



Bcnature

- 
- **Discovering Townsends Big-eared Bats**
 - **Yorke Edwards - A Natural Thinker**
 - **Slime Mold - Migrating Protoplasm**

"Know nature and keep it worth knowing"

The Magazine of BC Nature

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Bcnature

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- To provide naturalists and natural history clubs of BC with a unified voice on conservation and environmental issues.
- To foster an awareness, appreciation and understanding of our natural environment, that it may be wisely used and maintained for future generations.
- To encourage the formation and cooperation of natural history clubs throughout BC.
- To provide a means of communication between naturalists in BC.

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Honourary Editor-in-Chief: Penelope Edwards (*pedward@telus.net*)

Guest Editorial: Rob Butler (*robbutler.ca*)

Advertising: Betty Davison (*manager@bcnature.ca*)

Website: David Lassmann (*djlassmann@telus.net*)

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BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists)
Heritage Centre, 1620 Mount Seymour Rd.
North Vancouver, BC V7G 2R9
Tel: 604-985-3057
Fax 604-985-3059

www.bcnature.ca email: *manager@bcnature.ca*

Office Manager: Betty Davison

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Photo - Alan Burger

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In association with the Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia, BC Nature's home office is located at the Heritage Centre in Mount Seymour Provincial Park. Please visit Elders Council website <http://www.elderscouncilforparks.org/index.html>



Editor's Notebook

Rebirth of the Naturalist

Guest Editorial - Rob Butler

Up until the 20th century, the naturalist was an amateur. Charles Darwin, for example was an unpaid traveler onboard during the HMS Beagle's around-the-world journey when he made the discoveries that led to *The Origin of Species*. During the 20th century, the amateur naturalist was replaced by the career scientist. The science became highly sophisticated requiring a high level of training to participate. The naturalist movements hung on as largely the recreational pursuit of amateurs in leisure times particularly among retirees.

It was not because naturalists showed no interest in participating in science projects. For years, the Christmas Bird Count in North America and the British Trust for Ornithology in the UK relied on naturalists to provide data. There is also a long history of citizens participating in land management projects. What is new is how naturalists are turning to research.

The 21st century re-awakening of the naturalist has been fueled by technology. The internet and mobile devices are allowing citizens to embark on projects of a scale unimaginable a few decades ago. It is now possible to collect large data sets over large geographic scales by many people in a short period of time. Bird Studies Canada's breeding bird atlases and *e-Bird* are two recent examples that have arisen because of internet technology. These data sets are being used to illustrate and examine questions about topics such as climate change and migration timing. Free information available on the internet is also making the science more democratic.

Questions about the validation of data collected by untrained people are valid but training and protocols can largely alleviate these concerns. Where improvement could be made is designing projects to test hypotheses. Many citizen science projects are descriptive and miss an opportunity to try to understand more about the ecology and evolution of the species and their ecosystems.

We are on the verge of the rebirth of the naturalist. Citizen science projects rely on a cadre of skilled observers and it is where nature organizations might see renewed growth. The ability for an army of skilled naturalists to fan out over the globe equipped with mobile data collection devices is now a reality. ∞

Dr. Rob Butler is an ornithologist and author. He is a Fellow of The Explorers Club and the American Ornithologists Union, and an Outstanding Alumnus of two universities. Rob co-founded the Pacific WildLife Foundation in 2003 to enhance research and education of the ocean and where he serves as President. He is also a scientific advisor for Bird Studies Canada, and a board member of several national and international nature, research and academic organizations. He is an adjunct professor of biology at Simon Fraser University. He has a lifetime of stories from expeditions and travels studying and conserving birds. He is a frequent guest of the Canadian media. Further information can be found on Rob's website: <http://www.robbutler.ca/>



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Gardening, art, ecology... VanDusen covers it!

VanDusen is once again offering a variety of courses this fall. Visit our website for more details! Here is a sampling:

- Sep. 24:** The Secret's in the Soil
Plant ID for Beginners
- Sep. 29:** The Watercoloured Garden
- Oct. 2:** Right Plant, Right Place
- Oct. 15:** Winter Container Workshop
- Oct. 22:** Plant ID for Intermediates
- Oct. 25:** Fungus Among Us: An Introduction to Mushrooms
- Nov. 5:** Effective Photo Composition

Letters to the Editor:

To: BC Nature- Office

Subject: article on Anna Roberts Summer Magazine
I was delighted to read the article on Anna !

When I live in 100 Mile House 1979-86 I used to help out on the Williams Lake CBC. Often I was paired with Anna. She was a wonderful companion and mentor and could easily out walk this much younger birder . In fact, I have never forgotten one memorable hike to hell and back in knee deep snow with the average temperature equal to the total species count for the day, about (-)25. On the other hand, who would you want to be with you to see three Northern Goshawks, large flocks of Gray-crowned Rosy Finches and all the crows and ravens at the Williams Lake dump! I have been blessed to know many mentor-naturalists and Anna always comes to mind as one of those people who was eager to share her passion for the natural environment with one and all. Thank you Anna, you richly deserve the McTaggart-Cowan Outstanding Naturalist Award.

