

The Kestrel

Quarterly Newsletter of the
Rocky Mountain Naturalists
2021 summer solstice



Stewart Wilson

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Can you find a good kestrel picture (our local species, the American Kestrel) for this spot? If so, please email it to the newsletter at rmnatskestrel@gmail.com.

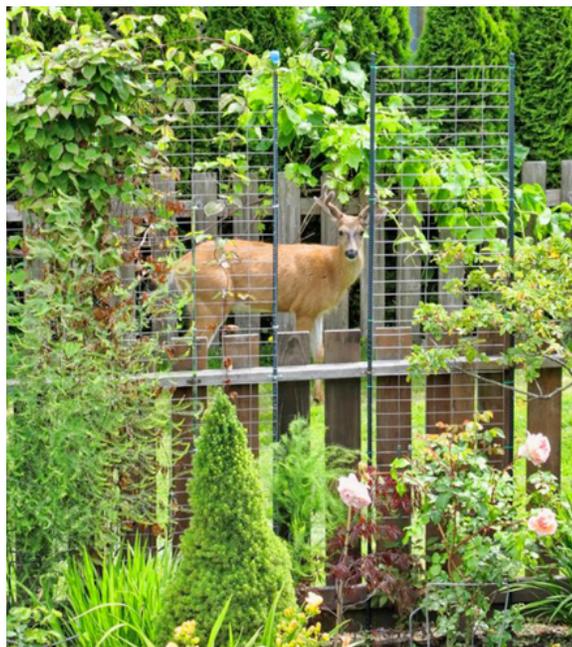
White Elk Seen on April 12

I was out birding yesterday in the Jaffray area and saw a white elk. It was on the edge of the forest, and I managed to get some photos before it disappeared into the forest. Pretty cool and unusual. I don't think it is albino as it does not have red eyes, but I suspect some kind of anomaly.

Lyle Grisedale



Deer Resistant Plants for Gardens



<https://eastbayexpress.com>

Deer like to eat your plants because you keep them nice and healthy and give them plenty of water. The plants are juicy and tasty (probably tasty to a deer, anyway). Where else does a deer find such juicy plants but in someone's garden? Much better than in the forest, for sure.

If you want deer to eat less of your plants, then, water them less. There are species of plants that require less water than common garden varieties yet still look nice. Lots of native species fit this description, like the junipers and Oregon grape. Take note of what you see in the wild, then ask the staff of your nursery to get it for you (please don't just dig it up from the forest).

Deer tend to dislike plants with strong scents. This is why juniper doesn't get nibbled as badly as cedar, for example. However, it is not perfectly deer proof under all conditions - just deer resistant.

Some non-native

plants are also deer resistant. One is barberry. The barberry commonly planted around town is only one of many varieties with both leaf and stem spines. Its stems are really spiny. The deer don't seem to like that. It is in the same plant family as native Oregon grape. Oregon grape doesn't have spines on the stem, but it does have sharp points on each leaflet (and is evergreen, always nice to see after a snowy winter).

For inspiration, check out the native plants gardens in Cranbrook.

(1) in front of Mount Baker high school, on Baker Street

(2) in front of College of the Rockies

For more inspiration, there are resources online. Do a web search for "deer resistant plants" or "native garden plants - southern interior BC".

Susan Walp



wildsafebcelkvalley.com



in.pinterest.com

Bluebird Nest Box Building and Renovation Project

Our 2017 supply of new Bluebird nest boxes, used by both bluebirds and swallows, was dwindling quickly. This spring, Ron took on the task of building 40 new boxes in his workshop. 3/4 inch plywood was accurately cut into pieces for the backs, fronts, sides, bottoms and tops. To prevent non-desirable birds such as starlings from using the nest boxes, the entrance hole is exactly $1 \frac{9}{16}$ inches in diameter. Holes in the upper sides along with small openings in the corners of the bottoms help provide ventilation and air circulation.

Sandy and Hasi assisted Ron in



Ron at work

Marianne Nahm



Hasi Oates



Hasi

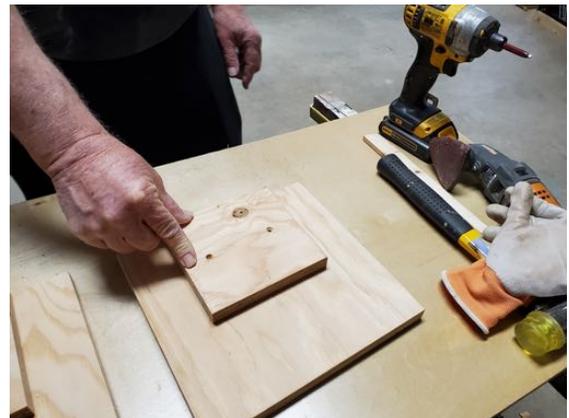
constructing and staining boxes. Other volunteers in this project were Daryl,



Marianne Nahm



Hasi



Hasi



Ron Janisch

who cut the plywood into strips, and crews of stainers including Sandy, Hasi, Marilyn, Judy, Sandy, Paula, Dina and Marianne.

