

## **A Rocha Pembina Valley (Larry Danielson, Chair, A Rocha Pembina Valley Education Team Board Member, A Rocha Canada)**

### **BioBlitz Project**

A Rocha Pembina Valley is a conservation organization affiliated with A Rocha Canada and A Rocha International. Although A Rocha International has been active with conservation initiatives for nearly 30 years, A Rocha Pembina Valley is a much younger organization. One of our main conservation activities is the annual monitoring of the raptor migration through the Pembina Valley. We have collected five years of good data, anticipating the opportunity to champion the valley as an "Important Birding Area."

The BioBlitz project (summarily described below) is an important step forward for our local organization as we partner with Manitoba scientists and local conservation agencies to promote biodiversity in our region.

A Rocha Pembina Valley conducted a 12-hour BioBlitz at the Livingston Nature Park in Morden, MB on May 30, 2009. Led by Paul Goossen, a volunteer from Canadian Wildlife Service, a team of Manitoba scientists and conservation experts identified the living species in the park, including 52 types of birds, 44 types of plants, 63 invertebrates, and three mammals.

The aim of this BioBlitz was to gather data to aid Morden's Parks and Recreation Committee as it works to conserve the river-front of Dead Horse Creek and to manage and protect the biodiversity in this public park. The complete findings and recommendations of the science team will be published in an *ARVP Biodiversity Report* (Fall 2009). In partnership with the Town of Morden, A Rocha Pembina Valley is also using the data to create a self-directed *Trail Guide* for Livingston Nature Park. Slated for publication in the spring of 2010, the trail guide will help park visitors to appreciate the biodiversity in this local setting and encourage their support for important steps in riparian conservation.

Important in itself, the 2009 BioBlitz at Livingston Nature Park was also a pilot project in preparation for A Rocha's larger and longer initiative in 2010—a 24-hour biodiversity study at Pembina Valley Provincial Park (400 acres) and the adjacent A Rocha Field Study Centre (100 acres).