



# THE OSPREY

**Newsletter of the  
West Kootenay Naturalists' Association**

**415 Olivia Crescent, Trail BC V1R 1A6**

**vol 46, no 1**

**March through June, 2019**



Old Glory © Margo Saunders

## GENERAL MEETINGS

The new schedule is as follows: Five meetings per year and the Annual Picnic in June as before. September meeting in Nelson, November potluck in Genelle, January meeting in Castlegar, March meeting in Trail, and the AGM and potluck in May in Genelle. Meetings are held on the last Monday of each month, 7:00 pm, *except as noted*. Potlucks start at 4:45 pm when the doors open for setup. Meal begins at 5:30 pm. Changes may be mentioned at meetings, via Google group and/or in your local newspaper. Beverages will *not* be available beginning next season until someone steps forward to handle this task. THE FOREGOING ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. For June annual picnic venue, see appropriate Field Trip Schedule. No meetings in October, December, February, April, July, August, or December. "The Osprey" in hard copy is distributed at September and January meetings, and the week after the May meeting to show the current year's Officers. If you have email, you will receive it as a pdf, in colour.

## WKNA OFFICERS 2018-19

### **ELECTED:**

PRESIDENT	Peter Wood	250-359-7107 <a href="mailto:annpeterwood@gmail.com">annpeterwood@gmail.com</a>
VICE-PRESIDENT	<b>vacant</b>	
PAST PRESIDENT	Brent Hancock	250-304-6840
RECORDING SECRETARY	<b>vacant</b>	
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP	Esther Brown	250-368-3663 <a href="mailto:estherbrown@shaw.ca">estherbrown@shaw.ca</a>

### **APPOINTED:**

ARCHIVIST	Beth Truant	250-368-6325
BC NATURE DIRECTOR (WKNA)	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633
FIELD TRIP DIRECTOR	Diane White	250-825-4178 <a href="mailto:L8ddi@shaw.ca">L8ddi@shaw.ca</a>
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 <a href="mailto:penandpaddle@gmail.com">penandpaddle@gmail.com</a>
PRESENTATION COORDINATOR	<b>vacant</b>	
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 <a href="mailto:penandpaddle@gmail.com">penandpaddle@gmail.com</a>

### **SECTION CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:**

BIRDING	Ed Beynon	250-365-7806
ENERGY & CONSERVATION	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633 <a href="mailto:snowdance@shaw.ca">snowdance@shaw.ca</a>
BIRD COUNTS: Bird Studies Canada, WKNA, Christmas and Summer	Craig Sandvig	contact info n/a
INVASIVE PLANTS	<b>vacant</b>	
RIVERS DAY (Provincial)	<b>vacant</b>	
VIOLIN LAKE STAKEHOLDERS	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 <a href="mailto:penandpaddle@gmail.com">penandpaddle@gmail.com</a>
GOOGLE GROUP ADMINISTRATOR	Arnold By	250-368-3068 <a href="mailto:awby@shaw.ca">awby@shaw.ca</a>

## FIELD TRIPS

**This schedule has been suspended indefinitely.  
Contact the FIELD TRIP DIRECTOR (see Page 2)  
for information on trips and meetings.**

**If you do not have email, contact the FTD for hard copy updates.**

***Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is May 15, 2019***

*Material accepted by the Publisher any time up to this date.*

*We reserve the right to edit for space, clarity, spelling and syntax.*

*Major changes will be discussed with the contributor.*

## **\*\*JUST A REMINDER \*\***

1. **Do you have any suggestions for new areas to visit?** Would you be willing to lead a hike? Please contact a Program Director with your great ideas. Thank you to all the contacts/leaders in all seasons. We learn so much from each of you.
2. **Common courtesy and common sense** dictates that you call the contact person to confirm your attendance at an event on the program, **AND THAT YOU CALL TO CANCEL** if you later find that you cannot attend. Lead time for the newsletter is as much as nine months between planning and execution. Nothing is written in stone and changes may have to be made from time to time, due to weather conditions or personal reasons. We would not want you to miss out on a single chance to enjoy our environment! **Don't wait until the last minute** to phone if you are interested in any of our events.....leader may have already left, especially if camping or long distances are involved.
3. **The leader of an outing is responsible for:**
  - ✓ Finding a replacement contact/leader if you cannot be available for your planned outing. A replacement *leader* may choose to do the same outing, or they may suggest another.
  - ✓ Getting the appropriate waiver form signed by every person attending. *There are TWO waivers – one for all attendees and one for guests (one-day membership + \$1.00). Print/photocopy the guest waiver beforehand and keep extra copies just in case.* Forward these forms to Esther Brown, immediately.
  - ✓ Making sure that no one is left behind with car trouble at the parking area, especially in winter.
  - ✓ Arranging to have the trip report forwarded to the Editor. The leader may delegate this, of course. The writer also has the obligation to get the report submitted in time.
  - ✓ Make it a policy with the entire group to keep the person behind you in sight. If your follower on the trail is lagging, slow your pace to keep that person in sight. If everyone in the group continually checks to make sure they can see the person behind them, it is impossible for anyone to get into serious trouble. If you split into groups, do not allow any one person to 'take off' by him/herself.
4. **NO PETS** are allowed on any of our outings.