A huge thank you to Ron for taking the lead on this project and for donating the use of his and Debbie's workshop.

The Club sells these boxes as well as uses them on its bluebird routes. The money from sales goes toward purchasing the now very expensive plywood,

stain, screws, etc. that are needed to construct quality boxes.

Another ongoing project is renovating old and damaged boxes. There are usually many parts that can be reused from these boxes. Daryl spent many hours in the greenhouse



built boxes

Hasi Oates



Hasi
6



staining

Marianne Nahm

last fall fixing boxes. Thankfully, Scott has joined the renovating crew, working from his Kimberley workshop to make good use of box pieces. Thank you so much to Scott and Daryl for taking on this project and to Judy for staining boxes.

For the second batch of boxes that Ron and crew constructed, Marilyn and I prestained the strips before they were cut into various pieces. Once the boxes were put together, I had two "staining parties" in my yard when the weather



another staining crew

Marianne



finished boxes drying

Marianne

was warm and dry. Thank you to everyone who contributed their enthusiasm, energy, time and skills to the Bluebird Box project.

Marianne Nahm

Trillium Plants in Bloom



We captured some photos of trilliums near Moyie Falls on May 8. The pink purple one seems rare, as we saw white ones mostly.

Paul and Joanna Battjes

[Pink, purple and white are all the same species; they start out white and then turn pink and then purple.

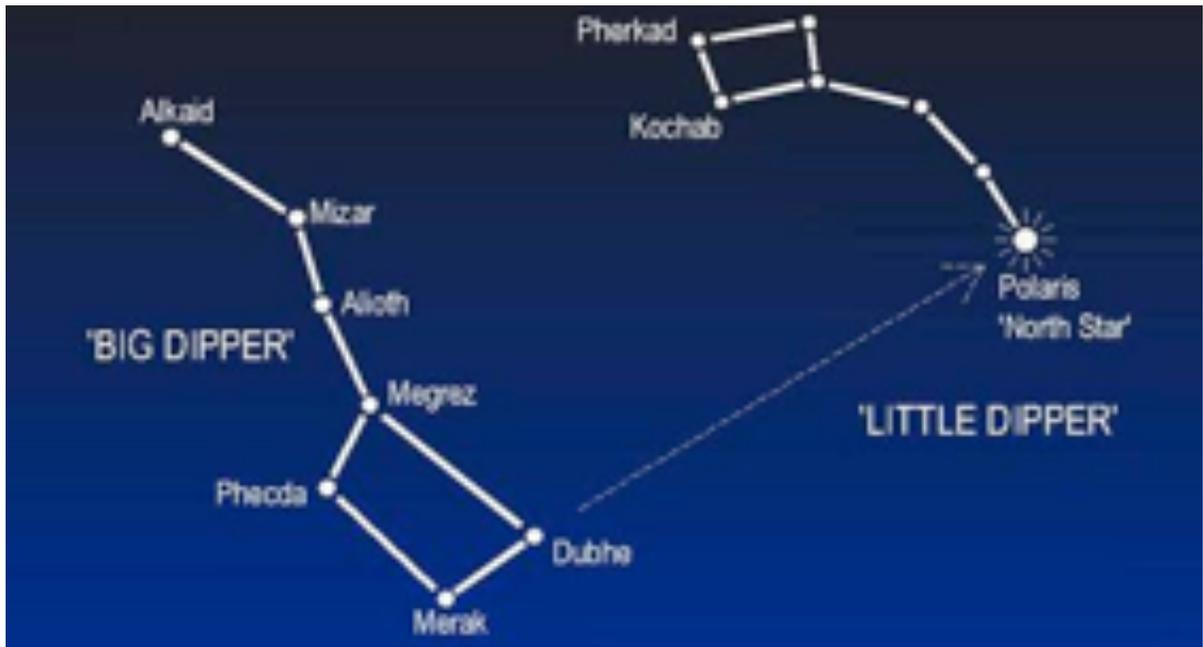
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For more on trilliums, see last summer's *Kestrel* (rockymountainnaturalists.org).



