

January 20 1983

Buffalo Lake naturalists held annual meeting

(by Grace Neill)

The 1983 Annual Meeting of Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club took place in the Recreation Centre meeting room at 8 p.m., January 20,

with 22 members present.

Executive positions for the year were filled as follows: President, Art Weis; Vice-President, Bertha Clarke; Secretary, Vera Hansen; Treasurer, Marvin Lohr; Editor and Librarian, Virginia Maitland; Reporter, Grace Neill; Directors, Grace Neill, George Cochrane, Edith Clark. Committees remain essentially the same as last year's.

Thanks to Jim Burrell, the club now has a fine bookcase, at only the cost of materials. There are a number of books which have been borrowed from the Library and not returned. Anyone having these books is requested to return them promptly, as other members would like a chance to read them.

Treasurer was instructed to send in the Club's membership dues to Canadian Nature Federation and Federation of Alberta Naturalists, our Parent Organizations.

There is need for Bluebird houses for the coming season, as quite a number of existing houses have been used as targets by so-called sportsmen! Anyone willing to help the Club, and the Bluebirds, by building a few houses, please get in touch with Lloyd Lohr. A "building bee" may be arranged.

The Federation of Alberta Naturalists annual meeting will be held this weekend, January 29, 30, at Red Deer College. Directors will attend.

Next regular meeting of B.L.N. will be February 17. Lunch was supplied by Dorothy Brownlee, the Burrells, and Edith Clark.

Since the report of Bird

Count Days, a few more of the Winter Bird Species have arrived. Somewhat later than usual, hordes of Waxwings, both Bohemian and Cedar, have descended on the Mountain Ash trees to devour the red berries. (This will not be news to Townfolk!) So far, Mr. Willis seems to be keeping all of the Grosbeaks at the Lake. Most unusual are the reports of Blackbirds and Robins at various points. They may be sorry to be here this week! But, cheer up folks, Easter is only two months away.

The past three Sundays have each seen a few Club members out skiing. With the new snowfall, perhaps trails will be in better condition and more will be out next time.

* Editor's Note — sorry Grace, you never saw a cedar waxwing.

Letters to the Editor

Good gosh! Could she have seen a Cedar Waxwing

Déar Editor

I fully realize the dangers in "tilting at windmills", but with my integrity as reporter for Buffalo Lake Naturalists at stake I feel I must reply to your remark - quote "you never saw a Cedar Waxwing". Did you mean to imply that I have not, at any time, ever seen a Cedar Waxwing? If so, how do you know? How could you possibly know what I have, or have not seen? If what you meant was that I did not, on the day in question, see Cedar Waxwings, again I ask "how do you know?" I didn't see you lurking in the trees where the birds were feeding! Admittedly, it is unusual to see that branch of the species here in winter, but how often do we see Robins and Blackbirds in the middle of winter? And it was not I who had seen those!

Official Winter Bird Counts of both 1980 and 1982 had reports of Cedar Waxwings at Edmonton and in the Lethbridge-Vauxhall area. Reference: "Alberta Naturalist" Volume 11, Supplement 1, May 1981, page 19 and Volume 12, Supp. 1, May 1982, page 8. Since they were seen in those areas, then why not here?

Respectfully yours,
Grace P. Neill

February 17 1983

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

A good turnout of 32 members and 10 visitors were on hand for the regular meeting of B.L.N., Thursday, February 17, 1983. Three of the visitors became members: Ed and Mary Faechner, and Helen Shinness. They were welcomed into the club. Other visitors were Vic and Marie Tremmel, Myrtle Raposo, two small children and two speakers for the evening.

Jean McDonald spoke briefly on Buffalo Lake Stabilization, which is in suspension at present while water quality studies are being made. Penny Waddell of Alberta Environment gave a presentation, with slides, on the South Saskatchewan River Basin Planning Program.

The meeting was chaired by the new President Art Weis, with new Secretary Vera Hansen taking the Minutes.

Lloyd Lohr reported on the Federation annual meeting highlights: "A proposed oil drilling site inside Prime Protection area in the Forestry Reserve has been refused. That had been a grave concern at the September meeting of F.A.N. There is also concern that there should be continued monitoring of the effects of the Lodgepole blowout.

"Sharptail Grouse are becoming very scarce and should be put on the Endangered Species list.

"A new club is being formed in the Crowsnest Pass, and, as encouragement for the people concerned, the F.A.N. summer outing will be held in that area, July 16, 17.

