

THE SAGEBRUSH CHRONICLE



Rick Andrews Returns

We welcome back **Rick Andrews** whose presentation on the **Wildlife of the Oldman River Valley** at our September 2018 meeting was extremely well received. This nature documentary was truly remarkable and we are sure these two films will be equally outstanding and informative.

Rick Andrews is a wildlife photographer and filmmaker from Lethbridge Alberta. Over the years he has photographed wildlife in many iconic locations including the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the Canadian Rockies, British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, Churchill Manitoba, Alaska and Japan.

More recently Rick has produced two short films on local area wildlife including "Country Club Marmots" and "Lethbridge Wild Turkeys" both of which feature local area wildlife.

Through his photography and film, Rick helps audiences develop a deeper understanding of our wildlife, as well as a desire to protect our natural world, for the benefit of future generations.

"Sea Wolves of British Columbia" run time: 16:27
"Behind the Scenes: Sea Wolves of British Columbia"
13:07

The coastal or sea wolves of British Columbia are a genetically distinct subspecies of grey wolf that inhabit the windswept coast and coastal islands of northwest British Columbia. Deriving as much as 75% of their diet directly from the sea, these wolves are truly unique and are found nowhere else on earth.

In the summer of 2018, local wildlife photographer and filmmaker Rick Andrews filmed a family of sea wolves which he will share tonight in two short documentary films.

Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at the Library Theatre

6:30 to 7:00 PM: Annual General Meeting

7:00 to 9:00 PM: Sea Wolves of British Columbia

Executive

President	Hugh Armstrong armstrongg.h@telus.net	526-1003
Vice-President	Anne Bernhardt	527-2792
Secretary	Betty Rainville brainville@telus.net	527-4949
Treasurer and Memberships	Eileen Cowtan ecowtan@hotmail.com	526-1264
Past-President	Dave McKenzie naturist@telus.net	527-1701
Directors at Large	Ian & Angela Turner ianang@telus.net Linda Fisher sweetgrass@gmail.com	526-1350 548-7706

MH Interpretive Program

(Managed by Grassland Naturalists)

Based in Police Point Park Nature Centre

Open Year Round

Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00AM to 5:00PM

Washrooms are on a timer and are open from
7:00AM to 8:00PM daily!

To get up to date information on what is
happening at the Nature Centre call the:

Nature Line at (403) 529-6225

Also find us on Facebook and Twitter
policepointpark

March 16 "Seedy Saturday": 1:00 to 3:00 PM. If you are looking forward to spring gardening, drop into the **Nature Centre**. There will be talks about vermicomposting, permaculture, and from the Horticultural Club. Of course there will be seeds to share. Try growing something different this year.

Fire in the Mountains and Prairies: A special interactive display dealing with fires in Waterton Park and locally will be in the Nature Centre until the end of March.

Volunteers are very important to the success of the Interpretive Program: A volunteer party is tentatively booked for April 4. Of course the Easter Weekend (April 20 to 23) requires lots of help. Call the Nature Centre to help out. Other events will also be popping up. Call the Nature Centre for updated information.

The Sagebrush Chronicle is published ten times a year by Grasslands Naturalists. **Submissions of writing and artwork are welcomed but must be edited for publication. Deadline: the 10th of each month.** If you would like to advertise in the Chronicle, more information is available from the editor. Submissions are to be sent to: milton.spitzer@gmail.com (403-528-3120). Do not imbed photos in articles but **do send** them separately.

The Society of Grasslands Naturalists encourages the study, conservation and protection of all components of the natural world. The Society provides educational opportunities, assists in the collection and provision of species data, acts as stewards of the environment, discusses environmental topics and organizes member activities. The Society also manages the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program.

General Meetings: 4th Tuesday, Sept. - May **Board Meetings:** 1st Tuesday Sept. - June

To join Grasslands Naturalists and/or send a tax-deductible donation, write:

Grasslands Naturalists
Box 2491
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8G8

Contact info: Nature Centre 529-6225

Annual Membership Dues: Eileen Cowtan

Individuals \$20
Families \$25
Organizations \$25

Donations to Grassland Naturalists and Interpretive Program are another great way to support local nature and nature education. Tax receipts are issued for all donations over \$10. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed by the authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the editor and the Grasslands Naturalists. The editor reserves the right to edit, reject or withdraw articles submitted. While due care will be taken of all manuscripts, photos or artwork submitted, GN cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to such articles.

