014 BVN newsletter). As of 17 December 2014, the bats were listed under SARA.

What about the caribou? As of 13 January 2015, the Federal government announced that it plans to begin the public consultation process which could result in the COSEWIC Endangered Central Mountain Caribou being listed "Endangered" under SARA. These caribou, including those that are or used to be found in Banff and Jasper national parks, are currently listed "Threatened" under SARA. The only difference in protection offered to species listed as Endangered or Threatened under SARA is in the timing requirements for recovery documents. One year is given for jurisdictions to have a completed Recovery Strategy for SARA Endangered species while two years is the time limit for the Recovery Strategy for SARA Threatened species.

Limber Pine in the sand dunes along the Hoodoos Trail.

If the normal consultation process is followed, it could be a year or two before Limber Pines are listed under SARA. These majestic trees are imminently and severely threatened throughout their Canadian range by White Pine Blister Rust (*Cronartium ribicolaan,* introduced pathogen), Mountain Pine Beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae)*, and climate change – the same threats that resulted in the Endangered status for its cousin, the other 5-needle pine in Banff: Whitebark Pine. At the current rates of decline it is expected that close to two-thirds of mature Limber Pines will be lost over the next 100 years.

Full results, including the press releases from the recent COSEWIC assessment meeting can be viewed on the Committee's website. Visit the Sara registry for the status of species and for copies of COSEWIC status reports**.**

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NATURAL SEEPS – Bears and Oil

Mary Harding

In preparation for the Waterton Wildlife Weekend, I was invited to accompany John Russell on a couple of field trips to check out the sites where he planned to take his groups.

For our first adventure, we drove up the Akamina Parkway to the National Historic Site that commemorates the First Oil Well in Western Canada. We parked, forded Cameron Creek and poked around in the forest looking for the remains of buildings and other structures associated with early oil production.

From there, John led me along a wildlife trail to an oily pool of water. The pool is about 5 metres across and a metre deep and is believed to have been dug by William Aldridge in the late 1800s. A thin layer of oil, the consistency of motor oil, seeps into the pool from beneath. Aldridge skimmed the oil from the surface of the pool and sold it as a lubricant for axels and for medicine. The gravestone of Aldridges' infant son is located nearby.

The rim of the pool was bare of vegetation. Next to it were several oil-blackened trees. Apparently bears regularly come to the pool to bathe, followed by a rubdown against the trees. Perhaps eau d'huile is attractive to bears.

The second adventure took place a few days later. After work, John and I drove back up the Akamina Parkway. At the National Historic Site we watched a brown coloured black bear take an interest in the interpretive signs. As we watched, the bear disappeared into the forest, heading west. John and I drove just over a kilometre west on the parkway before parking. We climbed down the embankment and soon found ourselves walking east down a bear trail.

As we were walking, I thought to myself 'we just saw a bear disappear into the forest heading west and we are on a bear trail heading east. This can't be a good idea. But hey, I'm with John Russell and he's an expert.' While I have complete faith in John, I was glad that I had remembered my bear spray.

Along the way, John pointed out bear signs that I'd never seen before. He explained that when bear trails meet or when trails approach an important feature, all the bears ritualistically step in the same track. We found ourselves following suit, stepping into clearly marked depressions on the ground.

When we came to a clearing, we stopped. It was early evening and the light was starting to dim. As John got his bearings, I touched his arm and pointed. Across the clearing was the bear. We looked at each other from a distance of about 30 metres. The bear disappeared behind some trees and reappeared next to the oil casing we were looking for.

The casing is a thick, 45 cm wide metal pipe that sticks out of the ground about a meter. It once housed the oil drilling apparatus. The top of this casing was jagged. As we watched, the bear rose up and planted its front feet on the edge of the casing. It reached in with one paw. It withdrew its paw and rubbed its face all over with the oil that still seeps into the casing. The bear then put its whole face into the casing, withdrew and rubbed its face against its paw. From its actions, I could almost hear the bear moaning with pleasure. What was it about the oil that was so appealing?