Night Sky: Point to Polaris, Arc to Arcturus

Everybody should know where to find the Big Dipper. It's located in the northern sky, and it's always visible from here if the skies are clear and dark. The two stars at the side of the dipper's bowl (cup) away from the handle are named Merak and Dubhe. These are known as the pointer stars because they point to the North Star, which is named Polaris.



sjastronomy.ca

Look at the Big Dipper's handle now. Imagine a gentle curve made by the handle's stars, extending away from the cup. Extend this imaginary curve until it runs into Arcturus, a bright star with a light reddish hue. This is how you arc to Arcturus.



wikimedia.org

Susan Walp

Congratulations, Art Gruenig

Art officially received his Meritorious Service Medal from the Governor General's Representative on May 13 through a virtual Ceremony from Ottawa. Several members of Art's family attended via technology, and I was honoured to pin Art's medal on his lapel.

Art worked tirelessly as a leader in the Rocky Mountain Naturalist Club for many years. When he and Lois first joined the Club, Art continued to add to already established Bluebird Trails, gathered nesting data and banded bluebirds. He built hundreds of nest boxes for the Bluebird Trails. A second project close to Art's heart was initiating the Western Painted Turtle Nesting beds at Elizabeth Lake. The Bluebird Trails and Western Painted Turtle Nesting beds continue to be focal points for the Naturalists.



Art with the Service Medal, in the centre of the box, along with gifts from the Governor General

Lois Gruenig

Art, thank you for being a passionate advocate for wildlife.

Marianne Nahm

Trumpeter Swans

I have been watching this pair of Trumpeter Swans for a couple years, and so far they have been unsuccessful in raising a family. But this year they have three cygnets, very exciting to see.

