

The "Independent" copy of this report was lost. I copy it here from my rough copy notes. Lm.

January 21 1982

Because of the inclement weather, only seventeen members attended the 1982 Annual meeting of B.L.N. on Thursday, January 21.

The 1981 executives have agreed to stay on in their same positions for another term. They are as follows: President Wilf Hewlett. Vice President Art Weis. Secretary Lloyd Greenlee. Treasurer Marvin Lohr. Editor Virginia Maitland. Reporter Grace Neill. Directors to F.A.N. Freddie Gape and Grace Neill.

Virginia Maitland, our representative on the Buffalo Lake Action Committee, gave some highlights of the committee's progress, and distributed newsletters and questionnaires to those who had not been on the mailing list.

The club has received a letter from Mrs Evelyn Blocksome of Hanna expressing interest in our activities and wishing to join our membership. We welcome her and hope she will be able to attend our meetings.

There are some people who have been active members, who through advanced age or illness are no longer able to take part but are still interested in the club. It was decided that we should give honorary memberships to these people so that they may receive our newsletters and keep in touch.

B.L.N. is a corporate member of both Federation of Alberta Naturalists and Canadian Nature Federation. Membership dues are payable now, and will be paid on the basis of the number of members in 1981. Canadian Nature Federation 1982 conference is being held in Calgary on July 2-10. Lloyd Lohr read details of the program and various field trips. B.L.N. is hosting a 2-day bus tour in this area July 3-4. F.A.N. annual meeting is to be held at Camp Caroline this weekend, January 29-31. Lloyd Lohr, Freddie Gape and Grace Neill hope to attend.

January 21 1982 Continued

It was voted to place an order at the Top Shop for one hundred caps with "Buffalo Lake Naturalists" embroidered on the front.

Weather permitting the club will try to have a ski outing on February 7th.

A card was passed around for all present to sign, sending good wishes to Herb Krueger, who has been in hospital for some time.

The program committee will have the year's program ready to present at the next meeting, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>.

Lunch was provided by Trudie Gape, Marge Ganske and Ruth Cochrane.

February 18 1982

Feb 24/82

By  
Trudie  
Grafe

# Lloyd Lohr spots rare Pigmy Owl

The long cold spell finally broke and on Thursday, February 18, the meeting of the Buffalo Lake Naturalists was well attended. The roll call was answered by members' observations, which included woodpeckers, crows (unusually early), Boreal and Black-capped chickadees, Evening grosbeaks, partridges, Northern shrikes and Blue jays. Lloyd Lohr observed a rare visitor in a neighbor's barn, a Pigmy Owl.

The president, Wilf Hewlett, welcomed a new member, Ralph Wilson and two guests. A letter from the Wildlife Research Centre, Denver, Colorado, informed observers in Alberta of colour-coded Bald eagles, some of which are carrying radio transmitters. The colored markers are on the wings next to the body, blue on the left and green on the right. Please phone sightings to L. Lohr, 742-3846, giving location, time and date.

The report on the General meeting of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists (F.A.N.) held at Camp Caroline on January 28, 29, was given by Trudie Grafe. The many concerns of our diminishing wildlife, vanishing wilderness, destroyed habitat, encroaching resorts and town in the National Parks as well as the Forest Reserves were discussed, evaluated and actions proposed. The expert knowledge of the appointed officers gave these considerations a sound base.

The ornithology steering committee proposed to store the data of previous, recent and future bird movements, sightings and nesting records in a computer to be available for future research.

Of great interest was the establishment of the new National Grasslands Park in Saskatchewan. The fossil site on Mt. Burgess was declared World Heritage Site in July, 1981 by UNESCO. Beaverhill Lake Sanctuary, approximately 65

km east of Edmonton has received the status National Nature Viewpoint. For the first time in Alberta a license for a drilling site was denied on environmental grounds, leaving the wildlife corridor at Service Berry Creek undisturbed.