After a few minutes of dipping and 'grooming', the bear melted back into the forest. John and I waited a few minutes before walking to the spot where we had first seen the bear. We found blackened trees with teeth marks. We approached the oil casing and found fresh tracks as well as more trees blackened by the bears rubbing.

We continued to search the area for bear signs and found a bear bed with an ensuite bathroom (a ring of scat encircling the bed), evidence of bears climbing trees and using their teeth to rip apart the wood to get at insects, more bear trails, claw marks and diggings.

John generously shared his knowledge of bear biology and bear signs. Together, we had the privilege of witnessing a private bear moment. No one seems to know why bears bathe in and anoint themselves with oil. Does it feel good? Does it rid them of parasites? Do they like the smell? Or are they preening? Anthropomorphic I know, but maybe vanity isn't exclusive to humans.

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HELS REPORTING

This is a reminder to everyone that the HELS database takes reports of 4 species (marmot, pika, mountain goat, and ptarmigan) every day of the year. So don't be a marmot and hibernate all winter. Instead, start the year off right by getting outside, looking and reporting on what you can find. The database will still take 2014 sightings so please send those in too!

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THANK YOU SHELLEY AND MICHAEL!

Shelley Mardiros has announced that she will step down from the BVN Board of Directors when her term is complete in February. Shelley has for many years been our dedicated treasurer and financial guiding-hand not mention a gracious host for so many of our board meetings and a regular contributor to the newsletter. Along with Jason Rogers, who also "retired" this year Shelley helped guide BVN through a challenging time in recent months and, peeka or pike-a, we will miss her. Thanks also to Michael Shuster who has been our web guru since we first posted our web site and has helped with many I.T. issues over the years as well as providing many beautiful photos to our newsletter.

Many members have asked us in the past if there is a way to get involved with BVN. The answer is definitely YES! We welcome those who wish to join our Board of Directors or just help with a chore or two. The Board meets approximately 6 times a year to plan the winter speaker program, manage finances, promote annual events such as the Christmas Bird Count and send out a newsletter three times each year. There are also opportunities to help with bookkeeping, represent our members and promote the goals of BVN in the community or maybe help organize our monthly meetings. Please speak to a Board member at upcoming events, or send a note to Info@BowValleyNaturalists.org.

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2014 BANFF-CANMORE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Canada Goose	CW	American Crow	8
American Wigeon	2	Common Raven	374
Mallard	114	Black-capped Chickadee	124
Green-winged Teal	3	Mountain Chickadee	198
Bufflehead	1	Boreal Chickadee	47
Common Goldeneye	6	*chickadee sp*	*76 sp*
Hooded Merganser	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	43
Common Merganser	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	13
Ruffed Grouse	2	Brown Creeper	5
Bald Eagle, adult	1	American Dipper	12
Hawk sp.	*1 sp*	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5
Virginia Rail	1	Townsend's Solitaire	6
NEW! American Coot	1	European Starling	12
Wilson's (Common) Snipe	1	Bohemian Waxwing	2
Rock (Dove) Pigeon	168	White-throated Sparrow	2
Northern Pygmy Owl	CW	Harris' Sparrow	1
Downy Woodpecker	7	White-crowned Sparrow	6
Hairy Woodpecker	2	Dark-eyed Junco	6
Three-toed Woodpecker	12	Rusty Blackbird	3
Northern Flicker	1	Pine Grosbeak	162
Pileated Woodpecker	2	*Finch sp*	*5 sp*
Woodpecker sp	*2 sp*	Red Crossbill	31
Northern Shrike	2	White-winged Crossbill	1
Gray Jay	44	Common Redpoll	3
Steller's Jay	1	*Redpoll sp*	*1 sp*
Blue Jay	13	Pine Siskin	32
Clark's Nutcracker	49	House Sparrow	230
Black-billed magpie	179		

CONTACTS

Let these people know your thoughts about current issues

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