Laurie from Summerland

Correction:

I read the summer 2011 copy of BCnature and greatly enjoyed it. Thanks for the efforts of all who put it together. However, I did notice on page 5 a picture of a couple of birds named as "Horned Larks." These are not "Horned Larks." Rather, they are Killdeer. Perhaps you are already aware of this error in naming.

Sue Mac

Thank you for catching the error Sue!

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BC Nature Camp Salt Spring Island June 4 to 8, 2012

By Nieke Visser

Salt Spring Island is the largest of the Southern Gulf Islands. Its geographical location between Vancouver Island and the outer Gulf Islands creates a mild climate with only half the amount of rain compared to Vancouver. Salt Spring's wildlife, its vegetation, and its people are a product of this unique physiography.

Following the success of the BC Nature Field Camp held in April/May 2010, the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club is pleased to announce another camp in June of 2012. Again, this camp will draw upon expert leaders and presenters covering all aspects of natural history, including birding, botany, geology and marine life. Excursions involve one or two-day hikes over rough trails, walking over slippery shorelines, and getting in and out of a Zodiac. Participants are therefore expected to be in good physical condition.

We have negotiated accommodation with Cusheon Lake Resort which offers one-bedroom cabins with full kitchens, some with a loft as well. The cabins sleep two; the loft cabins sleep four. Fee: \$650 per registrant based on double occupancy; 50% is due upon registration. Costs include a five-day camp with accommodation for four nights, four dinners, all events and presentations, and a four to five hour marine wildlife tour with a visit to one of the outer islands; not included are travel and ferry costs, breakfasts and lunches.

Registration will start Sunday, January 15, 2012, at 9:00 am by contacting Nieke Visser at 250-537-5443 or



Photo: Nieke Visser

Bald Eagle over the Belle Chain

niekevisser@shaw.ca. For more information please call or email Nieke anytime.

Additional information and registration instructions will be announced in the winter issue of BCnature magazine, on BC Nature's website and its e-newsletter as well as on the SSTNC website: www.saltspringtnc.ca ☞



The President's Perch

By John Neville

The AGM at Williams Lake was a special event and I thank all of you who contributed and participated.

Immediately afterward we headed for the East Coast. Our destination was the Bay of Fundy and several locations in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The funnel-shaped bay absorbs and ejects 100 billion tons of salt water on each tide. The water rises and falls 15 meters, which are the highest tides in the world. It's a very rich marine environment where some of the following mammals might be seen from cliffs and boats: Northern Right, Blue, Fin-back, Minke, Humpback, Sperm, Beluga, Orca, and Long-fin Pilot Whales. Other marine mammals to look out for are: Harbour, Harp, Hooded and Grey Seal; White-beaked, White-sided and Common Dolphin; and Harbour Porpoise. The bird checklist has more than 350 species and is interesting in all four seasons. For example, about 110,000 Razorbills spend the winter amongst the islands.

We gained different perspectives on the bay from Fundy National Park www.parkscanada.gc.ca, Joggins Fossil Cliffs UNESCO World Heritage Site jogginsfossilcliffs.net, and the Tintamarre National Wildlife Area and Tantramar Marshes near Sackville at the head of the Bay. More about the bay in a minute. At Kejimikujik National Park, one evening we sat on the edge of a lake to record Common Loons. Behind me in the woods, Hermit Thrush and Eastern Towhee provided a musical background. In the foreground, Bullfrog, Trout and Bats were feeding voraciously on Mosquitoes. We were protected by bug shirts! In Cape Breton Highlands National Park, I was walking a trail one morning recording Green Frogs, Coyote and Chestnut-sided Warbler when I heard footsteps behind me. I turned and quietly asked... "Is that you Heather?" ... With long strides across the road and



Moose Encounter - Cape Breton Highlands Natinal Park

crashing through the bush, a Moose parted company with me. Heather had been watching the moose follow me for some time and her photograph is included.

In the Bay of Fundy there is an archipelago of 16 islands created from basalt and sedimentary rock. The woodland is Acadian Forest, which comprises boreal trees mixed with deciduous hardwoods from further south. The largest (25 by 10 km) and most populated is Grand Manan Island with about 2500 people. You reach this beautiful island by an exciting 90 minute ferry ride. The journey starts from Black's Harbour, near Highway 1, the Trans Canada, in New Brunswick. Around the island, fishing boats can be seen everyday catching herring, pollock and mackerel and emptying crab and lobster pots. They also tend fish farms, like the West Coast. Edible Common Periwinkle were introduced to these shores about 200 years ago. Dulce is harvested from the shoreline. We enjoyed another resource, fresh fiddle heads in our salad. One of the island treasures is the extensive network of trails. The most important one skirts the whole island. Many others link with the peripheral trail and most of the public pathways are in good condition. A trail guide is available. Our first stop was Long Pond

Bay. It contains Anchorage Provincial Park and a bird sanctuary. In late May most of the migrant birds had already passed through but Lesser Scaup, Herring and Greater Black-backed Gulls were still on the pond. The gull colonies were on offshore islets. After dark, the high pitched trills of American Toads began. Those long trills were my first successful recordings of the trip.

