

THE TRUMPETER

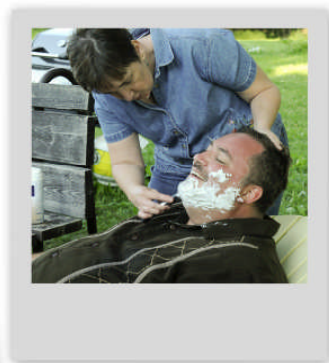


Autumn 2011

A Publication updating members and Friends of Elk Island Society



This has truly been a wonderful summer; Canada Day was celebrated with festivities and cake on 01 July. Parks Day on the 16 July was great fun and very well attended. The Park and Friends of Elk Island Society sponsored a Bird Count Marathon to raise funds for a memorial bench and plaque for Chris Wilke a long time volunteer at the Park. The “prize” of the evening was watching the superintendent Stephen Flemming have his lovely wife Jo-Anne shave his long time beard off. The deal was Stephen and his supporters had to find 100 species of birds on the 16th. Pledges were made either to find or not to find. For some very strange reason, the most birds counted was 62 species. The birds were all in hiding, so off came the beard!



Upcoming EVENT

Sunday September 4 Dark Sky Preserve Celebrations - Astotin Lake Area

Have fun being in the dark! Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve partners will host events such as special guest presenters, telescope observations, guided hikes and activities showcasing how residents can contribute to preserving dark skies. Astronomical celebration and celebrities will be out of this world!

Chris Wilke volunteered with the resource conservation at Elk Island National Park from 1985 to 2009. Chris passed away suddenly in 2010. He is truly considered a life-long volunteer to the park. During his volunteer years with the park he participated in many of the wildlife conservation programs in the park. His interests were diverse but he did have a passion for the bison and elk management programs that he participated in faithfully for over 20 years. During this time Chris became a part of the Elk Island family. He also gained a great deal of experience in bison and elk management over the years and became a true ambassador for the park. Chris was devoted to the park and spent thousands of hours assisting staff during the conservation programs including spending countless hours photographing the park and providing his services by cleaning animal skulls for display and for the park conservation programs for the park.

The Bird Marathon has raised over \$600.00 with some pledges still to come in. The Friends of Elk Island Society, Parks Canada staff and Chris's many friends would like to Thank the following:

John and Shelagh Graham, Denise Trottier, Evelyn Henke, Mr. and Mrs. Wilke, The Cool family, Catriona and Rebecca Graham, Kent and Shirley Harrold, Gary Harrold, Gwynne Hayward, Bruce Chisholm, Maureen Shenher, Wayne L. Millar, Sandy Clarke, Laura Elliott, Betty Koziak and anonymous donators. With a huge SPECIAL THANKS to Stephen Flemming for donating his beard.

Report on 14 July Trumpeter Swan Survey

By: Brett Sarchuk

Resource Conservation

Elk Island National Park

Parks Canada

Today, we flew a Trumpeter Swan Survey for Elk Island, Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Grazing Reserve and south to Miquelon/Ministik Lakes.

Here are the results since 2009 including today's:

2009	33 adults and subadults	8 Breeding Pair	24 Cygnets hatched
2010	29 adults and subadults	7 Breeding Pair	25 Cygnets hatched
2011	30 adults and subadults	4 Breeding Pair	15 Cygnets hatched

The numbers seem to show that there aren't as many successful breeding pairs as in the past. I saw ten pairs together this year, with only four of them having cygnets. In 2009, there were 11 pairs (8 breeding), and 2010, 12 pairs (7 breeding). Maybe the rainy June had something to do with it and some nests were flooded. I did notice water was finally filling up marshes that have been dry for years. Also, this was my first time navigating, so there could be some missed pairs hanging around.

As Rob Kaye used to explain, the population is like a stock market, with short term ups and downs. However, the short supply of feed on the winter range in the USA remains a major limiting factor. Somewhere around 80 to 90 % of our cygnets are not surviving the winter months.

All the Breeding Pairs are in secluded spots with most being in Elk Island, Cooking-Lake Blackfoot and Ministik Bird Sanctuary. There were single swans hanging around, as well as a few groups of three. The best chance to see Trumpeters are these non-breeding subadults which tend to hang out in

busier areas like Astotin Lake or wetlands along the Elk Island parkway. As well, Astotin Lake is used as a staging area in the Fall when Trumpeters and Tundras are getting ready to migrate south to their wintering grounds.

Message from Park Superintendent: Stephen Flemming

Communities – looking – forward.*

*Watch for exciting upcoming announcements

Words from the Board Chair: Gary Harrold

What a phenomenal summer this is turning out to be. Superintendent Flemming's infectious enthusiasm has been a breath of fresh air to all of us.

Over the course of the past few weeks, the Friend's of Elk Island has been involved in many events. We, of course, have remained supporters of the Trumpeter Swan survey program and have also helped Dr. Arthur Whiting in his research within the area. We volunteered our assistance at the Canada Day celebrations, Park's Day event, Citizenship Celebration and witnessed Stephen Flemming "lose his beard" at the Bird Marathon. The Memorial Bench project is underway and, in fact, four of the benches have arrived. Some of our inventory from the Visitor Information Centre is currently on sale once again at the VIC and we had a very successful Boxing Day Bird Count. We will be participating in the upcoming Star Party event on September 4th and look forward to the upcoming Annual General Meeting to share with you some of the plans for the future.

