



Lakescape

Newsletter of the Wabamun Watershed Management Council

No. 37 | Spring 2025



John Lucas

Welcome Spring!

Spring brings renewal, flowers, rain showers, new ideas... and it's the perfect time to celebrate all we love about Wabamun Lake! Check page 4 for several tips to help keep our treasured lake healthy this spring. Enjoy this edition of *Lakescape*, and if you have any ideas for stories or questions you would like answered, please reach out to us at info@wwmc.ca.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank John Lucas for volunteering his time and talent and sharing his amazing photographs with us. John is an award-winning professional photographer. He and his wife Diane are Seba Beach residents and we are truly grateful to them for all of their contributions to creating a healthy Wabamun Lake. You can see more of John's work at johnlucasphotography.ca — be sure to browse his Seba Beach and Wabamun galleries!

In This Issue

Chair Report.	2
Spring Tips for Lake Health.	4
Invasive Species	5
Wabamun Q&A: Boat Launches	7
Fishing Wabamun Lake Summer 2025 . . .	8
Wabamun Lake Christmas Bird Count . . .	9
Wanted: Western Grebe Spotters.	11
Stan Franklin's Royal Accolades	12
Membership Renewal	12
Our Supporters.	13



WABAMUN WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



John Lucas



John Lucas

CHAIR REPORT: *Spring Is Here!*

By Sue Styles, WWMC Chair

The long-awaited open water season is upon us! The WWMC is pleased to share a brief update of recent Wabamun watershed activities and information. Also see below for several useful and informative links.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of each member of the WWMC Board of Directors and Representatives and thank them for sharing their time, talents, and valuable expertise as watershed stewards. A past Board member, Stan Franklin, was recently honoured with a King Charles III Coronation Medal for his many years of watershed stewardship work. Congratulations to Stan for this recognition (see page 12).

Current WWMC Board of Directors and Representatives:

Sue Styles, *Chair*

Neil Fleming, *Past Chair*

Dave Ball, *Treasurer*

Michelle Foster, *Secretary*

Denny Thomas

Sheila Smith

Gordon Wilson

Appointed Representatives:

Arin MacFarlane Dyer, *Alberta Environment and Protected Areas*

Rob Wiedeman, *Parkland County Division 5 Councillor*

There are two vacancies on the WWMC Board of Directors. YOU could step in and help us be a voice for Wabamun Lake! If this opportunity interests you, please have a look at the [Join Our Board of Directors](#) document for details of this rewarding position, and contact us at info@wwmc.ca.


WWMC activities and initiatives updates:

- WWMC is hiring an **Executive Director** to support capacity building for implementation of the [Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan](#). This exciting opportunity is made possible through a generous three-year Environmental Operating Grant from the Edmonton Community Foundation. We look forward to making an official announcement soon!
- Ongoing activities:
 - Keeping apprised of the **Highvale Mine Reclamation Plan Application**. The TransAlta combined Highvale Mine Decommissioning and Final Reclamation Plan application materials remain under review by the Alberta Energy Regulator. At this time, WWMC's primary interest in this file lies in the post-disturbance hydrology of the Highvale Mine site.
 - Assessing implications of Parkland County's [Wabamun Waterfront Initiative](#) — most notably

Project A, the marina and swim pond — on the health of Wabamun Lake and surrounding ecosystems. All lake stakeholders are encouraged to get informed about this project and provide feedback to Parkland County.

