

The Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

A good turnout of 30 members attended the Annual Meeting of B.L.N. on Thursday, January 19, 1984.

A new member, Elsie Tennant was welcomed to the Club.

The only major change made in the Executive list was the election of two new directors to Federation of

Alberta Naturalists. Wilf Hewlett and Marvin Lohr were named to this post and they, along with Appointed Director Lloyd Lohr have attended the F.A.N. Annual Meeting in Calgary over the weekend. Their reports of that meeting will be received at our February 16 meeting.

A common problem has turned up among those

maintaining bird feeding stations. The pesky Weaver Finch, alias English Sparrow or House Sparrow, have discovered the feeders this winter and are invading in great numbers. They have not bothered before, having been able to find their meals elsewhere so it is a puzzle why they have all at once decided to join the

Chickadees in a feast of sunflower seeds.

Hugh Charles kindly donated a large box full of bags of suet for members to take for their feeders. Suet is greatly appreciated by Chickadees and small Woodpeckers and so far the sparrows don't seem to have acquired a taste for it.

Secretary Vera Hansen was instructed to write a letter of appreciation to Gulf Canada Resources for their decision not to use domestic water in their oilfield operations.

Lloyd Lohr brought the news that Fred Schutz has been honored with the Loren Goulden Award for his many years of contributing a Nature Column to the Rimby Record.

From Bryan Shantz comes an invitation to a meeting of the Bluebird Association in Lethbridge on February 11.

A note from member Evelyn Blocksome of Hanna inviting members to observe wildlife in her area in the spring. This will be considered by the Program Committee.

There was some discussion of plans for the forthcoming spring meeting of F.A.N. which will be hosted by B.L.N. on the May long weekend.

Lunch was supplied by Marshalls, Muhlbachs and Gladys Hewlett.

The Neills were surprised on January 17 to observe an Osprey which was dining on a pigeon less than a hundred feet from their house. Ospreys, otherwise known as Fish Hawks, are supposed to be exclusively fish-eaters and should have left for South America in October, so why this one stayed so long is another puzzle. At any rate, it must have decided a pigeon made a better meal than a fish it couldn't find!

We have a report from Orville Hanna, a Fenn area farmer that he too has a Blackbird wintering at his place. Also that a Mourning Dove had been seen there during and after the December cold spell.

January 19 1984

Another chirp from ye Olde Editor!

Guest Editorial

(By Clunk Claudwart)

(Ed's note: The language has been cleaned up in Mr. Claudwart's remarks.)

In your paper of January 25, a member of the Buffalo Lake Naturalists referred to the English Weaver (House Sparrow) as a pesky bird at the feeder. My dictionary says pesky means annoying, disagreeable and troublesome. I wonder if the same description would be used if it had a yellow head, red wings and green tail feathers. What other bird hops around your yard chirping a happy tune all year and what other bird eats all the bugs in your garden from spring to fall?

It is said that sparrows invade the houses of other birds.

This is not so. It is the migratory birds that invade because a sparrow picks a house and guards it all year long and will fight like hell to keep it.

In another article (same paper) it mentions a sparrow needs eight grams of weed seeds a day to survive. Is this too much to ask for a happy chirp and somebody to look after your garden?

I hope the naturalists have not forgotten the days of their youth when sparrows even cleaned the streets of Stettler in the middle of winter and all they got was horse manure.

— Clunk Claudwart

P.S. Have a nice day.

Am planning a new sparrow house.

My identification of an Osprey was shot down by a couple of more knowledgeable people. They tell me it was a female Goshawk. Sorry about that!

February 16 1984

The Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Thirty-four members and five visitors attended the regular meeting of Buffalo Lake Naturalists Thursday, February 16.

Brief reports were heard from the Directors who had attended the Annual meeting of Federation of Alberta Naturalists.

An Editorial Committee formed to replace Virginia Maitland, who has resigned from that position, had compiled the first Newsletter for the year and copies were distributed among those present. The 1984 programs were also on hand. Some interesting outings are being considered for this year.

It was decided to order more club caps and to check on getting more of the small

crests made.

We are sorry to hear that the Bruce Smiths are planning to move. They will be missed by the Club.

Skiing has not been good this winter so there have been no Club-planned outings of this nature. The Krugers and Muhlbachs have tried to keep a trail but conditions have not been favourable.