The hard work of the committee members and the devotion to their convictions made this meeting highly informative and fascinating. To make the next General Meeting more accessible to interested visitors, the location will be changed in 1983

to a central city. Membership in F.A.N. is available for \$10, seniors - \$8 per year by contacting F.A.N., Box 1472, Edmonton and includes the magazine Alberta Naturalist in four annual editions plus special issues.

Following, two films were shown: The Nahanni River, and a Canoe trip on the Yukon River. The raffle was won by Ruth Cochrane. A friendly chat over the coffee cups concluded the evening. The informative newsletter of BLN by Virginia Maitland is now available.

March 18 1982

## Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(By Grace Neill)

Thursday, March 18 saw a good turnout of 35 members and one visitor for the regular monthly meeting of Buffalo Lake Naturalists. Roll call revealed several Spring sightings of starlings, gophers, a crow or two. Several quite large herds of both Mule and Whitetail deer have been seen, and Lloyd Lohr had spotted a Great Grey Owl, rare this far East. There have been several reports of geese but none had yet been seen by club members.

Caps have been made up, in green and white with the Club name on the front, and they are being sold at \$4 each.

In spite of the ups and down of weather the past month, several ski outings have been enjoyed by from four to thirteen members. Another was planned for March 21. It turned out to be a beautiful day, and around 15 showed up to ski on Ewing Lake and up through the hills to "The Log Cabin."

For Bird Study, Jim Burrell showed a carousel of slides, "Birds Of The Forest" with commentary read by Vera Hansen. A contest conducted by Virginia Maitland had members try to identify seventeen different birds from silhouettes. The winner was Bea Lohr, who got twelve.

A good program of pictures from a canoe trip in the far North is planned for the Red Deer River Naturalists meeting March 25. Several B.L.N. members hope to take in that meeting.

At the next meeting of B.L.N. on April 22, Mrs. Helen Harris of the Red Deer Club will present a program of flower pictures.

Lunch was supplied by Art and Alma Weis, Linda Hayes and Art Johnson.

April 22 1982

# Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(By Grace Neill)

Thirty-two members and seven visitors attended the regular meeting of B.L.N. on Thursday April 22. Eleanor Moman was welcomed as a new member.

A lot of signs of Spring were reported. Everything is much later than last year but at least the Bluebirds are looking over the nest-boxes

and various other species are seen gathering nesting materials. Brave little Crocus buds are poking their heads out as well.

Members discussed plans for an early birding hike by Red Willow Creek, North-east of Botha on April 25 and a more ambitious project, a canoe trip on Battle River between Alliance bridge and

Burma bridge (North of Coronation) for the weekend May 8,9. Anyone interested in the canoe trip may contact Lloyd Lohr at 742-3846 for more details.

Virginia Maitland, the Club's representative to the Buffalo Lake Action Committee reported the results of the questionnaire which had been distributed. Less

than half were returned but of those who answered, most were in favor of Lake Stabilization while being more reserved in opinion of cost sharing.

Apparently, the old Raccoon has been sighted in the area. If anyone sees, or has seen one of these animals, the club has a paper for recording details. The District Agriculturist's office also has the paper.

Red Deer River Naturalists have started publishing a small newspaper of interest to all of Central Alberta. A copy was on display and they will be appearing in local stores as soon as the next edition is out.

Helen Harris of the Red Deer club brought a very enjoyable program of slides. The first part, a set made up by her group with a tape by their President Mike O'Brien, gave an excellent view of the feelings of Naturalists toward their environment. Mrs. Harris' study of flowers showed a great deal of work on her part, in finding and photographing the specimens and then in arranging the slides for an interesting and educational presentation. A hearty vote of thanks was given Mrs. Harris, and her husband Herb, for bringing over such a good program.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 20 at 9 p.m., preceded by the Annual Waterfowl Hike to "Shuckburghs' Slough". Hikers will meet at the Museum at 7 p.m.

Lunch was provided by the Jamesons, Marie Kerl and Ron Komishke.

May 20 1982 2891 AS 1192

## Buffalo Lake Naturalists took waterfowl hike

(By Grace Neill)

Thursday, May 20 was the date of B.L.N.'s annual Waterfowl Hike. Altogether 29 members and four visitors took part in the hike and/or the meeting which followed.