- Monitoring and providing feedback to Parkland County regarding proposed amendments to [Highvale End Land Use Direct Control District Regulations](#) where applicable, to protect the health of Wabamun Lake and its watershed.
- WWMC completed the winter season [LakeKeepers](#) water sampling program in March. [LakeWatch](#) summer season water sampling will begin in May. These highly informative water sampling reports are completed by the [Alberta Lake Management Society](#) and you can read them on the [Studies & Reports](#) page of our website.
- **Invasive plants**, namely purple loosestrife and Himalayan balsam, have been identified on the shores of Wabamun Lake. Invasive plant control events (weed pulls and mechanical cutting) will be organized this summer season to mitigate the spread of Himalayan balsam. Keep an eye on our socials and emails for event(s) details and a call for volunteers. The Alberta Environment and Protected Areas Invasive Species team is exploring options to address management of purple loosestrife.
- Wabamun Lake **Bulrush Restoration Year 2 Monitoring** will be undertaken in the summer.
- WWMC is expanding our **citizen science** and education programs and projects focused on the local Wabamun context. Later this season, we will commence a Western Grebe Nesting Survey (see page 11). Bird Counts also provide several opportunities each year to participate in citizen science (see page 9).

To stay up to date with these activities and be the first to know about upcoming events, visit wwmc.ca and our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages. If you have any watershed concerns, questions, or suggestions, please reach out to us at info@wwmc.ca.

The WWMC wishes you a wonderful spring at the lake and in the watershed! 

Lake Links

Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan:

[Full report](#), [Two-page summary](#)

[Wabamun Lake Water Level](#) (Weir, lake inflow/outflow, historic lake levels)

[Real-Time Hydrometric Data for Wabamun Lake](#)

[Wabamun Lake Water Treatment Plant Operations](#)

Water Treatment Plant at Sundance [monthly pumping volumes](#)

[Riparian Health of Wabamun Lake](#) (2022 NSW Report)

WWMC [Studies and Reports](#)

Bylaws to Restrict the Use of Fertilizers and Herbicides (downloadable PDFs): [Seba Beach](#), [Betula Beach](#), [Lakeview](#)

[Alberta Native Plant Council](#)

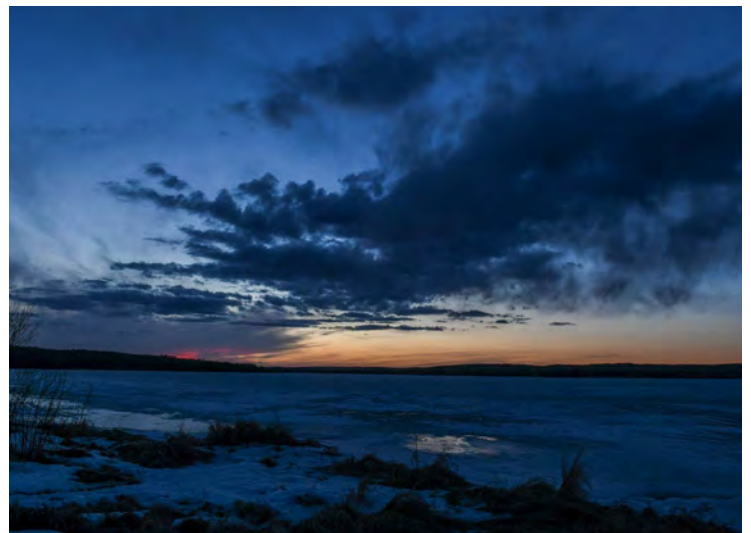
[Aquatic Invasive Species](#) (Alberta Government)

[Alberta Invasive Species Council](#)

[My Wild Alberta](#)

Become a WWMC [General Member](#) or [Renew](#) your General Membership (membership is free)

Become a WWMC [Corporate Member](#)




John Lucas

Spring Tips for Lake Health

By Sheila Smith and Neil Fleming, WWMC Directors

Everyone has a role to play in helping keep Wabamun Lake clean and clear. As the weather warms and we spend more time on or near the water, there are many things we can do on our properties to contribute to lake health.