GN Website:

<http://www.natureline.info/gn>

GN Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/GrasslandsNaturalists/>

You must be a Facebook member to view most of it.

For Sale

A Cuisinart beverage fridge with a glass door is now surplus and is being sold. This fridge retailed for \$350 but the Nature Centre is asking \$200. Visit the Nature Centre to view this appliance.

Member's Corner

A reminder to all our members "if you haven't renewed your membership for 2019 now is the time to do so." At the end of this Chronicle is the membership application form.

A hearty welcome to new members: **Sheila and Grant McLoed, Holly Mackie, Sam Miller** (Pincher Creek) and **Pat Lucas** (Hillcrest). Hopefully we will be able to meet you at our meetings or perhaps on some of our outings.

Upcoming Events, Field Trips and Announcements

Grasslands Naturalists and Nature Centre Events

During March: What's the Connection? An Interactive Display from Parks Canada at the Nature Centre. This exhibit explores the role of fire in mountain and grassland ecosystems.

Saturday, March 16: Seedy Saturday from 1:00 to 3:00 PM: Bird friendly coffee or hot chocolate is being served while seeds are traded and presentations are made concerning vermicomposting, permaculture and from the Horticultural Club.

Tuesday, March 26: Annual General Meeting followed by Sea Wolves Presentation: Note this is taking place at the Library Theatre. AGM from 06:30 to 7:45 PM. Presentation at 8:00 PM (see title page).

March 30: Annual Field Trip to the Manyberries area to observe early spring migrants as well as to view Sharp-tailed Grouse Dancing on their lek (note: viewed through scopes thus not interfering with their courtship ritual). Led by **Ben Verner**. Meet at **6:00 AM** at the Tim Hortons along Dunmore Road across from the Medicine Hat Mall. This trip will return to Medicine Hat in mid afternoon so bring a lunch and also dress warmly.

Saturday, April 13: Grasslands Naturalists Spring Litter Blitz will take place in Ranchlands. Time and meeting place will be announced by email to members as well as in the April Chronicle. Note: The date is a week earlier than the City wide blitz as this falls on Easter Saturday. This change was made so that members can volunteer for the Easter Program at the Nature Centre.

Saturday, May 4: Workshop on Invasive Species at the Nature Centre (time TBA) conducted by Gerry Ehlert and Marty Drut.

Other non GN Events

Friday, March 22: World Water Day: The library is showing the film "Anthropocene: Human Epoch" from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Film makers travelled to 20 countries to compile this video footage that illustrates the impact that humans are having on the planet. It's a difficult film to watch but it is not all doom and gloom according to filmmaker Jennifer Baichwal.

April 4 and 5: Ecotrust Environmental Gathering in Calgary: GN Members are encouraged to attend. The GN Issues Committee has budgeted for financial assistance to one or two members for registration and transportation. Martha Munz-Gue (403 526-2226) has attended the previous 3 gatherings and can provide information concerning this gathering.

April 5: SEAWA Spring Educational Forum: The topic is Water Management with presenters talking about everything from the Water Act to future water supplies, forecasts, etc. This forum will run from **8:00 AM until 2:30 PM at the Medicine Hat Cultural Centre, Room CC169**. Contact Brooklyn Neubeker, (403) 580-8980 or seawa.ca.

What the Prairies Used to Look Like

Nature Manitoba, Bird Studies Canada and Nature Saskatchewan designated the Ellice-Archie and Spy Hill community pastures as important bird and biodiversity areas this week. "It's one of few places in this province now that you can really get a grasp of what the Prairies used to look like — this grassland that stretches across the horizon," said Tim Poole, co-ordinator of the Manitoba Important Bird Areas Program. See: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-saskatchewan-important-bird-area-1.5035100>

Provincial Grant for our Interpretive Program

On Thursday, March 7, a supportive group of Grasslands Naturalists and friends gathered in the Police Point Park Nature Centre for the presentation of some new funding from the Provincial government. Nature Centres across Alberta have been operating with some municipal funding, some donations, and a lot of grant writing. Shannon Philips, Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks, recognized the value of our work, connecting Albertans to nature and our heritage. Increasing evidence confirms the physical, social, community health benefits of getting out in nature and developing an appreciation for our environment.



Honourable Robert Wanner, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for Alberta, confirmed funding of over \$71,000 at a pleasant afternoon gathering in the Nature Centre. We are very pleased to have the recognition and funding to continue our high quality events and displays. This funding will continue our interpretive activities with a focus on thriving in our southeastern Alberta environment, while understanding and taking personal action to deal with climate change.