"The F.A.N. spring meeting will be on the May long weekend, at the Edmonton Nature Centre, with field trips to Beaverhill Lake, Wagner Bog and Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary."

New Programs for the year, and the current

Newsletter were distributed by Editor Virginia Maitland.

There was some discussion about getting individual name tags, this was tabled for further investigation.

Lloyd Lohr presented each of the lady speakers with a "Wilderness Association" calendar.

Next meeting of B.L.N. will be March 17, Nature Study Night. Bring your collections, artifacts, Bird Books.

Lunch was supplied by Hugh and Nora Charles, Bertha Clarke, Ruth Cochrane and Martin Graham.

March 17 1983

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

On Thursday, March 17, 32 Buffalo Lake Naturalists held their regular meeting. Two were new members: Victor and Marie Tremmel, who had been visitors for the first time last month, were welcomed to the club.

Reports of Spring arrivals included Canada Geese, Robins, Crows, Bluebirds, Ducks, Tree Sparrows, and White-breasted Nuthatch, as well as many Richardson Ground Squirrels (gophers) and one report of Crocus in bloom.

Since this was nature study night, several specimens of bird nests and eggs, and a piece of Poplar well chewed by Beaver, were displayed.

Virginia Maitland quoted from a Nature Magazine that feeding honey or sugar solutions to Hummingbirds is harmful to them. They will drink the artificial nectar from feeders because it is easier than obtaining the real thing from flowers, but it could be poisonous. Thus in attracting these fascinating little creatures to your home, for your pleasure, you may destroy them. Nature, left alone, will take care of itself. Virginia also played a tape of recorded bird calls, part of the Roger Tory Peterson collection.

Lloyd Lohr brought a Bluebird house which contained a Wren's nest, and conducted a contest to see who could guess nearest to the number of little sticks of which the nest was made. The sticks were then removed and counted. 756 pieces! A lot of trips for that wee bird. Martha Kruger won the prize guessing 725.

Trudie and Ernie Grafe gave a delightful show of slides from Hawaii, where Trudie had spent her vacation in January.

There are a number of outings tentatively planned for the Spring season. The first, weather permitting, will be a hike on the abandoned C.N.R. grade south-east from Highway 56 on March 26.

The next regular meeting will be held April 21, when Mr. Jim Butler of U. of A. will be guest speaker. His topic "Birds and Flowers of South Florida's Cypress Swamp".

Lunch was provided by Elsie Doak, Rosemary Dowie and Gladys Hewlett (filling in for Elsie

Cruikshank who was ill).

What appears to have been the last ski outing of the season was March 6. Nine adults and two wee girls attempted the trail from Muhlbachs' to Krugers'. One energetic lady even made the return trip, while two of us, no names mentioned, were happy to be rescued a

bit short of the destination.

A note here to anyone interested, visitors are always welcome to attend club meetings, and visitors very often become members. Membership fee is only \$2. individual or \$3. family. Club outings are fun as well as educational, at only the cost of transportation.

April 21 1983

The Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(By Grace Neill)

For the regular monthly meeting of Buffalo Lake Naturalists on Thursday, April 21, twenty-six members and nine visitors were present. The visitors were Samantha Kudras, Glynis Smith, Gina McBeth, Stan Cartwright, Anna Tipman, Rudolph Tipman, Violet Delker, Jim Butler, and Dana Dolsen. Samantha, Glynis and Gina, and Bruce Smith became new members. Welcome to the club, folks. Librarian Virginia Maitland reported again that many books are missing from the library. Any having these books are requested to PLEASE return them so others may enjoy them. Specially needed at this time are the books of instructions on building birdhouses.

Jim Burrell had on display a sparrow trap which can be bought from Mrs. Eva Danacker (the 'Purple Martin Lady') at Sherwood Park.

The matter of F.A.N. grants to Corporate clubs was discussed. Any club with a worthwhile project may apply to F.A.N. for assistance. For example, the Red Deer club has started publishing an interesting newspaper "The Central Alberta Naturalists" and the Lethbridge club has bought a set of Nature books and placed them in the new Nature Centre there. Any ideas for our club?

Bryan Shantz had sent over a sample of the new booklet to be used to keep records of Bluebird trails. These will be gathered at the

end of each season, copied on microfilm, and returned.

It was decided to get a list made up, of members who want identification buttons, then have the buttons made with individual names. Each to pay for his/her own button at \$1. each. Members present put their names on the list, those not present will be contacted.