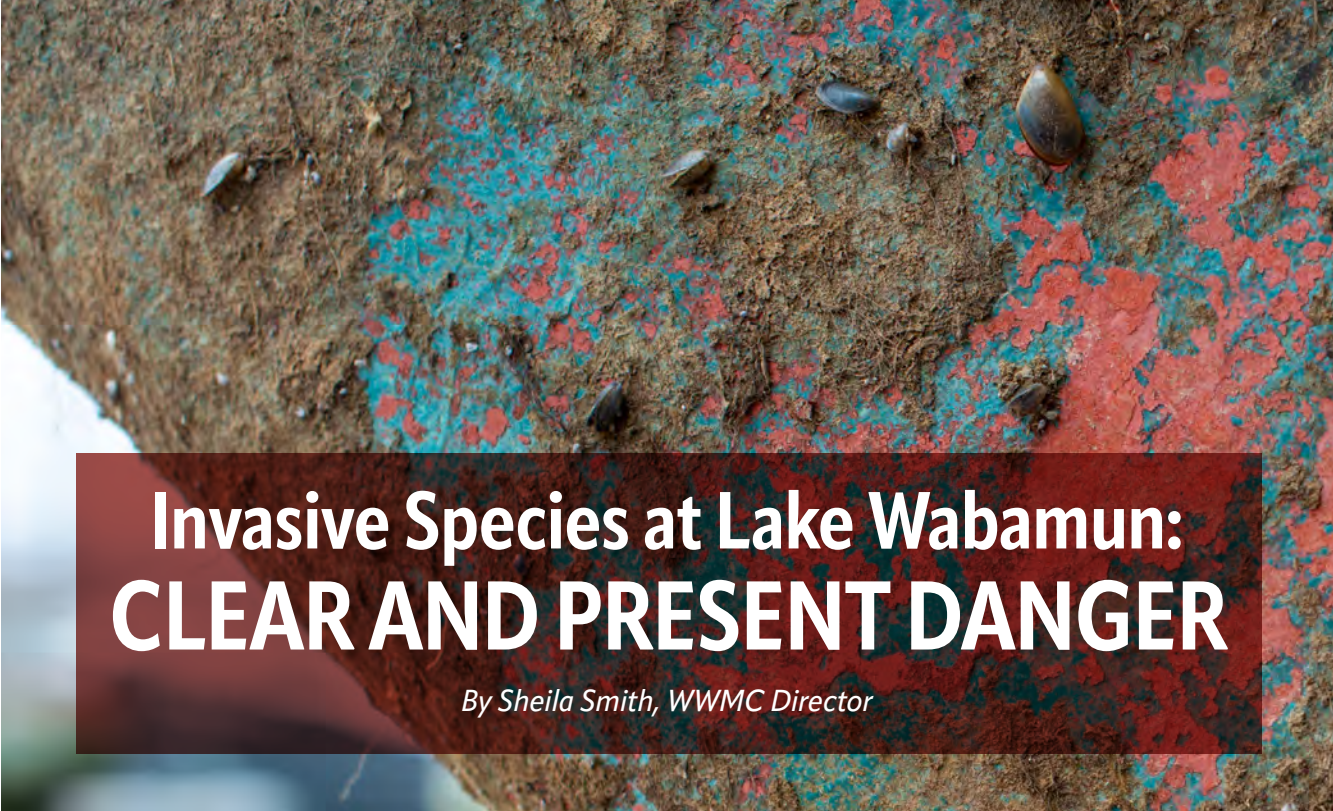
- Don't use herbicides or fertilizers on your property. These end up in the lake and promote cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms and other health issues. The summer villages of Seba Beach, Lakeview, and Betula Beach have bylaws that restrict the use of fertilizers and herbicides in their communities (see page 3 for links).
- No wheels in the water. Under the *Public Lands Act*, it is against the law to use off-road vehicles in public waters. If you see this activity at Wabamun Lake, you can report it immediately to the Environmental Hotline: 1-800-222-6514.
- Have your septic system checked to ensure it is working properly, or convert to a holding tank.
- Contain all gray water discharge, including outdoor showers.
- Don't wash cars or equipment near the lake.
- Pick up after your pets.
- Allow for a strip of native vegetation adjacent to shorelines.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning products. 



