



THE OSPREY

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

415 Olivia Crescent, Trail BC V1R 1A6

vol 45, no 1

March through June, 2018



Lewis's Woodpecker

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, January, and May meetings. If you have email, you will receive it as a pdf, in colour.

WKNA OFFICERS 2016-17

ELECTED:

PRESIDENT	Peter Wood	250-359-7107 annpeterwood@gmail.com
VICE-PRESIDENT	vacant	
PAST PRESIDENT	Brent Hancock	250-304-6840
RECORDING SECRETARY	vacant	
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP	Esther Brown	250-368-3663 estherbrown@shaw.ca

APPOINTED:

ARCHIVIST	Beth Truant	250-368-6325
BC NATURE DIRECTOR (WKNA)	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633
FIELD TRIP DIRECTORS	Pat West, Castlegar	250-304-2656 pwest27@telus.net
	John Golik, Slocan	250-359-7278
	Margaret Knudsgaard, Rossland/Trail	250-362-9572
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com
PRESENTATION COORDINATOR	vacant	
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com

SECTION CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:

BIRDING	Ed Beynon	250-365-7806
ENERGY & CONSERVATION	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633 snowdance@shaw.ca
BIRD COUNTS: Bird Studies Canada, WKNA, Christmas and Summer	vacant	
BLUEBIRDS	vacant	
BUTTERFLIES	vacant	
INJURED BIRDS/ANIMALS	Carol Pettigrew (birds)	250-365-3701
INVASIVE PLANTS	vacant	
RIVERS DAY (National)	vacant	
RIVERS DAY (Provincial)	vacant	
VIOLIN LAKE STAKEHOLDERS	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com
WEBSITE, KOOTENAY REGIONAL	Kevin MacAskill	250-825-2245
--Google group administrator	Arnold By	250-368-3068 awby@shaw.ca

FIELD TRIPS

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

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

Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is May 16, 2018

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, July 18, 2017:

Six people braved the smoke and heat for our "Bank Swallows and Butterflies" field outing to the Pend d'Oreille Valley. Five of the seven Bank Swallow colonies that were checked were active, representing hundreds of nesting birds. Other avian highlights were Say's Phoebe and Lewis's Woodpecker. It was a great day for butterflies, with 18 species recorded, ranging from the showy Great Spangled Fritillary to the dainty Hedgerow Hairstreak (see photos on Page 4). Thank you to all who participated. I look forward to getting out with the group again this summer for more butterfly-watching and photography. Butterfly photos by Alistair Fraser; group photo by Keiko Fitz-Earle (Alistair Fraser, Malcolm Fitz-Earle, Janice Arndt, Dorothy Fraser; missing from the photo are Keiko Fitz-Earle and Paul Prappas).

Janice Arndt



Saturday, September 30, 2017:

Hike to Twin Peaks The weather forecast was not great but eight WKNats and one guest showed up for the hike. We drove up highway 3 to the Bombi Summit and then northish on forestry roads to a parking place at about the 14 kilometre mark. From there we hiked up to the first summit of Twin Peaks and had a brief break before continuing to the second summit. The weather was quite pleasant on the way up and many photos were taken of the beautiful fall scenery. There was a cool wind at the top so we found a sheltered spot for lunch where we observed a small flock of horned larks. Dark clouds were moving in from the west which motivated us to eat quickly and start our descent. Snow pellets fell on us as we walked along the ridge towards the lower peak and thankfully the storm soon passed by. As we were descending we met two keen, happy young hunters who were packing out a bull elk. We were back at our vehicles by 1:30 pm. Photos by Hazel or Ed.