Jim Butler from U. of A. had a fascinating show of slides, on the Flora and Fauna of South Florida's Big Cypress Swamp. The club was very fortunate to be able to have such a learned speaker. His program was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Lunch was supplied by Marge Ganske, Trudie Grafe and Martin Graham.

Next meeting will be on May 19, preceded by the annual Waterfowl Hike to "Leo's Lake". Hikers meet at the Museum grounds. Meeting will be in the usual place.

Club activities during the past month have been well attended. On March 27, 12 hikers walked all, or part of the four miles of abandoned C.N.R. grade from a mile East of Hwy. 56 to the old Sabine elevator site. After the walk, the group was entertained with lunch at the home of new members Vic and Marie Tremmel.

The Tremmels have offered to guide another hike East of their place, to Herbert Lake where Ducks Unlimited has done a lot of work.

On Saturday, April 16, fifteen members accepted the invitation to Open House at the Union Carbide Plant at Prentiss. The plant, still under construction, should be in operation by the end of 1984, with its main product being Anti-freeze. Bryan Shantz, the Biologist who takes care of the "Bluebird Farm" was on hand with his slide presentation which most of us had seen but were happy to see again. A side trip on the way home brought us to the "Joffre Greenhouses", a project of the Alberta Gas Ethylene plant at Joffre. About four acres are under glass at present, with plans for four more acres, using heat from the plant that would otherwise be wasted. A fantastic growth of cucumbers and tomatoes, and chrysanthemums, begonias and geraniums show that the idea is indeed working. All of

Central Alberta may be supplied with the fresh produce when the whole area is developed.

Sunday, April 24, seventeen adults and two children hiked the Red Willow Creek Valley, eighteen miles Northeast of Botha. Seen during the walk, or along the road there: 20 species of birds, 14 flowering or budding plants, 3 rodents, 2 reptiles and a lone butterfly.

Thanks to the Jones and Klins on whose land we walked.

It should be noted here that on Club-organized hikes no actions are tolerated that would cause damage or inconvenience to property or owners, be it privately or publicly owned.

After working up good appetites, all appreciated lunch at Lloyd and Bernice Greenlee's. A grand finale to a nice afternoon.

Next proposed outing will be a canoeing trip and overnight camping along the Battle River, May 14, 15. Any interested should contact Lloyd Loehr, phone 742-3846.

May 19 1983

Buffalo Lake Naturalists News

(by Grace Neill)

Thursday evening, May 19, was rather chilly, but most of the 32 members and four visitors who attended the regular B.L.N. meeting had spent the previous hour on the road across "Leo's Lake", happily spotting birds, of which 22 species were identified. Very few Yellow-head Blackbirds, no Grebes and no Black Terns were seen, a contrast to previous years, but an exciting find was a pair of Black-crowned Night Herons. Many of the group got their first sight of these.

Visitors for the evening were Anna Tipman, her son Rudolph, Gary Hughes and wee Mary Beth Lohr. The Club gained three new members, Bertha Smith, Tina and Christine Wilson.

Identification buttons were ready for those who put their names on the list at the last meeting. Anyone missed may still add their names for a later order. These will be valuable when on an outing with other groups, as well as to help new members and visitors get acquainted. So please wear your button to meetings.

A trip to the Ellis Bluebird Farm is planned for June 12. The phoning committee will call members regarding time and arrangements.

A petition regarding the use of leaded gasoline was on hand to sign.

A letter from Alberta Wilderness Association with news of a raffle they are conducting was received too late to help with ticket sales, but it was decided to send a

donation to help with their work.

Species Count Days will be May 28 - 29. Birds, animals, and flowering plants will be counted. The group's lists will be added to those of other groups all over the Province and will be printed in a future issue of "Alberta Naturalists".

Ron Kruger gave a good report of the May 14, 15, canoe trip taken by himself,

Lloyd and Marvin Lohr, Barb Smith and Vel Hainsworth. They found that the meandering Battle River in the Duhamel area made a lot more miles than other parts of the river they had canoed before, so they didn't reach their planned destination. Some who drove up to meet them were a little worried!

Lloyd reported an exciting and fruitful Horned Owl banding expedition on the cold and snowy Monday, May 9. Five people from Edmonton and Calgary led by Edgar T.

Jones and guided by Lloyd and Ron banded three young owls from each of four nests. They had already banded a family of five and two of four young before arriving at Lohrs, a record day for them. Remember, readers, that Great Horned Owls are a protected species and it is illegal to destroy them. They catch a lot of mice and gophers to feed themselves and their families.