Signs of Spring: a few gophers have been seen and Magpies seem to be starting nests. It seems a bit early.

We are pleased to have Ivan Dawson come to show slides from part of the world tour he and Hazel had last year. His choice of pictures from the Orient — Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia

were enjoyed by all. He also had a display of souvenirs from those places.

The next meeting will be held March 15. This will be Nature Study Night. Bring

along your bird books, articles, artifacts or specimens of interest.

Lunch was served by Barb Smith, Marion Webb and Grace Neill.

March 15 1984

1984

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Thirty-three members attended the regular B.L.N. meeting on March 15. There were no visitors this time.

Since winter seemed to have returned there were few further signs of spring noted. A great number of Snow Buntings have been seen, also a herd of over twenty white-tailed Deer and some Horned Larks.

Some plans have been made for the Spring F.A.N. meeting to be held here May 19-21, but more work is needed on this and all plans will have to be finalized by the time of our next meeting, April 19.

An invitation to participate in a meeting regarding the proposed Milk River Ecological Reserve was unfortunately received too late. However, another meeting, on the Rumsey Natural Area, will be held later in the year, and we must get in on that one.

Members have been invited to attend the April 2nd meeting of the Rockateers, who will have a very interesting speaker on Ar-

chaeology in the Old Crow area.

Marge Ganske, Earl Cruikshank and Helen Shinness are all in hospital. Well wishes go out to each of them. Sympathy is extended to Jim Burrell who lost a brother recently.

Entertainment for the evening was films, one on the High Artic, one on Gannets of Bonaventure Island, and "Twenty Million People" about the settlement and progress of Canada from the 1700's to 1967.

Next meeting will be April

19, and that will be Nature Study night previously planned for the March meeting.

April 19 1984

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Twenty-four club members were joined by two visitors at the regular meeting of B.L.N. on Thursday, April 19.

As this had been declared Nature Study meeting, several articles were brought by members to display. These included two artistically decorated pieces of driftwood, several bird nests, a large shelf fungus, a Ruffed Grouse, a Deer Mouse, two specimens of the scourge of lawn and hayfield, the Pocket Gopher, and a panel of pressed leaves and flowers.

The most notable report at roll call was that of a flock of several thousand Lapland Longspurs seen by Lloyd Greenlee. Our beautiful Bluebirds have returned, such a lovely reward to all who have put up nest boxes for them.

A note was received from Marge Ganske. We were happy to hear she is back home at Heart Haven after a stay in Bashaw Hospital. Grace Grabill was reported to be in University Hospital in Edmonton, having suffered a stroke. Earl Cruikshank is back in Stettler Hospital after having been in a Calgary Hospital. We wish them all well.

Vern Richardson has kindly donated for the club library a number of copies of the Saskatchewan Naturalists publication, the "Blue Jav."

Sunday, April 29 has been chosen for the annual Bird Walk by Red Willow Creek, northeast of Botha. Participants are asked to bring their lunch and meet at Lloyd Greenlees at 1:30 p.m.

A canoe trip is to be undertaken on Battle River on May 5-6. Likely from the dam at Forestburg to Highway 36 near Alliance.

Next regular meeting will be on Thursday, May 17, when final plans will be made for the meeting of F.A.N., May 19 - 21.

The F.A.N. summer outing will be held in the Medicine Hat area, June 29 - July 2.

Allen Clarke gave an interesting account of his recent trip to the Dominican Republic as a member of a group from the Seventh Day Adventist Church who went

there to put up a building at their Campground.

Lunch was supplied by Allen and Bertha Clarke,

Edith Ciark, and the Burrells.

June 21 1984 PJ Lind

34

The Buffalo Lake Naturalists

by Grace Neill

On Thursday, June 21, around 48 members and friends gathered at Martha and Ron Kruger's farm home for the last regular meeting of the season.

Two groups ventured out to see what goodies Mother Nature had to offer. The most startling find was the devastation left by hordes of Tent Caterpillars -- mile long stretches of trees completely stripped of leaves, branches black with the crawling masses. Not a pretty sight, and not very inviting to those who wished to hike in search of wildflowers and birds.