Cyanobacterial harmful algal bloom at Wabamun Lake, October 2024. John Lucas



John Lucas



Invasive Species at Lake Wabamun: CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

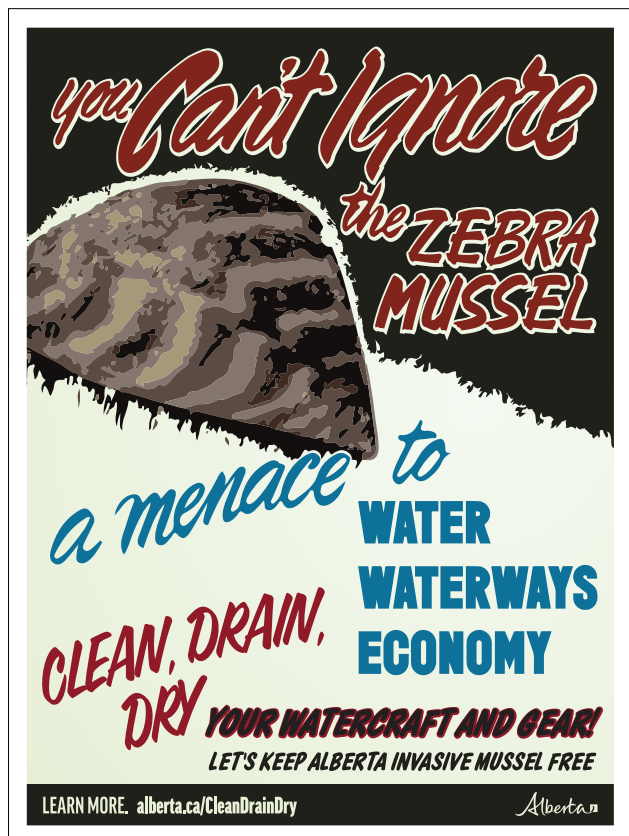
By Sheila Smith, WWMC Director

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) present a significant danger to lake health. These non-native species — including invasive mussels, plants, and fish — disrupt aquatic ecosystems and can cause costly damage to lakes and watersheds. Recent encroachment of invasive mussels in nearby provinces (including [Manitoba](#)) and U.S. states (such as [Idaho](#)) presents a critical risk to Alberta's water resources, making prevention and early detection a priority.

A provincial AIS task force was established to provide recommendations to address the threat of invasive mussels by strengthening Alberta's prevention and early detection efforts. As the [Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species \(AIS\) Task Force Recommendation Report](#) (December 2024) outlines:

“Invasive mussels (zebra and quagga mussels) pose a serious threat to Alberta's waters and economy. If introduced, these invasive mussels could clog water intake pipes for irrigation, municipal water systems, and hydro-power facilities, leading to millions of dollars in annual maintenance costs. Their spread would also impact recreational areas, as mussels attach to watercraft, docks, and other equipment, making them difficult to clean and maintain. Environmentally, invasive mussels disrupt ecosystems by outcompeting native species for food and altering aquatic habitats. This disruption reduces biodiversity, damages fish habitats, and

can degrade water quality by promoting harmful algal blooms, impacting fish, wildlife, and human health. Given these potential impacts, preventing the introduction of invasive mussels is critical to preserving Alberta's water resources.”




The AIS Task Force recommends several measures to combat the spread of aquatic invasive species, with particular emphasis on invasive mussels. The WWMC supports all of these recommendations, which include:

- Implementing a mandatory annual watercraft sticker program to confirm inspections.
- Piloting a decontamination dip tank for watercraft.
- Requiring mandatory inspections for all watercraft entering Alberta from eastern or southern borders.
- Advocating for expanded federal approval of chemical treatments for aquatic invasive species.
- Establishing a provincial eDNA monitoring program for early detection.

- Developing invasive mussel-specific response and tactical plans.
- Conducting training exercises for rapid response to mussel infestations.

The WWMC is collaborating with our partners on an ongoing basis to assist in efforts to prevent invasive species from entering Wabamun Lake. Watch for informative and practical (boat inspections) events this summer.