Along the road west of the Museum and across "Leo's Lake" 21 species of birds were identified. There were far fewer ducks than in previous years, but more shorebirds, due probably to the shallow water.

Roll call revealed several sightings of Pronghorn Antelope, which are becoming more common in the area. One member reported seeing a family of wild goslings. Orioles and wrens are back, as well as several different kinds of sparrows. This writer had two unusual sightings, a Brown Thrasher and what appeared to be an albino hawk.

Several members had gone on an early hike April 25 to Red Willow Creek Valley northeast of Botha. Because of the late Spring there were no flowering plants found. The creek was high so they had the exciting experience of crossing it on a fallen tree. Nobody admitted to falling in!

Lloyd Lohr reported on a successful canoe trip May 8, 9 on the Battle River. A party of 12 made the trip, two exciting days with a camp-out between. A lot of wildlife was spotted, including Blue Herons building their nest. At one point, an unfortunate cow was found mired in the mud, and rescued. A new recruit to canoeing, Vel Hainsworth was so thrilled with the trip

that she went on another the next week on the Red Deer River.

May 29 and 30 will be Annual Species Count days. Birds, animals and flowering plants will be counted, in the usual 15-mile diameter circle around Stettler. These counts are forwarded to Federation of Alberta Naturalists and added to counts taken by other clubs throughout the Province.

A trip on June 6 to Mi-

quelon Lake was discussed. Phoning Committee will contact members who were not at the meeting.

The June 17 meeting will be held at the Kruger farm as before with Nature Hikes and a hamburger supper, with a \$2 charge for the meal. Meet at Krugers' at 6 p.m.

Lunch was served by Gwen Lang, Olive Long and Virginia Maitland. Lloyd Lohr and grandson Kelly Strandquist have attended the spring meeting of Federation of Alberta Naturalists at the Harvey Gardner ranch west of Nanton the past weekend, May 22, 23, 24.

June 17 1982

## Naturalists held annual barbecue

(by Grace Neill)

This writer was pleased to discover that old friends who have moved to B.C., and still receive *The Independent*, enjoy reading this column.

The evening of June 17 saw 39 members and friends enjoy the annual outdoor meeting, nature hikes and barbecue at the Kruger farm. This outing had become a tradition with Herb Kruger at the controls, and all were happy that Martha and Ron are willing to carry it on.

Hikers were able to witness the banding of five young Mountain Bluebirds, with Lloyd Lohr patiently explaining to the children the reasons for doing this. A long search for Lady's Slippers was finally rewarded near the end of the walk. Apparently the weather did not favor their blooming in the usual numbers this year. A great number of other blooms were seen and identified along the hiking, and winter skiing trail through Lohrs' pasture. It is nice to see an area like that, left in so near to its natural state. Several birds, unusual to other quite near areas, were heard or seen there as well.

Beavers have felled several trees across one part of the trail, blocking it to vehicles. Their plans don't always work out either, their lodge is in the opposite direction! At another point, a

groundhog curiously watched the watchers from a log near her den.

After the hike, the hamburgers and pancakes were soon devoured. In the short meeting that followed, a card was signed by all, to be sent to George Jameson, who is seriously ill in the University Hospital. Everyone hopes he will soon be able to join in the fun again.

Lloyd Lohr gave a brief report on the F.A.N. meeting he had attended in May, and reminded the group of the Canadian Nature Conference in Calgary, July 3, 4, conducted by the club. Lloyd

has the details.

Bill Muhlbach told of a tour being planned by The Agricultural Service Board to the High River area July 6-9.

The club is planning a bus trip to Fort Edmonton, August 15.

A Labor Day Weekend

canoe trip and campout on Red Deer River is planned for September 4, 5, 6.

This was the final regular meeting for the summer. Next meeting will be held in the usual place on Thursday, September 16, 8 p.m.

Meanwhile, Happy Holidays, everyone!

## Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Niell)

On the morning of July 3, despite the wet weather, six people arrived by chartered bus from Calgary to take part in the two day tours promised by Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club. These tours were one part of the program offered at the Canadian Nature Federation Conference being held in Calgary, attended by naturalists from across Canada.

After getting settled in their motel and having lunch, they boarded the bus, accompanied by guides Wilf Hewlett and Lloyd Lohr. By way of Donald, where they enjoyed the Museum, and through the scenic valley, the tour took them to the Battle River Power Plant. There

being no one in authority available to guide the group, Lloyd and Wilf, armed with brochures obtained at the Plant's open house last September, were able to explain the project to everyone's satisfaction. This of course included the land reclamation work, a prime concern of naturalists.

After a visit to "Bigfoot" and "Brutus", the giant machines used in mining coal for the plant, the group enjoyed an hour's walk in Big Knife Park--again despite the rain!

Back to town for supper, and the visitors, accompanied by several B.L.N. members, enjoyed the trip out to "Leo's Lake" for a look at the birds. (This time, "thanks" to the rain, there is considerably more to the lake and the birds appreciate it.) Joining another group who had stopped to see the Town and County Museum, they made a rather hurried trip through the museum. Vel Hainsworth then kindly offered to take everyone to her home for

coffee, and entertained them with her slides from two memorable canoe trips.

At 9 a.m. on the 4, raining again, it was decided to leave the bus behind and take the visitors in cars to Buffalo Lake and the Boss Hill area. There they were entertained by Mrs. Astrid Rider who was able to explain the history and present activities of the area while supplying coffee and cookies. After a brief trip out to see an archaeological project and a look at the very wet lake, the group returned to town to dry off and have lunch before heading back to Calgary by way of Drumheller.

The visitors each took home one of the B.L.N. crests as a memento of the trip, which they all had thoroughly enjoyed. Thanks go to all of the club members who helped, specially to Vel and to Mrs. Rider who opened their homes for the occasion. Though plans had to be altered some because of the weather, the weekend was judged a success and again the hospitality of Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club will be acclaimed.

July 3-4

# Buffalo Lake naturalists report

(by Grace Neill)

To start off another series of regular meetings of Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club, 28 members and two visitors met in the Recreation Centre meeting room at 8 p.m. September 16. The visitors were Samantha Kudras and Helen Shinness.

Some interesting trips were reported on at Roll Call, with sightings from richly-hued alpine flowers to Burrowing Owls. An Oriole's nest, and one of an unidentified tiny bird were brought in by Trudie Grafe. The Oriole had used for the outside structure bits of frayed-out plastic twine, supplied by the Grafes, but had lined it with the usual material, horsehair.

Newspaper pictures were shown, of a Raccoon and a moose in the Halkirk area. What could be the reason for wildlife such as these appearing in habitat so foreign to them?

The club's finances are such that now a good screen for the projector can be afforded. Lloyd Lohr was instructed to shop for one.

The bus trip to Fort Edmonton Park was attended by around forty people. A pleasant day was enjoyed by all.

Labor Day weekend having been cold and wet, the proposed canoe trip on Red Deer River was cancelled.

The outing of October 3 planned for the Buffalo Lake area has been cancelled, so a replacement outing was discussed. McKenzie Crossing west of Big Valley was suggested, with possibly a drive from there to Buffalo Jump Park. Phoning committee will advise members. Anyone else interested in taking part may phone Gladys Hewlett at 742-3739.

Lloyd Lohr took the group along, via his pictures, on a trip he had in Ontario. He spent ten days backpacking along the Bruce Trail, covering about 90 miles. The Trail is considerably longer, altogether, and is maintained by local volunteers along its route. A really thrilling trip for one with the

necessary stamina, but everyone thoroughly enjoyed the "armchair version."

Lunch was supplied by Marshalls, Muhlbachs and Barb Smith.