President's Report to the GN AGM March 26th, 2019

Another year of the GN Society activity is soon coming to an end and I hope you have enjoyed the year. I think it has been another very productive one. We hope the increased number of general emails of events/happenings is working to keep everyone informed. Let us know if we need to change anything.

Looking back over this past year, a lot was again accomplished, and when you read the online Committee reports you will see we have a very dedicated number of members who have served you well this year. Thank you to all the Committee Chairs and their members.

I will leave it to the Committees to update you on their activities. The major project which we can say is done is the renovations at the Nature Centre and Prairie Viewpoint. Stay tuned for the great unveiling which we hope to announce soon!

Thanks to Corlaine and staff for your outstanding dedication towards the great programming of the MHIP! This year has been particularly challenging, with the upgrades going on, but Medicine Hat and it's citizens will be the big winners!

Our indoor speaker program has been very successful and varied again this past year. A big thank you to Linda Fisher as she stepped up to take the Chair and brought in the interesting speakers.

I remind you again, the strength of a club is it's members and the ability to attract new members. We have a relatively stable membership and have added a few new members over the past two or three years and I think we have been able to keep club events and happenings interesting for the membership. We always want to hear from you if you have new ideas that may fit our mandate.

The Board is there to serve the membership, so if you are not happy about the direction or content please let any one of us know, either by a phone call, e-mail or text. Or better yet, come to a general meeting and tell us. And, once again, I am begging for members to step forward for positions on the Board and Committees. As I write this, we are three weeks from the AGM and no nominations have been received!!

Lastly, I want to again thank my Board for their hard work and dedication over the year. We always have great and sometimes lively Board meetings, and some have gone overtime, but everyone works for the same goal and that is, the good of the Society and the environment.

Respectfully submitted,
Hugh Armstrong, President

ps: We need to get the sea-cans emptied out by the end of March so please donate some time by contacting the Nature Centre

Exciting Sightings by R. Frew

Frigid temperatures and severe wind-chill factors persisted throughout the month of February and into March. This has made outdoor bird watching a challenge, and many GN birders chose to stay indoors as feeder watchers instead of venturing outdoors. Horned Larks, among the first of our spring migrants, are now being reported in increasing numbers in some rural areas south of the city, often in the company of Snow Buntings and/or Lapland Longspurs. Exciting sightings reported during February and early March includes the following species:

Ben Velner reported an unusual sighting of a **Mountain Chickadee** at his bird feeder in NE Crescent Heights on February 16th. This species prefers open coniferous forests in the mountains and foothills, and is considered a vagrant in the Prairie Region according to the GN Southeastern Alberta Bird Checklist.

While travelling along RGE Rd 73 and HWY 887 south of Seven Persons, and then proceeding along Robinson Coulee Rd. to the Black and White Trail, Dan and Mark Schiebelbein observed 2 **Snowy Owls** (RGE Rd 73), and a flock of ~30 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, which included a few **Rusty Blackbirds** (Hwy 887). An abundance of **Horned Larks** was encountered along the entire route.

On the morning of February 22nd, Milt Spitzer observed a female **Hooded Merganser** near the confluence of The South Saskatchewan River and Ross Creek, opposite Police Point Park. Bob Frew later confirmed the sighting after the merganser had moved closer to Police Point Park. An earlier **Hooded Merganser**, a male, which was first reported by Phil Horch on January 1st, lingered around the Trans Canada Bridge and was still being seen as of March 1st. The species is uncommon in the province.

On February 26th, Rhonda Hunter reported a **Long-eared Owl** in the front yard of her residence in Ross Heights. This shy reclusive species can be difficult to detect during daylight hours. In previous years Long-eared Owls have also been found near Bullshead Reservoir (2015, 2017), and have bred successfully in Police Point Park (2009).

Two accipiter species have been reported in the past month; a **Cooper's Hawk** continues to be observed in Hugh Armstrong's Parkview neighbourhood, and several **Northern Goshawk** sightings have been reported by GN birders at Police Point Park. The most recent goshawk sighting was reported in Southridge on March 6th.

A **Northern Shrike** was reported by Barry Anderson in the southeastern part of the city near Taylor Mews on March 6th. This winter visitor can usually be seen perched in the open, on treetops or on power lines.