You can be a part of the solution! Visit the province's [Clean, Drain, Dry](#) web page for simple — and legally required — steps to follow to make sure your watercraft (motorized or non-motorized) and gear are free of potentially harmful invasives. 



WABAMUN Q&A

By Neil Fleming, WWMC Director

WWMC board members are often asked questions about lake health, wildlife, and other lake-related topics. We'll feature your questions and the answers here in Lakescape. If there's something you want to know, please email your question to info@wwmc.ca.

Boat Launches


Q: Why is there no formal boat launch on the west basin of Wabamun Lake? And why was the Seba Beach launch closed?

A: In 2013, Parkland County commissioned a [boat launch study](#) to find a location for a launch to serve the many day users and residents on the west end of Wabamun Lake. The prime determinants of an effective boat launch are adequate water depth, sufficient parking area, and safety. The study evaluated the many existing informal launches as well as undeveloped areas in search of a location to construct a new boat launch. Because of the topography of the shoreline on the entire west basin of Wabamun Lake, it was determined that none of the existing launches had adequate water depth to handle today's larger boats and provide adequate parking space. Aerial assessment found a location east of Sundance Meadows on the south shore, on land owned by TransAlta, but again it was determined that there was inadequate water depth to accommodate large boats.

With support of the WWMC, an agreement between Parkland County and TransAlta was reached to reopen the previously operational launch on the outflow channel of the Sundance power plant. That site had been closed following the 2005 CN train derailment and resulting oil spill for fear that oil could be drawn into the power plant boilers. The redesigned launch was opened in late 2022 with positive reviews. In 2020, the Summer Village of Seba Beach Council made the decision to close the launch adjacent to the pavilion on 5th Street South. When this launch was developed, some 70 years ago, a really big boat would have been a 15-footer with a 25-hp outboard that would float in about six inches of water. Today's boats, some of which require triple-axle trailers to haul, require three feet or more of depth to launch. Getting to that depth would mean operators would have to back trailers 100 feet or more into the lake, causing damage to both the lakebed and their tow vehicles, and undoubtedly adding pollutants to

the lake water. Additionally, there is no parking lot or turnaround area to accommodate tow vehicles and trailers, and the proximity of a playground and a Saturday farmers market highlighted logistical and safety concerns for the continued use of the site. Accordingly, the Seba Beach launch remains closed.

Current low water levels make boat launching even more damaging to the lakebed at all non-sanctioned locations, so this may be a good time to remind everyone to "[Keep Wheels out of Water](#)." In Alberta, it is illegal to operate any type of wheeled motor vehicle in a waterbody. As a result, boaters are asked to launch at one of the three official launches at Wabamun Waterfront Park, Wabamun Provincial Park, and the new Sundance location on the south shore. Parkland County will continue to work with residents and the summer villages to restrict access to the informal launches to protect our lake.

You can find detailed information in the 2013 [Lake Wabamun Boat Launch Study](#). 