The next and last meeting for the summer, will be the annual Hamburger Cookout at Krugers on June 16. Come

early, hikes will start at 6:30, to sloughs and woods and possibly some Bluebird banding. A charge of \$2. each is made for the supper, all proceeds going to the Club. Martha and Ron Kruger host this meeting but volunteer helpers will be welcome.

An interesting film 'Vital Heritage, Swamps, Marshes and Bogs', which was supplied by Alan Willis, was enjoyed by all after lunch supplied by the Greenlees and Vel Hainsworth.

Trap shooting facility moved west of town

Rob Docherty reports that the Stettler Trap Shooting Club's range has been moved and rebuilt one mile west of the RCMP office.

There will be a fun shoot and practice on Sunday, June 12 at 1:30. Shells will be available. Regular shoots are held on Wednesday night. Rob says, "Everybody is welcome."

Buffalo Lake Naturalists don't like trap shooting at Leo's Lake

(by Grace Neill)

On Thursday, June 16, 53 members and friends were on hand for the last meeting of the season, with the Annual Hamburger Cookout at the Kruger farm. First, three groups drove to different parts of the area to see birds, flowering plants and beaver lodges. A bountiful supper of delicious hamburgers and potato pancakes was supplied by the Krugers, with other tasty treats provided by other members. A minimal charge of \$2. per person went to the Club's funds. The Krugers wish to express their thanks to those who brought desserts and helped with preparations, and to the men who so ably managed the grills. But the biggest Thank You is due Martha and Ron from the Club, for supplying the meat and the pancakes as they have each year.

51 White Pelicans

At the rather informal outdoor meeting following supper, members discussed activities of the past month. The Species Counts of May 28 - 29 have not yet been completely tabulated but all reporters saw good numbers of birds and flowers. Trudie Grafes discovery of 51 White Pelicans west of Warden had to be the highlight!

The trip to Miquelon Lake on June 5 was attended by 13. Bruce and Glynis Smith camped overnight. A walk around the camping area brought sightings of two huge Beaver lodges and ponds with various ducks and Redwinged Blackbirds, and a good variety of flowering plants not seen everyday around home. Several Ruddy Ducks occupied a pond in

the park, and Bruce was lucky to set up his 'scope and find it zeroed in on a Red-Necked Grebe on its nest. A lone Cinnamon Teal was spotted along the highway en route. The lake itself is like all lakes at present, suffering from the drought but it still offers some lovely scenery.

Visit To Ellis Bluebird Farm

On Sunday, June 12, a large turnout of 32 was entertained by Bryan Shantz and Charlie and Winnie Ellis at the Ellis Bluebird farm at Prentiss. The dozens of weathered Birdhouses around the farm testify to the loving efforts of Charlie over many years to provide homes for Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. House Sparrows are not favored as they kill the other birds, so he has traps to catch them. He has disposed of a great many of these intruders but still they come, and had occupied an elaborate Martin House right in the yard! One man can do only so much towards undoing the harm done by those who brought the sparrows to North America in the first place.

A walk over the pastures and woods of the farm allowed the visitors to see baby Bluebirds in one house, House Wren eggs in another, Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrows and Warbling Vireo in the trees and many flowering plants as well as several Coyote dens on one hill. The Coyotes stayed discreetly hidden! Bryan showed and explained his method of banding Bluebirds and keeping records of each individual so that they can be easily identified later. Research is being carried

out to determine what effect, if any, the Union Carbide Plant and all the activity have on the birds. At present, it seems they are accepting the Industry and are going about their own affairs as usual.

After the walk, the Ellis' kindly provided a welcome pot of coffee, and offered their lawn for all to sit down and eat our lunches. We all signed their guest book, and left feeling confident that we will be welcome to come again.

The Club's supply of caps have been nearly sold out. More are to be ordered as they have proved very popular. Orders were taken for identification buttons for those who were missed on the first round.

Eva Kirtley has made a generous donation to the Club library, a large book "Baby Elephant Folio" by Audubon and Peterson. A welcome gift indeed. Thank you, Eva.

A tentative plan for a weekend campout July 9, 10, in the Gooseberry Lake - Neutral Hills area, was discussed. Ruth Cochrane agreed to look into getting space at the campground.

The Federation of Alberta Naturalists are holding a weekend outing in the Crowsnest Pass area July 16, 17, in support of a new club being formed there.

No activities have been planned for August. Suggestions will be welcomed. Phone Art Weis at 742-2936.