Projects we are looking at include a fundraising Casino, participating in the Biosphere project, better access to the trails for the handicapped, involvement with school projects and helping inner city children to experience the outdoors. We will be assisting with the planning of the 2013 Park celebration and the list keeps growing.

We are looking forward to the future and the upcoming events with enthusiasm.

Gary L. Harrold, Chair

MARK YOUR CALENDAR- Friends of Elk Island Society Annual General Meeting is to be held at the Astotin Theatre on Sunday 23 October 2011 at 2pm. Please attend and bring ideas for the upcoming year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve 5th Anniversary
Join us for a Party under the Stars
At
Elk Island National Park*

*Sunday, September 4th, 2011
4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Astotin Lake Area*

Thank you for supporting your local national park by purchasing an entry pass at the park gates and campground kiosk. The event is free for all visitors with a valid park pass.

On the Labour Day weekend join us for our annual celebration of the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve (BHDSPP) hosted by:

**Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Edmonton Centre
Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Parks Canada Agency – Elk Island National Park
Strathcona Wilderness Centre
Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village
Sherwood Park Fish and Game Ketchamoot Creek Recreation and Conservation Area**

Sunday, September 4th marks the fifth anniversary of the creation of the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve.

Outdoor activities include public stargazing with astronomers using a variety of telescopes and children's activities.

Indoor activities include a photography workshop, astronomical presentations, interpretative programs and red light flashlight assembly. Please join us as we welcome our new partner, Miquelon Lake Provincial Park, into the BHDSPP.

OUTDOOR EVENT PROGRAM

4:00 P.M.- 6:00 P.M. Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village presents storytelling and children's games at the Blue Events tent, near the playground.

5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada welcomes visitors to experience the skies through special solar telescopes. Astotin beach area and theatre deck.

6:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M. Elk Island National Park presents red light flashing making workshop, at the red tent, near the entrance to the Astotin Theatre. Please bring a flashlight to modify.

7:30 P.M. – 10:30 P.M. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada volunteers present night-time telescope viewing, on the lawn, throughout the Astotin Lake Area; Pavilion Cook Shelter overlooking the beach. Later observing dependent on sky and astronomer conditions!

INDOOR EVENT PROGRAM

Astotin Theatre

5:00 P.M. Yuichi Takasaka presents a workshop entitled Landscape Astrophotography in the Canadian Climate featuring the special challenges northern photographers face: Mosquitoes, clothing and gear, and how to protect your equipment in minus 40 Celsius degrees!

6:00 P.M. Elk Island National Park presents Space Canoe 2.0 – Conserve the Cosmos. Join park interpreter and Space Cadet Matt as he continues his mission of cosmic discovery and once again searches the solar system to answer the age old question “Can life exist beyond our little blue planet?”

7:00 P.M. Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve Partnership presents Welcome Ceremony – Miquelon Lake Provincial Park. On behalf of the partnership, Strathcona Wilderness Centre welcomes Miquelon Lake into the Dark Sky Preserve.

7:15 P.M. Miquelon Lake Provincial Park presents DSI: Dark Sky Investigator – A little girl’s outdoor quest takes a turn when she encounters a grumpy owl which sends her on a nocturnal adventure in search of darker skies. A lively, interactive family theatre show.

8:30 P.M. Yuichi Takasaka presents A Dark Sky Journey through beautiful Canadian landscapes. Yuichi’s spectacular professional photography includes images and video from his recent trip to the Yukon

9:30 – 10:30 P.M. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada’s Bruce McCurdy presents Follow the Water: The Search for Life in the Universe. Bruce is a fountain of astronomical knowledge! You will be inspired and captivated by this presentation and questions are welcome.

10:45 P.M. Theatre closes.

Please dress for the weather and night time temperatures.

Many activities will proceed ‘rain or star-shine’ – telescope viewing requires clear sky.

An adult must accompany children. Pets and food are not allowed in the Astotin Theatre; seating is limited.

Be Star-Bright! Bring a flashlight to cover with red, night-friendly material for the enjoyment of all.

Note: We are looking at adding new articles to the Trumpeter. We are looking for member memories of trips to the Park and photos if available.

**Just a short paragraph or two that we can publish. Please send to:
info@elkiland.ca or mail to:**

The Friends of Elk Island Society
Box 70
9920-63 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T6E 0G9.

We are also looking for a talented person to build our newsletter at reasonable cost. If you are that person please email us at the above address.

Memorial Bench Project:

This project has been a long time coming and we have four benches to install. They were delivered on Friday 19th and are lovely solid benches, built by Custom Park and Leisure of Calgary, Alberta. Plaques are ready for two of the benches and will be installed soon. If you wish to discuss this option of remembering email Friends of Elk Island Society at info@elkiland.ca

This is the spot for your stories, photos and memories of Elk Island National Park.



We need your support

Friends of Elk Island Society
Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Individual Membership \$10.00

Family Membership \$15.00

Donation: Tax receipt required for \$10.00 or more? Yes

\$25.00 \$50.00 \$75.00 \$100.00 Other _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Note: Only donations over \$10.00 are eligible for a tax receipt, not membership dues.

Please make cheques payable to the **Friends of Elk Island Society**

Membership renewals are due one year from date of purchase.

Mail to:

Friends of Elk Island Society
PO Box 70, 9920 – 63 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 0G9