Neil Fleming



Sheila Smith



FISHING WABAMUN LAKE SUMMER 2025

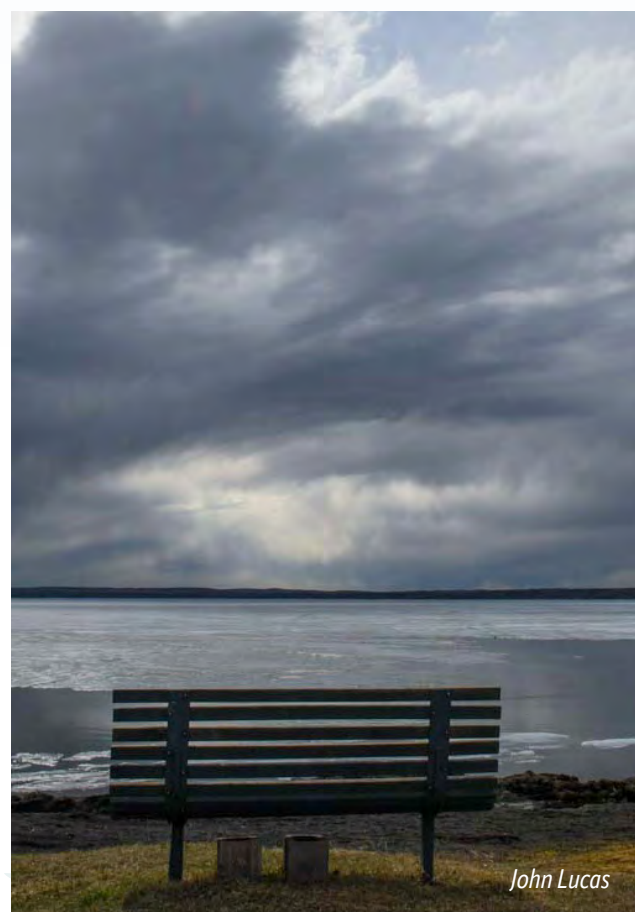
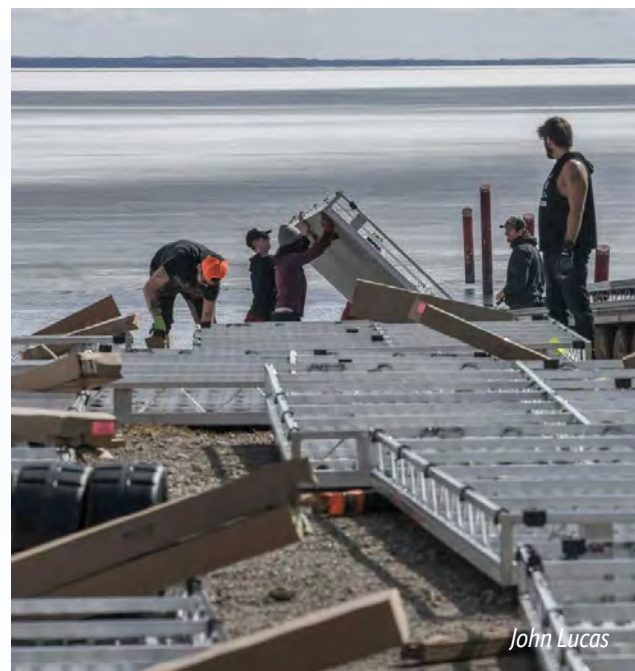
By Sheila Smith, WWMC Director

Fishing has been an important part of the history of Wabamun Lake, and continues to be of interest for anglers, Indigenous peoples, visitors, and residents. The WWMC is working to support a healthy aquatic ecosystem through our [Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan](#), which includes fisheries management objectives (see page 33 of the Plan).

There are new sportfishing guidelines for Alberta for 2025. It's every angler's responsibility to stay informed about the new guidelines. What can you catch? Can you use bait? What can you keep? What size fish can you catch? [My Wild Alberta](#) provides an introduction to these regulations and access to the updated 2025 Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations, as both a downloadable PDF and an interactive web-based app. You can use this guide to look up specific regulations for Wabamun Lake.

You can help keep Wabamun Lake healthy and safe for fishing for years to come:

- We want to learn more about and participate in existing citizen science/angler data collection programs, and would love to hear from you if you're familiar with any fish monitoring programs. Please contact us at info@wwmc.ca.
- Continue to learn and practice safe fish handling techniques. [My Wild Alberta provides lots of tips and links](#) to several great short videos demonstrating safe fish handling.
- Stay informed. Visit wwmc.ca/wabamun-fishery for information about fishery initiatives and the 2023 Fall Index Netting (FIN).
- Get involved! Watch for upcoming opportunities to share your knowledge and enthusiasm about angling at Wabamun Lake! 🐟



Wabamun Lake Christmas Bird Count

By Angie Specht

Spring may seem like a strange time to talk about the Wabamun Lake Christmas Bird Count, which occurs during the winter holiday season. But, given that we are in the midst of migration and nesting season, this is a great time to encourage folks to learn about birds, enjoy watching them, and recognize how important they are to our incredible Wabamun Lake. Perhaps by the end of this article, you'll want to try birding yourself, and you'll be ready and eager to participate in the next annual count!