On the weekend of September 18, 19 the fall meeting of Federation of Alberta Naturalists was held in G.H. Dawe School in Red Deer. Trudie Grafe and Grace Neill attended as directors from B.L.N. The evening program on bluebirds, by Bryan Shantz, was attended also by the Hewletts, the Haywoods, Vel Hainsworth and Lloyd Lohr. Mr. Shantz is the Biologist hired by Union Carbide to monitor the effects of activities of their Prentiss plants on the hundreds of bluebirds of the "Ellis Bird Farm." He is also Western Canada's director to the North American Bluebird Society. He is willing to bring his presentation to a B.L.N. meeting and it is hoped he will be available for the October meeting. Anyone interested in bluebirds will be welcome to attend. Notice will be given when date is assured. If you are presently, or anticipate maintaining bluebird nest boxes or are interested in the possible formation of a local Bluebird Club, please keep this in mind. It is a very rewarding experience, even on a small scale.

September 16 1982

October 21 1982

## Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

On Thursday, October 21, 29 members and four guests gathered for the regular meeting of B.L.N. The guests were Marie Bignell, Karen Fischer, Myrtle Raposo and Helen Shinness.

Because of the rain and snow on October 3, the outing planned for that day had been cancelled. No more outings are planned at this time.

Trudie Grafe reported on the Fall meeting of Federation of Alberta Naturalists, held in Red Deer in September.

Copies of the latest Newsletter were distributed by Editor Virginia Maitland. As well, several copies of Central Alberta Naturalists, the Red Deer River Naturalists' newspaper, were on hand.

The club will purchase material for Jim Burrell to build a suitable bookcase for the club's library which has outgrown its two suitcases.

Members voted to make a financial contribution to the "Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation."

The new fall series of The Nature of Things, with Dr. David Suzuki is now underway. Watch for it on Channel 6, Wednesday, 8 p.m.

Red Deer River Naturalists regular meeting is Thursday, October 28, at 8

p.m., in Lindsay Thurber School Library. This month's program is to be on the Willmore Wilderness Area. Several B.L.N. members hope to take in this program.

The November 18 meeting of B.L.N. will feature a program by Bryan Shantz, on the Ellis Bluebird Farm and the way Union Carbide is carrying out its promise to protect and care for the hundreds of birds Mr. Ellis has attracted to his sanctuary over many years. For this meeting only, the program will come first, beginning at 8 p.m. so that school children may attend without being kept up too late. Business meeting will follow. Anyone who is interested in Bluebirds is encouraged to attend as this is a very good program.

The new screen, purchased by the Club since last meeting, was put to good use by Marvin Lohr. He showed a lovely set of slides depicting places he and Beatrice visited this past summer. From South Dakota's Badlands, Niagara Falls, Quebec City, the St. Lawrence River, right on to Prince Edward Island, another trip was enjoyed by the whole group.

Lunch was served by Lola Stewart, the Strandquists and Gladys Hewlett.

## Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Six B.L.N. members attended the October 28 meeting of Red Deer River Naturalists. Feature of that meeting was a show of slides and commentary by Vivian Pharis of Alberta Wilderness Association, on the Willmore Wilderness Area near Grande Cache. One of Alberta's few remaining true wilderness areas, threatened several times already by would-be developers, Willmore is certainly deserving of protection. True, it is accessible to only those hardy enough to travel several days at a time on foot or horseback, but if developed in the manner planned, its wilderness designation will cease — a serious loss to future generations.

On November 7, several members joined the hundreds who attended the Open House at the Sheerness Generating Plant being built

by Alberta Power Ltd. The project, enormous beyond imagination, will be under construction for over two years more. Visitors were taken by busloads on a tour of the project area, and at the camp were treated to a bountiful lunch of pastries, fresh fruit, ice cream, coffee and juices.

Another reminder of the forthcoming meeting of B.L.N. in the Stettler Recreation Centre on November 18, when Bryan Shantz, biologist with Union Carbide will present his program on Bluebirds, specifically the Ellis Bluebird Farm where he is in charge of the care and protection of the hundreds of birds which have been attracted to the property by Mr. Ellis over many years. The program will begin at 8 p.m. and everyone who is interested in Bluebird preservation is invited, even urged to attend.