Next regular Club meeting will be Thursday, September 15.

Trap Shooting in Bad Location

All members were greatly

shocked by the news of the Stettler Trap Shooting Club moving its facility to a position on the East edge of Leo's Lake. The lake has always been a haven for migrating, and many resident, waterfowl, and the presence of the shooting range can do nothing but harm. In the three days immediately following the first "Fun Shoot" on Sunday, June 12, scores of Canada Geese, adults and young not yet able to fly, were seen walking overland in all directions from the lake in a pitiful search for water in a safer place. Some have found temporary quarters at farm dugouts, but with the shortage of sloughs in the area, it is feared that many will have perished. While it is not the intent of Naturalists to begrudge the Gun Club their kind of sport, it must be pointed out that their choice of location is unfortunate, to say the least. The sad plight of those helpless goslings must surely be the moral responsibility of the people in charge of the move.

June 16 1983

The next week - - -

Unsuitable location for trap shooting

*Life
Cells
Editor's
Opinion*

In *The Independent's* June 22 issue, Mrs. Grace Neill expressed the concern of Buffalo Lake Naturalists that the new location of Stettler Trap Shooting Club's range is on the east shore of Leo's Lake, better known as Lac La Shuckburgh, about a mile west of Stettler on Highway 12.

In normal years of precipitation, this stretch of slough and marsh land is a principal hatching ground for migratory waterfowl. It should have been made a bird sanctuary some years ago.

Damage to its bird-raising role had been wrecked when the town split it with a road to outlying water wells. Now the activities of the gun club will

drive more waterfowl away.

Mrs. Neill reported: "Following the first fun shoot, June 12, scores of Canada geese, adults and young not yet able to fly, were seen walking overland from the lake in all directions in a pitiful search for water in a safer place." The migration of the geese from the lake June 12 cannot be ascribed to a shortage of water. That would be too great a coincidence.

The sportsmen of Stettler Trap Shooting Club should consider the potential harm to waterfowl propagation by the location of their range on Leo's Lake, and Buffalo Lake Naturalists should lead a movement to have the area declared a waterfowl preserve.

And The week after that!

Trap Club should move

Dear Sir:

The Stettler Trap Club have indeed chosen to relocate in an illogical setting. If they expect to have ducks to shoot after they have improved their aim, why blast them out of their nesting habitat in the spring? Do they not know that almost every local species of ducks inhabit this marsh as well as other waterfowl and shore birds from the tiny Marsh Wren to the proud Canada Goose. Rather than the geese choosing a poor place to nest, the Trap Club have chosen a poor place to shoot!

Even in winter, the Short-eared Owl can be seen flying low over the dry rushes and muskrat houses in search of mice.

We are fortunate to have such an attraction for waterfowl, close to town where school children, naturalists, or anyone who loves birds can observe them closely, and listen to the mingled voices of at least 20 species of birds. Even a pair of Black-crowned Night Herons were seen there this spring by the Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club.

Such a haven for wildlife should have been declared a Bird Sanctuary long ago; and it is still possible, the land owner willing, unless some major project becomes more important.

Water levels will rise and fall seasonally and only in extreme drought would it be entirely dry, and then not permanently.

The Trap Club should pack it up now, move to one of the denuded fields that surround Stettler where there isn't so much as a twig left for a bird to sit on, or a slough that hasn't been dried up for "agricultural purposes", a term that means, "ALL NATURAL GROWTH AND PONDS MUST GO."

Prior to relocating the Trap Club, there was not enough public airing on the matter. I missed the public notice in *The Independent*, and so did others. We could have saved them a lot of work.

Yours for nature,
Virginia R. Maitland

"No water, no geese"

It was reported in the Buffalo Lake Naturalists news letter of June 22 that the Stettler Trap Club was scaring Canada Geese away by shooting at "Leo's Lake". During our June 12 shoot both adults and young were reported to have been seen walking overland in all directions, searching for water in a safer place.

The reality is that those geese chose a bad spot to nest. Waterfowl need water to survive. At the time we held our shoot Leo's Lake was as dry as a bone. As we were shooting the dust

was blowing off the bottom of the said "lake". So the truth is the "sad plight of the helpless goslings" had more to do with the lack of rain than the activities and "morals" of the club members. No water; no geese.

We held two regular Wednesday night shoots previous to the June 12 shoot where just as many rounds were fired on each night. If shotguns were going to scare these geese out of their habitat why would they wait until the third time to pack up and "wander aimlessly"? I repeat: no water, no geese.