The Wabamun Lake Christmas Bird Count is one of many that happens worldwide each year between December 14 and January 5; our count takes place on either the last Saturday or Sunday of the annual Birds Canada and Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. These counts collect data on the number of species and collective number of birds, as well as weather or any other special conditions observed by counters in a specific 24-km-diameter



Bald eagles. *Angie Specht*

geographical circle. This data is then compiled and sent to Birds Canada and the Audubon Society. The data is used to understand bird numbers, health of populations, and conditions affecting birds and the environment, and to support advocacy for bird conservation.

Wabamun's count circle includes Wabamun Provincial Park in the east, Keephills in the southeast, Sundance in the south, Seba Beach in the west, Silversands/Southview in the northwest, and Range Road 41/Highway 633 in the northeast.

2024 was the 47th anniversary of the Wabamun Lake Christmas Bird Count. Thirty-six volunteers participated on a cloudy yet relatively mild Saturday. Twelve parties drove and walked 472 km in designated zones, while 12 others watched their bird feeders. Each party and feeder watcher counted the species and numbers of each species they saw. At the end of the count period they sent that data to the



Ruffed grouse. *Angie Specht*





Evening grosbeak. *Angie Specht*



Boreal chickadee. *Angie Specht*

circle compiler, who added all the relevant information together and sent it in to the main count site.

This year we saw 33 species. Our most unusual bird was a mountain chickadee. It was a good year for owls; we saw five great grey owls, two great horned owls, and one northern hawk owl. We also saw five northern shrikes, a robin-sized predatory songbird.

Organizations like Birds Canada, the Audubon Society, and the WWMC play an important role in advocating for bird conservation, lake and ecosystem health, and the participation of the general public in helping to champion biodiversity and environmental health.

You don't have to wait until Christmas to start birding and participating in citizen science! You can contribute birding data any time using the [eBird](https://ebird.org) app, and there are other counts throughout the year, including the [May Bird Count](https://birds.canada/maybirdcount) and the [Backyard Bird Count](https://birds.canada/backyardbirdcount) in February.

If you are interested in the Wabamun Lake Christmas Bird Count, please contact Angela Specht at birdswabamun@gmail.com.

Happy Birding! 🐦

Resources

Birds Canada: [birdscanada.org](https://birds.canada.org)

The Audubon Society: audubon.org

ebird: ebird.org



Great grey owl. *Angie Specht*


Wanted: **WESTERN GREBE SPOTTERS**

Join a citizen science community of Western Grebe Spotters to help collect data on western grebes this summer! We are looking for eight to ten volunteers to help look for western grebes and their nests at Wabamun Lake and, with minimal disturbance to the birds, collect data on numbers, locations, and habitat information. This will help our local Alberta biologists by providing “on the ground” information about the status of western grebes. It is also an opportunity to collect and input data into a new cooperative survey app to inform conservation of western grebes throughout their western breeding range. Western grebes are a threatened species in Alberta and it's important that we contribute to efforts to protect these beautiful birds and the lake that supports them.



Dave Prescott

We will have an education and training session in early June with volunteers and biologists from Alberta Environment and Protected Areas. You will have an opportunity to learn more about western grebes, how to safely observe them, and how to collect and enter data.

If you are interested in being a Grebe Spotter this summer, please contact us at info@wwmc.ca and we will provide you with more details. 



Dave Prescott



Stan Franklin's Royal Accolades

By Sheila Smith, WWMC Director



In February 2025, retired WWMC board member Stan Franklin received a [King Charles III Coronation Medal](#) from Rebecca Shultz, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas (AEP). Along with ten other outstanding Albertans, Mr. Franklin was recognized for giving of his time and talents in service to our environment, communities, province, and country.