November 18 1982 (BPP) (redated)

Despite the snowstorm, and competition from several other meetings and functions in town at the same time, around 40 people attended the November B.L.N. meeting on Thursday, 18. 10 were visitors, attracted by the Bluebird program presented by Bryan Shantz. A very enjoyable and informative program, based on the Ellis Bluebird Farm and Union Carbide's project in the Joffre-Prentiss area, it told the story of the Ellis' effort to attract and protect Bluebirds on their farm over many years, and how Union Carbide was persuaded to carry on the work after purchasing the land.

Mr. Shantz, the first biologist ever hired by the company, is in charge of the care and protection of the bird colony, and of monitoring the effects of the industry's presence on the birds. It is hoped that with such cooperation from a large industry, the birds will be able to continue to thrive in the area as they have done for so long. This year's results seem promising, good news to all Bluebird lovers and specially to the elderly brother and sister who have put so much loving work into their project.

The Bluebird Story was followed by a shorter, but no less interesting, one on Eagles and Hawks. This also by Mr. Shantz. In appreciation for bringing the program to the club, President Wilf Hewlett presented Bryan and his wife, Hazel, who admits to having helped him with the work, each with a B.L.N. cap.

Visitors who received special mention for their birding efforts were Aletha Hrycyk, Agnes Klaus and Hazel Rachar as old-timers in the game, and Ed Faechner, a beginner who had rare good luck with his first Bluebird houses, this year.

Following lunch, which was supplied by Marion Webb, Evelyn Van Buggenum and Lloyd Lohr, a brief business meeting was held.

Plans for the club's Christmas Party and Bird Count days were discussed. Counts will be undertaken on December 19 and January 2, when club members will

cover two areas to determine how many birds of how many different species can be found. Count coordinator is Lloyd Lohr. The Christmas party will be a potluck supper and entertainment, held in the meeting room at 6 p.m., December 19. Participants are requested to bring a food dish of their choice, and plates and cutlery for themselves.

*Buffalo Lake naturalists*

## The Ellis Bluebird Farm

(by Grace Neill)

It was decided the club should take a membership in Alberta Wilderness Association.

Present executive is to be the nominating committee to find new executive members for the next year. Annual Meeting date is January 20. Memberships of \$2. individual, or \$3. family are due at that time. New members will be welcome.

If you have a place in the country where a nestbox or two can be maintained, it is a rewarding experience, well worth the effort to provide a place where Bluebirds can nest and raise their young. Plans and instructions can be obtained from the Club.

Now that cold weather has arrived, a piece of suet hung from a tree branch will be welcomed by Chickadees and both Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, and they in return provide entertainment for the donor. It takes little effort to attract these lively little fellows and they become quite friendly in no time.

Nov 1982

December 19 1982

# Naturalists can't explain birds' absence

(by Grace Neill)

Members of B.L.N. have completed their bird counts for the winter of 1982-83. These counts are held at approximately the same time each winter, in two areas, the Stettler area and the Erskine - Red Deer River area. Each takes in a circle of 15 miles diameter.

On December 19, 1982, in the Stettler circle, 498 birds

of 14 species were counted. This compares badly with the 1981 count of 864 birds of 15 species.

On January 2, 1983, the Erskine - Red Deer River area yielded only 184 birds, of 12 species. Again an unfavorable comparison to the January 3, 1982 count of 591 birds, 18 species.

Most notably missing this year, are Redpolls, Snow

Buntings and Grosbeaks, which in other winters have been seen in great flocks. No scientific explanation has yet been offered for their disappearances.

On the evening of December 19, following the bird count, over 30 members and friends gathered in the meeting room for the annual Christmas Potluck Supper. Your reporter was unable to

attend, due to the 'flu' bug, but has been assured a great time was had by all. The feast was followed by the singing of carols, to the accompaniment of Lloyd Lohr's guitar.

Sympathy of fellow members is offered to Margaret Spensley and Olive Long, whose husbands passed away recently.



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