## TRIP REPORTS

**Tuesday, December 4, 2018:**

Three WKNA members and one guest met at the Safeway parking lot and then drove to the group camping parking lot, just before Kokanee Creek Provincial Park where we met up with another WKNA member, 5 hikers in total. The day was sunny and a brisk -2, with no wind. We started off up Kokanee Canyon Trail and right at the beginning of the trail, we encountered a woman with her dog who warned us of a large pool of fresh blood on the Kokanee Glacier Road, where our trail meets the road. We carried on and took several pictures of the ice on the creek and went on up to see the falls. We noted several circular, dinner plate sized ice formations (icebergs) floating on the water just to the right of the falls. We continued to the Kokanee Glacier Road and indeed, found a large pool of fresh blood. We could see from the amount of blood, it was most likely a large animal that had been wounded, running up the road when it was taken down right by the path, perhaps by a cougar. We saw no sign of the animal carcass, however. We carried on and found the mansion site, the old wall, a magnificent beech tree with old carvings of past lovers, a yew tree, a large old oak tree and the famous

pool. We experimented with the whispering as mentioned by Alistair Fraser and found the acoustics quite amazing, I could hear the whispering quite well. We continued down the trail and crossed the highway to the park and after taking more pictures of the amazing, snow capped mountain carried on through the park, trying out a trail that lead us through the forest rather than the road, to our cars. One of the hikers noted we had walked 6.4 km.

\*Kokanee Creek Park is located on the old "Busk" estate site. Charles W. Busk was a wealthy English gentleman who came to Nelson in the late 1800's. He had acquired a large tract of land with lake frontage 14 miles from Nelson. From plans drawn by English architects, Busk built a large mansion that once sat on a rise a short way up Kokanee Glacier Road. As a country squire and gracious gentlemen, Mr. Busk enjoyed entertaining guests but also had many interests in surveying, mining, fruit ranching and Scouting. He lived an eloquent, lavish life style. After 1913 the romance of his new way of life had dulled and it is estimated he went through three fortunes. Sadly, within a few years he died, disillusioned by most of his ventures, withdrawn and ignored by friends whom he once had entertained so lavishly. The park as it is seen today was originally established in 1955.\*

Diane White



Icebergs



Yew

Busk Pool

View



**Saturday, January 12, 2019 – Chimo Cabin:**

Mother Nature was very hospitable to the 11 Naturalists and 3 guests as we snowshoed up the trail to Chimo Cabin. The day was beautiful with no wind, a few clouds and warm sunshine. We did not need to light a fire in the cabin as the sun warmed us through the windows; a few sat on the porch in the sunshine having their lunch and one member sat outside to take in the beautiful view of Old Glory in the distance. So many pictures were taken to remember the day. On the way back some went up the 200 metres at Cookie's cabin so that the newer folks in the crowd could see the cabin up close. A few that had already seen the cabin went ahead to the parking lot, about 10 minutes from there and waited for us. We all agreed it was a great day and a wonderful time with good company and fabulous weather. Two of the guests signed up, as they were so taken with the great people and wonderful time we had and want to be included in many more adventures! [Photos page 4]