Stettler Trap Club

There was water

Dear Editor:

It has come to my attention that I may be getting some answers to my report last week re: the geese leaving Leo's Lake.

Apparently people supposed to be "in the know" have flatly stated that the reason the geese left the lake was because the lake was dry.

This letter is to inform those people, and anyone else who may be of the same opinion, that I personally checked the lake on the second day after the shooting started and while I will admit that the water had receded drastically, there was still plenty of water on the south side of the "town well road" and it is highly unlikely that so many geese left at that time because of water shortage.

I was not alone on that check. My neighbour and I are both willing to testify to the fact that there was water there.

Thank you
Grace Neill

Buffalo Lake Naturalists made a tour of historic Neutral Hills area

(by Grace Neill)

Several B.L.N. members drove to Gooseberry Lake Park, north of Consort, on Saturday, July 9 and were met by Mr. and Mrs. Art Spencer who conducted a very interesting tour of the area.

Mr. Spencer has worked with Special Areas for many years and was a knowledgeable guide. He is also a member of a small group which has undertaken to preserve the local history and members have put a great deal of work and their own money into the task.

So, with a man in the lead who is both naturalist and historian, we spent an exciting afternoon. An ancient stone effigy, the figure of a man outlined in rocks, was found at the top of one of the highest hills west of the park. Thought to commemorate some famous Chief, it has not yet been declared an historic site. We all agreed with our guides that it should be, as already someone has disturbed it by digging, and moving a pile of

rocks which was probably some sort of cairn. Several plants unusual to us, growing nearby, were explained by Mr. Spencer who in his work has made extensive studies of all varieties of grasses, etc. An abandoned gravel pit along the road housed a colony of Bank Swallows. Many nest burrows were lined up near the top of a sand pile but they were too deep for the nests to be visible.

Further on, a stone cairn with sculptured bronze plaque tells the legend of the Neutral Hills which were seen in the background. This was erected by the Spencers' Historical group, and, a sad commentary on human nature, it had been vandalized shortly afterwards. Another cairn, similarly built, tells the history of the Big Gap Stampede which was held in the Hills many years ago. This one is less likely to be damaged as it is built on the exact site, now practically inaccessible.

Away from the Neutral Hills, back across Highway

12 and south of Monitor, is a natural phenomenon rightly named Mud Buttes. A part of these hills consists of the type of soil used as drilling mud in oilfield work. It oozes up and forms unstable heaps, to dry into crumbly flakes on the surface, making it hazardous to walk on. Otherwise, the bare sides of the hills give the appearance of having been tossed and twisted by some prehistoric upheaval. Many beautiful Prickly Pear Cactus bloom on the hills, as well as the tiny Moss Phlox. There is also a variety of nutritious grasses which make winter grazing for resident wildlife as well as cattle. Two buck deer scampered out of sight over a hill at the approach of visitors.

Unable because of the recent rains to travel the road to Sounding Lake and the N.W.M.P. cairn there, the Spencers took us to their home to see their collection of artifacts gathered in the vicinity. Hundreds of arrowheads and stone tools are displayed in neat cases,

most of this work having been done by Mrs. Spencer who has studied Archaeology. Another bronze plaque is ready to be installed at the grave of an early N.W.M.P. Constable who had later lived in the district, as a trapper. Their group is also preparing markers of steel plate for the old school sites in the area.

From the Spencers' farm, the Cochranes and their granddaughters departed for home while the rest went back to the Park. Vera Hansen, Barb Smith and Trudie Grafe left from there,

leaving only the Smith trio and the Neills to camp overnight and try to identify a number of birds singing in the trees. On Sunday morning the road led to Hanna, where a colony of Burrowing Owls were seen just east of town. Intriguing little birds, shy about being photographed, they inhabit gopher or prairie dog dens. Two antelope and several Canada geese were spotted along the road. Hanna Museum was the last stop before heading back up "56" toward home, a great time having been had by all.

July 1983

Spencer 12/1983

September 15 1983

Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club

(by Grace Neill)

On Thursday, September 15, Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club meeting got underway again after the summer break. 37 members and four visitors were present. Visitors were Pat Hahn, Brenda Hayes, Eva McBrien and Freda Turigan.

Roll call was answered by members telling highlights of their summer, which ranged from trips to many parts of the country, to brand-new twin grandchildren. Travelling farthest were the Tremmels to the East Coast, and Muhlbachs to New York.