Phil and Annalora Horch reported a **Peregrine Falcon** at the intersection of Eagle Butte Rd. and TWP Rd. 114 on May 9th. This rare falcon is always a coveted sighting on the prairie grasslands.

Please report your exciting sightings to Bob Frew: phone 403-526-4573, or e-mail: robert.frew@shaw.ca .

Horned Lark: Photo by R. Frew





Upper left Blue Jay with peanut and to the right a close-up of Northern Flicker. Photos by Dwayne Myers. Dwayne has sold his house and will soon be heading to London Ont. We will greatly miss Dwayne and hopefully he will keep in touch with some wildlife photos from there. Photo to the right is of a Long-eared Owl, taken by Rhonda Hunter. Note: Photos can confuse this owl with a Great Horned Owl depending on pose.



Some Bird of the Day Photos

Taken by Ian Wallis during his and Wendie Blackwell's trip to Sri Lanka and India. They will be doing a presentation at the Library on April 8.



From top left down and anti-clockwise:

Red-whiskered Bulbul



Kalij Pheasant

Purple Sunbird

Grey Treepie

Black Francolin

Crested Kingfisher





Grasslands Naturalists

Box 2491, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 8G8



Membership Form for 2019

Name* _____ Name of 2nd Family Member ** _____

Address* _____ Membership: Individual \$20/year _____

City / Province* _____ Family \$25/year _____

Postal Code* _____ Organization \$25/year _____

Telephone+ _____ Donation _____ Tax Receipt Available

Email++ _____ **Total Enclosed** _____

Preference for receiving Chronicle newsletter*:

Post or Email or Neither

Current and recent Chronicles can be viewed and downloaded from the Grasslands Naturalists website www.natureline.info/gn

* Required information. ** Required information for family membership.

+ Optional Information. For phone number(s), please note if it is a residence, cell phone or business number.

++ Information required if you wish to receive the Chronicle or Nature Alberta Magazine by email.

Informed Consent for Field Trips

I may wish to participate in field trips and events organized by Grasslands Naturalists.

I affirm that as a participant I am prepared to stay with the group and follow the directions of the coordinator. If I choose to bring my child(ren)/ward(s), I will ensure they also stay with the group and follow the directions of the coordinator and activity leader. I affirm that, knowing my personal state of health, I feel that I am mentally and physically capable of participating in the trips and events that I choose to attend.

I acknowledge that I am aware of the inherent risks, hazards, and dangers associated with activities arising from my participation in trips and events which may result in injury to me or result in my death.

Therefore, in consideration of my participation in these trips and events, for myself, my heirs, my executors, my administrators, and my successors, I voluntarily assume all risks and hereby waive all my rights against Grasslands Naturalists and unconditionally release and discharge the Grasslands Naturalists, its members, directors, officers, its affairs and its coordinators from all manner of activities, causes of action, suits, claims and demands for damages due to personal injury, death, loss or damage to property, expenses or otherwise which may or shall arise in any way as a result of my participation in the above trips and events.

Signature of Member

Signature of 2nd Family Member

Date: _____

Date: _____



Grasslands Naturalists
 Box 2491, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 8G8



Consent Form

Consent to the Use and Distribution of Personal Information

Grasslands Naturalists (GN) collects personal information subject to *Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)*. GN may, subject to your consent, wish to make some personal information public through, for example, its Chronicle, Website, Facebook page or newspaper article. Please indicate your consent to the following release of information and note any specific exclusion of a consent such as for children.

	Yes	No	Exclusion
Name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Residence telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Cell phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Business phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Email address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Residence address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

As a GN Member, you can receive, free of cost, an electronic version of the quarterly Nature Alberta Magazine. To receive the magazine, GN must supply your email address to Nature Alberta so that it can email you the magazine. Please indicate your consent to receiving the electronic version of the Magazine by email from Nature Alberta. Yes No

Beyond the above consents, GN will not distribute personal information to a third party without your consent unless such information is required, by law, to be released to a federal or provincial government agency in order, for example, to maintain GN's non-profit organization status.

Consent to Receive Emails Related to Commercial Activities

GN may wish to send you emails to promote some of its commercial activities including those provided by its *Club* and *Interpretive Program*. Please indicate your consent to receiving such information. Yes No

Modification of Consents

You may modify any of the above consents, at any time, through a written request to the member of the GN Executive responsible for Memberships.

Signature of Member	Signature of 2 nd Family Member
Date: _____	Date: _____