However, a few bravely walked a short distance in on Lloyd Lohr's well-marked trail, and found a number of undamaged blossoms. There were Wild Roses, Meadow Rue, two different Wintergreens, one species of Orchid, Lady's Slippers, Heart-leaved Alexanders. A Veery was heard singing high in the leafless trees. The group was also able to witness the banding of a family of five baby Bluebirds. The other group found Shooting Stars and a large patch of Elephant Heads, and were happy to see six adult Canada Geese with twenty-two young at the Beaver Lodge. Also seen were a number of species of Ducks, Coots, Terns, Yellowhead and Redwing Blackbirds, some Hawks and a Robin that has occupied a roofless Bluebird house.

As has become tradition for the June meeting, a fine supper of hamburgers and potato pancakes awaited the hikers back at Krugers. Thanks go to the Charles for supplying the meat for the occasion, and to Martha and Ron for preparing and serving. Desserts were brought by several others.

Several members plan to take in the F.A.N. Summer outing in the Medicine Hat area on the long weekend.

The proposed June 24 trip to Devon Gardens was postponed to July 22. A bus has been engaged for the trip. Members wishing to take this tour please call Gladys Hewlett at 742-3739 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. week days.

There will be no meetings in July and August. The next

regular meeting will be September 20.

May 17 1984

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

by Grace Neill

On May 17 twenty members attended the regular meeting, after several had taken the walk out to Leo's Lake to find twenty bird species there. Several species found there in other years were not seen.

Members received the sad news of the death of one of our more ardent birders, one

who had kept a list of every bird species seen in her lifetime. Grace Grabill will be sorely missed. A card of sympathy was sent to her family, and a donation is being sent to the Heart Fund in her memory. A number of club members attended her funeral on Saturday and it was noted that, as a fitting tribute to one who loved

Nature, an Oriole sang during the graveside service.

Get-well cards were sent to Earl and Elsie Cruikshank who are both hospital patients.

A few last minute details were settled for the F.A.N. weekend. Thanks go to Alma Weis for getting the programs printed.

Lloyd Lohr reported on the

April 29 hike on Red Willow creek. The creek was found to be extremely low, and what few flowering species were found were small, stunted likely by the cool dry weather. Seven bird species and Red Squirrel were seen.

There was no canoe trip May 5-6, due to unfavorable weather. Future plans: Species Count Days, May 26 and 27, groups will take essentially the same routes as last year, on one or the other day. Birds, mammals and flowering plants to be noted. On Sunday, June 3, members will meet at the Vic Tremmel farm, four miles East of Linda Hall at 1:30 p.m. and be conducted by Vic on a hike along Herbert Lake.

Next meeting, June 21, will feature the annual Hamburger Cookout at Martha and Ron Krugers farm.

A trip to Devon Gardens and Clifford E. Lee Sanctuary is proposed for June 24.

Bertha Smith and the Tremmels supplied lunch.

A very successful Federation of Alberta Naturalists weekend was held here, with Buffalo Lake Naturalists as hosts.

It began with registration on Friday evening and finished off with a visit to the proposed Rumsey Aspen

May 19-21

Parkland Natural Area on Monday, the Meet included the regular F.A.N. Directors meeting on Saturday, field trips Saturday morning to the Buffalo Lake area and Saturday afternoon to the Ewing Lake area. Saturday evening supper, prepared by Don Gillespie and staff, was enjoyed by around sixty people. After supper, slides of the Flora and Fauna of Dry Island Buffalo Jump Park were shown by Steven Briggs and Lloyd Lohr showed slides taken on various

earlier F.A.N. trips.

On Sunday, over thirty people were entertained by Dr. Charles Bird and family at the South-west corner of Buffalo Lake. Dr. Bird explained the workings of the Weather Station which he maintains in co-operation with Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, then conducted a hike through his farm, to "The Narrows" The group were excited to find a good supply of Morel Mushrooms, and several patches of Pale Coral-root

Orchids growing among the Balsam Poplars. A number of Songbirds were identified, as well as some Butterflies and Skippers. A picnic dinner was enjoyed (in between showers) on the grounds of the Birds' lovely home, and Mrs. Bird kindly supplied coffee and goodies in the house after the hike. All were indeed grateful to the Birds for their hospitality.

It is hoped that the visitors from the other clubs enjoyed the weekend as much as we local people did.