Reports were heard on the trip to Gooseberry Lake in early July and the Federation of Alberta Naturalists summer outing in the Crowsnest Pass the next week. The Neills attended the latter, which was in support of the newest club, Squad 30-24 in a well-played Naturalists. 24 members from six clubs were there, and enjoyed a very well planned weekend.

Jim Burrell extended an invitation to members to join with the Rockateers at their meeting on October 3, to hear Dr. Phillip Currie, who has addressed the clubs before and is a very interesting speaker.

A suggestion that the club might get matching vests or jackets was tabled for more information.

It was decided that the club would support in principle the idea of erecting suitable markers at all old school sites. Jim Burrell told how nicely this had been done in an area he visited in Manitoba.

Vera Hansen read a letter from Vel Hainsworth, a valued member who has moved from our midst.

Elsie Cruickshank and Ernie Grafe were reported to be in the hospital. Get well wishes were sent to them. We are glad to have Herb Hayes back after his illness and long convalescence.

After lunch, served by Gladys Hewlett, Edna Haywood and Vi Isaman, Vera Hansen and Lloyd Lohr showed slides taken at various outings during the

past year.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 20.

The Neills and Lloyd Lohr attended the F.A.N. fall meeting held in Canmore's Bow River Lodge on September 17 and 18. 16 members held the meeting

while some 30 others enjoyed a drive and hike in Kananaskis County. On Saturday night all members joined the residents of the Lodge for supper, then the Seniors were invited to join in and enjoy the slide presentation given by Bob and

Mary Smith. On Sunday, one group hiked on Mount Yamnuska in the freshly fallen snow, while the rest drove and hiked around Bow Valley Provincial Park.

Our club will host the May, 1984 F.A.N. meeting. Details will be worked out later.

Chowenat - Elk Valley

October 20 1983

The Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Thirty members attended the regular meeting of the Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club October 20, and

welcomed Jack Armstrong as a visitor and new member.

Reports on the fall

meeting of Federation of Alberta Naturalists held in Canmore September 17 and 18 were given by Directors Lloyd Lohr and Grace Neill. Vel Hainsworth and George Neill were along to enjoy the field trips.

This Club will host the Spring F.A.N. meeting in May, 1984.

Get well cards for Elsie Cruickshank and Ernie Grafe, and a birthday card for Art Haywood were signed by all present.

The Club is ordering a supply of Christmas cards and Nature Calendars from Canadian Nature Federation, and will have them for sale. Also, the new F.A.N. pins are available now, and orders were taken for them.

There was more discussion on the subject of Club vests, but no action taken.

A Wildlife Photography Workshop is being held in Edmonton's Nature Centre

November 19, 20. Several members plan to attend.

The beautiful Audubon book donated by Eva Kirtley is now in the library. A fine addition to the Club's collection of reference material.

Bruce Smith showed a set of slides he had taken at various Club outings, as well as his own family trips, and a set given to the Club by Vel Hainsworth, also showing several club trips.

Lunch was supplied by Gwen Lang, Ron Komishke and Art Johnson.

Next meeting will be held on November 17.

On Sunday, October 23, eleven members met at Lloyd Lohr's and made a tour of several local ponds in search of Swans. Quite a number were found, as well as two large flocks of Canada Geese. A brisk hike in the woods and coffee and goodies at Lohr's rounded out a nice afternoon.

November 17, 1983

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Thirty-two members braved the foggy evening to attend the regular meeting of B.L.N. on Thursday, November 17.

Reports of a few remaining Summer birds, and the first of our Winter visitors, were heard at roll call.

Cards of thanks were read, from some recently-hospitalized members to whom well-wishes had been sent.

Other items of correspondence were read and discussed, one particularly concerning the opening of the upper reaches of the Oldman River to logging. So few true Wilderness areas remain, and each is constantly in danger from development of some sort.

Several names were suggested as possible new Directors to F.A.N. This will have to be settled before the F.A.N. Annual Meeting which is to be held in Calgary, January 21,22, 1984.

This Club is to host the Spr-

ing F.A.N. meeting May 19, 20, 1984. Anyone having ideas for field trips and/or entertainment, feel free to make suggestions. Advance planning is needed so a program may be made up to send to other clubs.

Christmas Bird Count day is Sunday, December 18, with tally session and Potluck Supper at the Meeting Room at 6 p.m. Each member please bring a food item and your own plate and cutlery. The second count, in the West area will be held a week or two later, possibly January 2.