Hazel & Ed Beynon



Lewis's Woodpecker

Scientific Name: *Melanerpes lewis*
Other/Previous Names: Lewis' Woodpecker
Taxonomy Group: Birds
Range: British Columbia
Last COSEWIC Assessment: April 2010
Last COSEWIC Designation: Threatened
SARA Status: Schedule 1, Threatened

Website reference: http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=589



Description

The Lewis's Woodpecker is a medium sized (26–28 cm) woodpecker with dark green upperparts (back of head, back, wings and tail), a silvery grey collar, maroon face and pink breast and belly. Sexes are similar in appearance, with the male being slightly brighter than the female. Juveniles are darker than adults and either lack or have subdued grey, maroon and pink in their plumage. (Updated 2017/05/30)

Distribution and Population

The Lewis's Woodpecker occurs only in western North America, where its breeding distribution is approximately the same as the range of Ponderosa Pine. In Canada, it occurs only in valleys of the southern interior of British Columbia, where it currently breeds as far north as the Fraser Basin (near the confluence of the Fraser and Chilcotin Rivers). Within this range, its distribution is patchy, with birds concentrated in areas with suitable habitat. (Updated 2017/05/30)

Habitat

Lewis's Woodpeckers require open habitat with scattered or edge trees. Large open areas are necessary for foraging. Trees are used as hawking perches and for nesting. Large diameter trees, either living, with partial decay or dead, with more advanced decay, are especially valuable for nest sites. A diverse ground cover of low shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants that produce berries or provide habitat for insects is an important habitat component. Three distinct habitats are used by the species: open forest or grassland with scattered trees, riparian forests adjacent to open areas, and burns. (Updated 2017/05/30)

Biology

Most Lewis's Woodpeckers in Canada are migratory, returning to their breeding habitats in early May. They raise a single brood each season and show strong nest site fidelity. The average clutch size in British Columbia is 4.8 eggs. Both adults tend the nest. The diet during the nesting period is mainly free-living insects. Wild and cultivated fruits are also consumed depending on availability. Adults and juveniles form pre-migrant flocks in late August through early September. They typically depart British Columbia in late September, although a few individuals stay in the southern Okanagan Valley if the weather conditions and food supply are favourable. (Updated 2017/05/30)

Threats

Habitat loss and degradation are considered to be the greatest threats to Lewis's Woodpeckers. Urbanization, increasingly industrialized agricultural practices and forestry practices have all contributed to habitat loss and degradation. Removal of trees for firewood, human safety or aesthetic reasons, reduces habitat quality by eliminating nest trees, a critical habitat feature for this species. Many decades of fire suppression in Ponderosa Pine forests has resulted in infilling by Douglas-fir and reduction of open pine forests which are suitable for this species. Competition from the introduced European Starling may be a threat to Lewis's Woodpeckers in areas where European Starling populations are high and nest sites are scarce. Accidental mortality of breeding adults through collision with vehicles may affect populations around highway corridors, many of which are in prime Lewis's Woodpecker valley bottom habitat. (Updated 2017/05/30)

The Urgent Need to Protect BC's Rare Ancient Inland Temperate Rainforest

What's at Stake

The Incomappleux valley has been severely logged for a major part of its length. But the logging stopped before the end of the forest, leaving behind a five-kilometre stretch of river with very rare valley-bottom Inland Temperate Rainforest, with trees up to four metres in diameter and 1,800 years old. Scientists say this forest could have been growing undisturbed since the last ice age. It is part of a 17-kilometre stretch of wild river running through intact wilderness adjacent to Glacier National Park.

This now famous valley has drawn scientists from five countries to study the biodiversity of its ancient rainforest and its extensive wetland and have found numerous rare species. Valhalla Wilderness Society has noted that a huge power corporation, TransAlta, has applied for a permit to do feasibility studies in order to install a power plant in the Incomappleux river valley. The TransAlta proposal claims a capacity to generate 45 megawatts of power. Any project under 50 MW will receive no formal Environmental Assessment, yet the power production can be increased in the future.

There is a tremendous comprehensive article about the Incomappleux Valley, which is almost in our back yard. It is much too long to reproduce here, but I would urge everyone to view this website, to find out exactly how wonderful and unique this precious area is:

<https://www.vws.org/project/inland/TheInlandRainforest.html>

Also included here are some other pertinent sites to visit:

Incomappleux River map
<https://mapcarta.com/24311002>

A short clip from the documentary "The Incomappleux". The Incomappleux is a documentary film about the Incomappleux River Valley, an old growth forest in British Columbia, Canada at risk of being clearcut logged. Estimated premiere in early 2011. Published on Sep 24, 2010

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGKjDEvMG0>

Proposed Incomappleux IPP

<https://ecosociety.ca/incomappleux-ipp>