September 20 1984

84 The Buffalo Lake Naturalists

(by Grace Neill)

Twenty four members were on hand on Thursday, September 20 for the first regular meeting of the season.

A letter was received from a young man requesting assistance in his University studies of Geography. Our club was one of several Environmental groups interested in Natural Resource development which he had chosen to interview. Lloyd Lohr agreed to meet with him as resource person.

1985 will be the Centennial year of Parks Canada, and the club has been invited to submit suggestions for celebration programing.

Canadian Nature Federation asks help in recruiting new members. Part of the

membership fee would be returned to the club.

A young man, Danny Smith, was around during the Summer working on the Nestbox Survey. He visited those with nestbox trails and recorded each box for future identification. This is a project connected with Ellis Bird Farm.

A letter was read from Vel Hainsworth. Vel now lives in Olds, but her heart is still with the club. She has promised she will, if asked, come to entertain a future meeting with her slides.

Environment Committee plan to meet at Vera Hansen's home on the evening of October 4. Program Committee will meet soon to draw up next year's programs.

A new supply of caps and crests is now on hand.

The Federation of Alberta Naturalists' summer trip to Medicine Hat area was taken in by Hewletts, Neills and Lloyd Lohr and his Grandson Kelly Strandquist. Reports were given on the different aspects of the trip by Gladys, Grace and Lloyd. A number of photos from the trip were on hand.

Lunch was supplied by Ruth Cochrane, Mary Faechner and Gladys Hewlett.

Next meeting will be held on October 18. Lloyd Lohr will show slides.

The Hewletts and Neills went to Edmonton on the weekend for the fall F.A.N. meeting and programs. Reports from this outing are forthcoming.

November 15, 1984

Buffalo Lake Naturalists Club

34
by Grace Neill

Thirty members attended the regular meeting on Thursday, November 15. The October meeting had been cancelled because of stormy weather and icy roads.

It was decided to send a

contribution to the Jack Miner foundation to help in maintaining bird sanctuaries.

Wilf Hewlett reported on the Fall meeting of Federation of Alberta Naturalists, held in Edmonton in September.

There will be a workshop on Cavity Nesting Birds, in the Recreation Centre Meeting Room at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 27, not on the 22 as reported earlier in The Independent. This is from the Ellis Bird Farm Project. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Vera Hansen has a supply of Calendars and Christmas Cards from Canadian Nature Federation, being sold by the Club.

They can be picked up at Vera's home.

The Club also has a good supply of caps and crests on hand.

The December Bird Count day for Stettler area is December 23. Potluck supper and Christmas party to follow. The second count, in the Erskine area will be held on December 30.

Lloyd Lohr entertained with a show of slides, some taken of Summer Club activities and some from a pack trip he had taken in the Rockies with Wilderness Association people.

Lunch was served by Vera Hansen, Trudie Grafe and Mike Graham.

December 23, 1984

Naturalists held Christmas meeting

(by Grace Neill)

About 40 people gathered at the meeting room for the club's Christmas potluck supper on Sunday, December 23. It was nice to have Bruce and Glynis Smith and Vel Hainsworth back for the occasion, as well as the Martin Grafe and Graeme Greenlee families as visitors. Some members were missed, as they were out of town or had visitors at their homes for Christmas.

After enjoying supper, the group took part in some nature-oriented contests conducted by Lloyd Lohr. Lloyd then gave an amusing (though sexist) reading, and Vel Hainsworth in her charming way recited a poem in praise of her homeland, Australia. The evening was rounded out with the singing of several Christmas Carols.

A number of members had been out during the

day, conducting the annual Christmas Bird Count. A total of 1016 individuals of 21 species were reported. Of special interest were a Merlin, two Snowy Owls, a Pileated Woodpecker, a Junco, some Lapland Longspurs, a Hoary Redpoll, a flock of 160 Common Redpolls, and 400 Snow Buntings.

The second count, in the Erskine circle, was held on December 30. It being such a cold day, not many went out, but they came up with a count of 559 individuals of 12 species. Notable in that area were a Mountain Chickadee and two Boreal Chickadees which are very rarely seen here.

Members are reminded that the Club's Annual Meeting will be held on January 17. It is important that as many as possible attend, as election of 1985 executive will take place at this meeting.

Happy New Year, everyone.