Lyle Grisedale

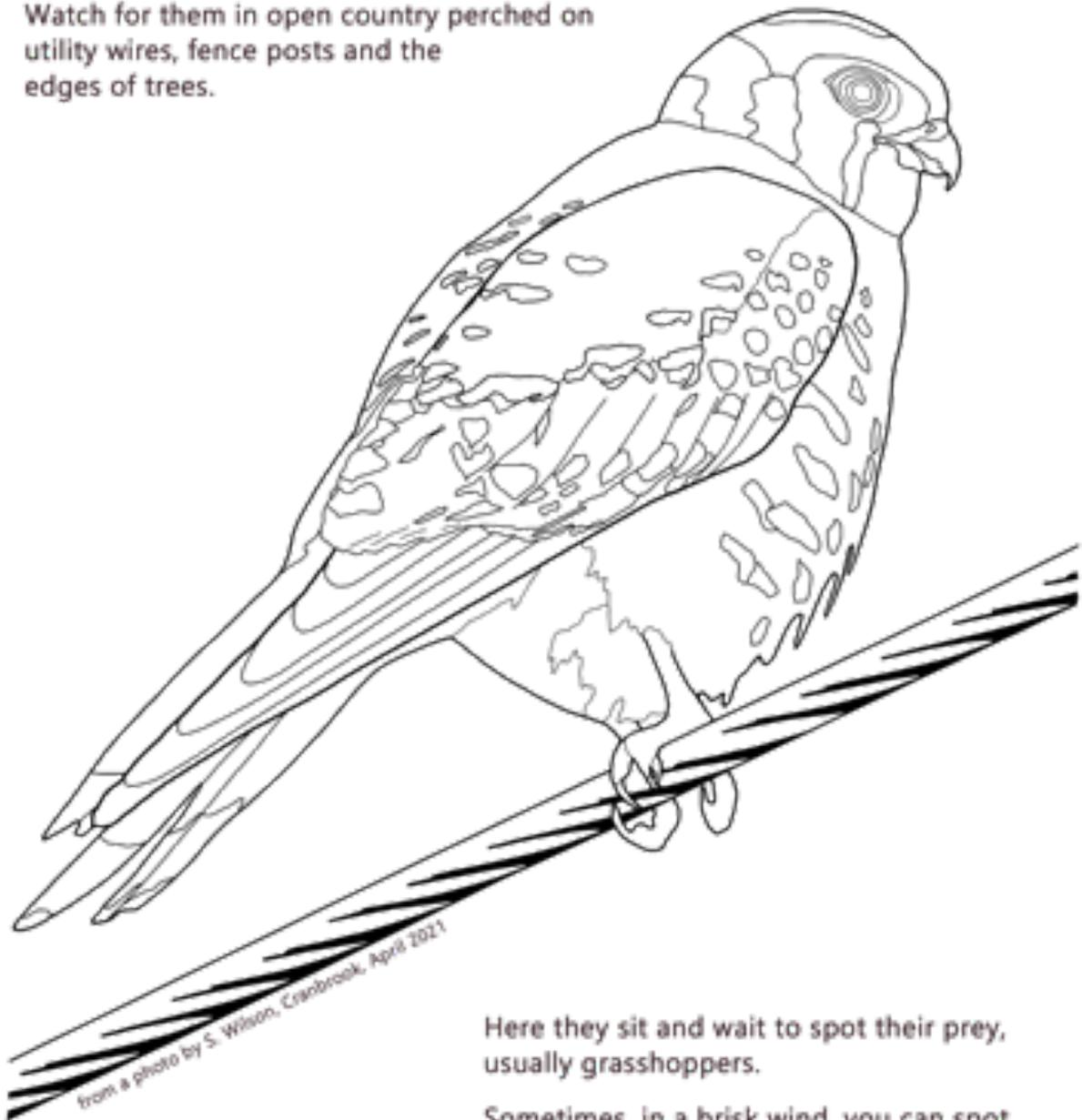


Bird Art for You to Make

American Kestrel - adult male

The littlest falcon of the Americas lives from the southern tip of South America to Alaska. Canadian birds spend the summer nesting here then fly south for the winter.

Watch for them in open country perched on utility wires, fence posts and the edges of trees.



Here they sit and wait to spot their prey, usually grasshoppers.

Sometimes, in a brisk wind, you can spot them hover hunting above the fields.

Black-capped Chickadee

Our little feeder friend is with us all year long and tells us with its excited "alarm" calls when a predator, such as a cat or small hawk is nearby.

Shading code: B=black, G=grey





from a photo by B. Gellley, Elizabeth Lake, June 2017

Cinnamon Teal

The male of this species of duck is rusty brown. He nests with his mate, who is brown, white and grey, in marshes with lots of good water plants for cover and food.

In the spring, summer, and early autumn look for them at Elizabeth Lake, Sylvan Lake (Cranbrook Community Forest), and Wasa Sloughs

Internet Links

The website for Rocky Mountain Naturalists can be found at:

<http://www.rockymountainnaturalists.org/>

It has a calendar of events, a blog with photographs, archived newsletters, and more.

Make sure you are up to date on the latest techniques for keeping yourselves safe in the wild. Visit this site now and then to see how the science has given us new information.

www.wildsafebc.com

Cranbrook Community Forest <https://www.cranbrookcommunityforest.com/>

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) <http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/>

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council (EKISC) <https://www.ekisc.com/>

Bird Observations <https://ebird.org>

Eagles <http://eaglewatch.ca/>

About Field Trips

Leader responsibilities:

Radios and first aid kits are available from Paula.

Find a replacement leader if necessary.

Keep the group together.

All leaders must have trip waiver forms [available from Paula] in case any non-members come along on the trip. Non-members must sign, and forms must be returned to Paula. Non-member insurance costs \$2.00.

Make sure everybody leaves the parking area safely.

Get someone to write an account of the field trip for the newsletter. Send it in to mnatskestrel@gmail.com, along with pictures, as soon as possible.

Carpoolers: Please offer to chip in for gas. On a round trip with a driving time of under an hour the compensation should be \$5.00 and on a round trip with a driving time of an hour or more the compensation should be \$10.00.

No dogs on field trips, please

Club Information

Executive

President	Marianne Nahm
Vice President	Hilary Anderson
Past President	Helga Knot

Secretary

Treasurer	Gretchen Whetham
BC Nature Director	Wendy Maisonneuve
Director at Large	Janice Strong



kestrel having lunch

Stewart Wilson

Committees, Co-ordinators and Representatives

Bats	Scott Bodaly
Bluebirds	Marianne Nahm
Bylaws and Policies	Virginia Rasch
Christmas Bird Count	Dianne Cooper
Club Camp	Jackie Leach/Ruth Goodwin
Communications	Susan Walp/Gerry Warner
Community Forest Planning Team	Rob Roulston
Early Morning Birding	Jim Hurvid
East Kootenay Invasive Species Council	Frank Hastings
Elizabeth Lake	Stewart Wilson
Field Trips	Paula Rogers
Internal Communications	Paula Rogers
Kootenay Conservation Program	Helga Knot
Little Big Day	Greg Ross
Membership	Hasi Oates
Newsletter	Susan Walp
Personal Information/Privacy	Jim Hurvid
Presentations	Marianne Nahm/Paula Rogers
Records	Wendy Maisonneuve
Rocky Mountain Trench Society	Jo Ellen Floer
Skookumchuck Prairie IBA	Dianne Cooper
Turtle Monitoring	Greg Ross
Upper Columbia Basin Environmental Collaborative	Emma DeGroot
Web Masters	Dianne Cooper

Events and Activities

Weeding turtle beds	Ongoing	If you have a little (or a lot of) time to help out, please contact Greg Ross.
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RMNats meetings - every two months, on the third Wednesday of odd-numbered months

Next meetings -	Wednesday	21	July
	Wednesday	15	September