After lunch, supplied by Buehla and Lloyd Lohr, Olive Long, Vera Hansen and Gladys Hewlett, Lloyd showed two N.F.B. films, "Grouse Country" and "The Flight of the Snows."

We regret to report the passing of Adam Maitland, just past his 89 birthday. A card of sympathy for Virginia was signed by all members present, and

several members attended the funeral in Camrose on Saturday.

Now is the time to start feeding our little Bird friends. A piece of suet hung in a mesh bag will be welcomed by the cheery Black-capped Chickadee and Downy and Hairy Woodpecker, and a feeder containing sunflower seeds will also attract Chickadees as well as Evening Grosbeaks. They will become quite tame and offer entertainment in exchange for the treats.

December 18 1983

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Dec. 8th meeting

Buffalo Lake Naturalists'

(by Grace Neill)

My apologies for not having this ready for last week's edition. I had not yet been given all of the information from the second bird count, and as I wish to have my reports as accurate as possible, it seemed best to delay for one week.

Members of Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club have again taken part in the Continent-wide Christmas Bird Count. This year marked the 84th consecutive official count, 1900 having been the first. In that year 27 observers covered twenty five county areas, and the number has now grown to over 35,000 observers in 1500 areas. A count area is a circle of 15 miles diameter, and each year the same area is covered. The local club has two such circles, one centred at the Verhoeven farm two miles East of Stettler, the other centered at the Charlie Forsyth farm South of Erskine. This one includes a

small area West of Red Deer River.

On December 18, the Stettler circle was covered, where 5,688 individuals of 14 bird species were noted by 22 observers and at seven feeding stations. By far the largest number were Snow Buntings. There were also four mammal species noted.

On January 2, in the Erskine circle twenty observers noted 429 individuals of 16 bird species, and three mammal species.

Notably scarce in both counts were Evening Grosbeaks, which have been found in substantial numbers in other years, and there were no Pine Grosbeaks seen this year. There were eight Sharp-tailed Grouse seen. These once-common birds were very scarce and really should be on the Endangered Species list.

A find of great interest to this observer was a Great Horned Owl, on the same spot where one had been seen last year. Also a Beaver, which are rarely seen out in winter.

Two Brewer's Blackbirds in Marvin Lohr's feedlot were another rare find. Also of note, but outside the time for the count were two Ravens and an Eagle. And not to forget to mention the Robin that was seen bathing in a puddle in George Cochrane's yard on January 2! One has to wonder where, and how that brave creature survived the -40 degree weather.

Contrary to the article in last week's paper, there was only one Owl species found, that being the Great Horned Owl, Alberta's official Provincial Bird. Although these owls can become a nuisance around farmyards, they do destroy a great number of rodents and they are protected by law.

Results of the Annual Bird Counts are published in the "Alberta Naturalists", printed by Federation of

Alberta Naturalists, and in the National Audubon Society's "American Birds."

On the evening of December 18, 45 B.L.N. members held their Christmas Potluck Supper. After a sumptuous meal the group sang Carols, accompanied by pianists Beula

Lohr and Dorothy Brownlee, Lloyd Lohr on the guitar, Art Johnson and his violin, and drummer Bruce Marshall. Vel Hainsworth, who had journeyed back from Barhead for the occasion, told what Christmas is like in Australia, in the Summer, and gave an amusing rendi-

tion of "Waltzing Matilda," and Lloyd Lohr sang the heart-rending ballad, "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer".

After the January 2 count, most of the observers met at Marvin and Bea Lohr's home for lunch and to turn in their lists to Lloyd who does

the big job of the final tally. The club's annual meeting will be held at 8 p.m. January 19 in the Recreation Centre Meeting Room. All members are urged to attend this important meeting as some new officials must be elected and plans made for the coming year.

Birders made annual count

Members of Buffalo Lake Naturalists headed by Director Lloyd Lohr have made bird counts in the pre-Christmas cold and again on Monday, and the results will be published next week by Grace Neill, press secretary of the group.

The data will be reported to Alberta Federation of Naturalists and will finally be forwarded to the Audubon Society in New York City.

The local counts were two of thousands held across North America each year from December 17 to January 2.

The statistics are used for a number of scientific purposes, such as determining bird populations densities in different regions, or population and migration changes over time.

Christmas is the traditional time for the winter counts mainly because people have free time then.

On the first trip on a very cold day more than 4,000 snow buntings were seen, but there were not present during the second outing. Redpolls have been strangely absent. Species most common were chickadees, black-billed magpies, hairy and downy woodpeckers, rock doves and several kinds of owls.