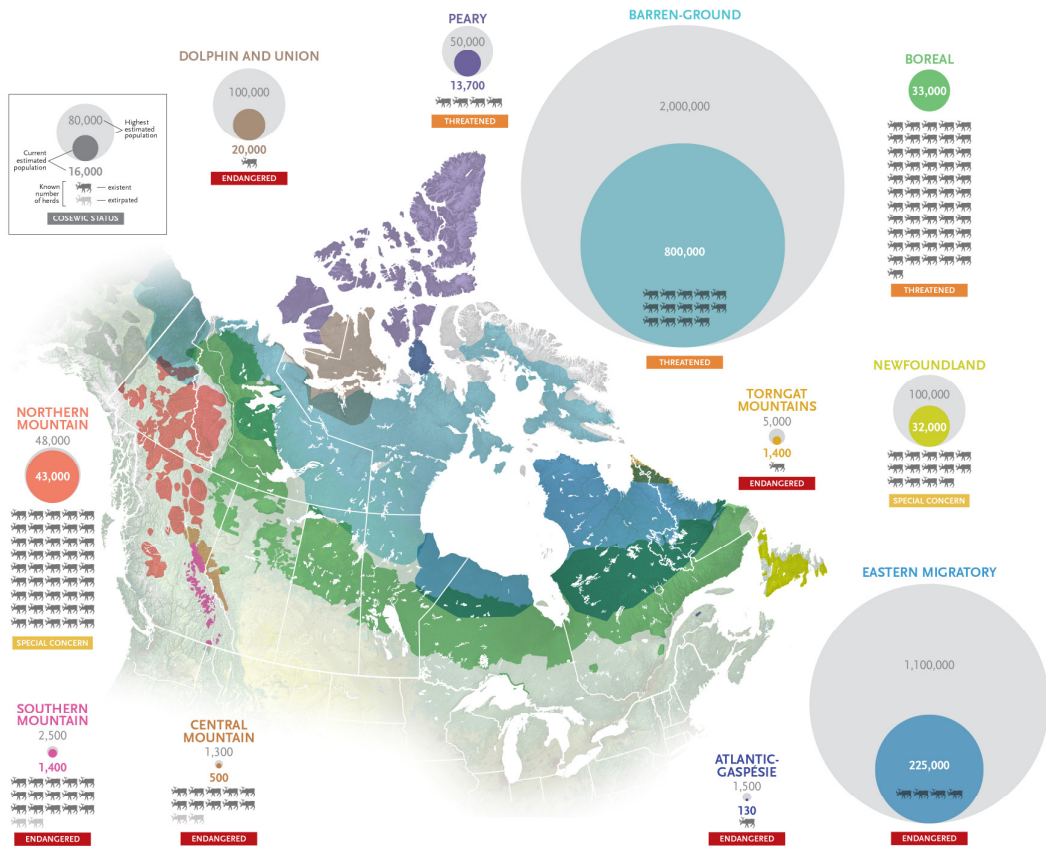
Diane White



## Caribou in Decline

“Caribou of Canada,” published in the January/February 2019 issue of *Canadian Geographic*.  
(Map: Chris Brackley/Can Geo)

This map is set to appear in the January/February 2019 print issue) may be the most important piece of cartography *Canadian Geographic* created in 2018. Along with charting the range of each of the 11 groupings of the country’s caribou, it shows the highest estimated population and current estimated population of each grouping. The overarching story is alarming — almost across the board, Canada’s caribou populations are a fraction of what they once were. Worse still, that decline has largely occurred during the last 25 years (see the story and more excellent maps for additional context). In essence, it’s a map of an impending extinction, unless we take steps to reverse these trends. [Enlarge for easier reading]



## Basic Facts About Woodland Caribou

Caribou are a member of the deer family and are adapted to cope with harsh winter conditions. Their large, concave hooves allow them to travel in deep snow conditions. Today, the woodland caribou is one of the most critically endangered mammals in the U.S., with only a few woodland caribou found south of the Canada border each year.



### Diet

They primarily eat ground and tree lichens. It takes 80 to 150 years for a forest to grow enough lichens for caribou. Woodland caribou are also known to eat shrubs, grasses and willows

### Population

There are seven subspecies of caribou, totaling approximately 5 million individuals. Two subspecies have already been driven to extinction. Today caribou can be found in parts of North America, Russia and Scandinavia. In the United States, two subspecies can be found. *Rangifer tarandus granti* or barren ground caribou, more well-known due to their long-distance migrations, total 950,000 and occur throughout Alaska and northern Canada.

There are two ecotypes within the *Rangifer tarandus* caribou, or woodland caribou, subspecies: mountain woodland caribou and northern woodland caribou. This distinction is based largely on habitat use and behavior. Woodland caribou have been reduced to one tiny population in the U.S., in far northern Idaho and northeastern Washington. This population, known as the International Selkirk population, is extremely rare, with only about 27 individuals left. These last caribou in the continental U.S. are a type of woodland caribou known as mountain caribou because they migrate to high alpine peaks in the winter. The worldwide population of mountain caribou has plummeted recently to fewer than 2000, in small, isolated populations at severe risk of elimination.

### Range

Did You Know? Caribou are the only deer species in which both sexes grow antlers. Every year they shed their antlers and the next year they grow new ones!

Historically, woodland caribou inhabited the forests of the Northern United States from Maine to Washington State, but have been reduced to one small herd in the Selkirk Mountains of northern Idaho, eastern Washington and southern British Columbia. This last U.S. herd is reduced to approximately 40 members that tend to stay mostly in the Canadian part of its range.

Worldwide, mountain caribou are found only in northern Washington and Idaho and British Columbia. The northern ecotype of woodland caribou have a broader distribution in Canada.

### Behavior

Caribou are well-known for their ability to use tree growing (arboreal) lichens as a major food source. As a result they are most often associated with mature coniferous forests that provide substantial quantities of tree lichens.

### Reproduction

Mating Season: Early to mid-October

Gestation: October to early June

Number of offspring: 1 calf

### FAST FACTS

Height: Average 4 feet (1.2m) tall at the shoulder

Length: 6 feet (1.8m)

Weight: 250-700 pounds (113-318 kg); males are larger than females

Lifespan: 10-15 years in the wild.