Mr. Franklin is a dedicated and longtime steward of Wabamun Lake. He joined the WWMC in 2011 and served on the Board of Directors. His love of the lake, ongoing stewardship of the lakeshore, and commitment to the Council have greatly benefited everyone who shares his passion for the lake. Mr. Franklin also volunteered extensively with the Alberta Lake Management Society's LakeWatch program. Through the program, he has collected water samples providing crucial data to inform and support a range of environmental and management initiatives. These contributions have made a lasting impact on the health of Wabamun Lake and lakes around Alberta.

Mr. Franklin modestly states that this award "is not so much about one person's efforts, but represents a recognition by AEP of the importance of watershed stewardship and the many volunteers who contribute to that initiative."

Congratulations, Stan, on this well-deserved recognition! 🎉

Membership Renewal

It's just about time to renew your WWMC membership.

General Members must renew their membership for 2025–2026 by June 30 of this year. If you wish to continue to support the work of the WWMC and receive notices and newsletters in your inbox, and other benefits, please renew today.

Renewal is free and easy. **If you have not changed your postal or email address**, go to our [Renew General Membership](#) page and fill out the brief form.

If you have changed either your postal or email address, go to our [General Membership page](#) and check the Renew box.

Renewed and new memberships made now are valid until June 30, 2026. Thank you for your support of WWMC and the health of Wabamun Lake! 🌿

Our Supporters

Partners

The WWMC thanks the following governments and organizations for their support of specific WWMC projects:



Donors

The WWMC gratefully thanks the following people who have donated to the WWMC to continue our work protecting the health of Wabamun Lake: Kelly & Mary Aldridge, Matt Anderson, Margaret Bakker, Todd Baldwin, Brenda Black, Lyn ter Borg, Ian Burn, Conrad Clement, Rob Cowley, Barry D'Angelo, Gail de Vos, Sandy Drummond, Carol & Keith Epton, Susan Evans, Neil & Elaine Fleming, Stan & Janet Franklin, George & Jean Haw, Colleen & David Judge, Kobylko Family, Maurice Lemieux, Kathy MacDonald, Rick MacPhee, Averie & Carman McNary, Don & Betty Meredith, Nick & Patti Moskalyk, Peter & Jordyce van Muyden, Julia & Tony Nelson, Barb Parker, Cliff Richard, Robarts Family, Ron & Patricia Rolfe, Bill & Kate Russell, Ian Simpson, Ingrid & Graham Smith, Cynthia Soneff, Jeff Stadnick, Sue Styles, Denny Thomas, Robert Van Soest, Denise & Bernie Wade, Lee Watrin, Sheila Wynn, Dwayne Zon. Edmonton Community Foundation: *McIvor Kent Endowment Fund*.

Remember: Donors to the WWMC receive a tax receipt. Please visit our [Donate page](#) for more information and to support lake health in just a few moments of your time.

Corporate Members

The WWMC thanks the following businesses, governments, and organizations for joining the WWMC as corporate members and helping the council achieve its goals. Please visit our [Get Involved](#) page for more information about Corporate Membership.

Gold Members



Silver Members



Bronze Members



Lakescape

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Lakescape is a publication of the Wabamun Watershed Management Council. It is published quarterly for the benefit of members as well as other stakeholders in the Wabamun watershed. All material is copyright the WWMC, unless otherwise specified. For more information about the council, visit wwmc.ca.



The Wabamun Watershed Management Council (WWMC) respectfully acknowledges that Wabamun Lake and its watershed are situated on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of Cree, Saulteaux/Ojibway/Anishinaabe, Blackfoot, Dene, Iroquois, Nakota Sioux, and Métis peoples. We acknowledge Indigenous peoples' deep connection to the watershed lands of Wabamun Lake, and thank them for their long history and ongoing role in lake watershed management. In an act of reconciliation, as we consider our role as watershed stewards, the WWMC intends to strengthen relationships with local Indigenous peoples so we may journey together to care for Wabamun Lake and its watershed for future generations.



WABAMUN
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