The songs of Winter Wren and American Robin were subtly different from those found elsewhere in the country and I sometimes had to stop and listen for a minute to confirm their identification. Some of the eastern species we encountered were Northern Mockingbird, Northern Cardinal, Eastern Meadowlark, Eastern Towhee, Common Eider, American Black Duck and Northern Gannet. The wood warblers were constant companions all around the island. Ovenbird, American Redstart, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Northern Parula and Chestnut-sided warblers always seemed to be around the next bend of the trail. Amongst the most beautiful songsters we enjoyed, were Swainson and Hermit Thrush and the rich whistles of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Wetlands were quite extensive around Grand Manan. Typically Alder Flycatcher, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow and Wilson's Warblers would be resident. The Castalia salt marsh was a little different. The vegetation was limited by the brackish water. Amongst some wild roses I was able to record Nelson Sharp-tailed Sparrow for the first time. The song can best be described as a soft hiss! It's only a nutty birder like me that would appreciate a drab grey sparrow, with a white belly and usually quite inconspicuous in Atlantic salt marshes. If you would like more information about birds in this region I can highly recommend Roger Burrows, *Birding in New Brunswick, 2010*, www.gooselane.com. When I met Roger he was wearing his Canucks shirt with Burrows' #14 on it, and preparing to support the Stanley Cup bid.

On the way home we visited the Museum of Nature in Ottawa. The visit emphasized to us the diversity of nature in our great country.

When you read this the Fall General Meeting will be fast approaching. I look forward to meeting and hearing some of your adventures over the summer. ☺

Natural Mistakes

By Clive Keen

What to do when your neighbour reports an Eskimo Curlew in his bird bath

Since becoming President of a naturalists club I've been receiving a number of personal "I've found this amazing bird!" messages. They always come from non-birders. Real birders have the sense to contact the experts, not me. But the reports are always highly enthusiastic, and I'm glad to get them, though not always sure that I'm handling them well.

For instance, there was the report from an enthusiast in Northern Canada of a Carolina Chickadee on her feeder. I don't think my response was a prize-winner. I didn't smirk, and no naughty words passed my lips. But I did say something along the lines of "And how exactly did you tell it from the Black-capped Chickadees that are all over your area? I'm sure I couldn't!" Not helpful. The Prime Directive in teaching is never put down the eager learner.

In fact the reports are usually given with such enthusiasm that there's no temptation to curl a lip. There was the person who said he had a Mackay's Longspur and Tricolored Blackbird on his land - a somewhat unlikely combination, but they were "Definitely what he saw!" He said he didn't manage to take a photo of the Mackay's but got a good one of the Tricolored Blackbird. It proved to be a doing an incredibly good impersonation of a Yellow-headed Blackbird. When this was pointed out diplomati-

cally, my correspondent didn't miss a beat, and reaffirmed his faith in the Mackay's. I finally applied my standard phrase: "That would be an extraordinarily unusual sighting for this region. In fact one has never been officially recorded in this part of the world."

I've used that sentence quite often now, and find it hasn't had the effect I'd intended. To me, the expression means "Ya gotta be kidding!" But what the listener hears is that they have seen something really, really exciting, which is exactly what they'd wanted. And perhaps that's not such a bad thing. The world can't have too many people excited about the birds they've seen, or mis-seen.

A variant on my standard "extraordinarily unusual" statement is: "That would be the first sighting ever in this area. If you can get a photograph to document it, you'll have achieved a real coup." That is a better approach. The listener can remain enthusiastic, and just might take a photograph, examine it, and quietly realize that he's actually seen a bog-standard summer visitor. That's good. He's on his way to becoming a better observer. And of course, there's always the possibility that he really has seen something very unusual, and can prove it.

This is why I like receiving such reports. One day, a non-birder will tell me that he's seen something unbelievable, and will be right. In fact, I'm coming to think that a non-birder is more likely to see a true rarity than someone like me. The problem with knowing the ranges of the birds is that you discount the ones known to be outside your area. You see what you expect to see -- or at least, I know I do. A little while ago I saw a Townsend's Warbler in a particular tree, and the day after, I saw a warbler in the same tree and happily watched it through my binoculars. "Lovely Townsend's" I said to myself, turned away, and heard it give a very un-Townsend song. Confused, I looked again, and was embarrassed to find that I'd been staring at a Magnolia Warbler. I'd been suffering from something the psychologists call "confirmation bias," which is a posh way of stating that our expectations strongly colour our perceptions. I was expecting to see a Townsend's, saw the black-and-yellow, the bib, and the streaked flank, and settled comfortably into my expectations. The grey crown and white eyebrow didn't fit my expectations, so I just didn't see them.

It gets worse. Why did I not take a second look, when I first saw the Townsend's, to make sure that it wasn't a Black-throated Green Warbler? I didn't, because BTGWs aren't in my area. The range maps state that clearly. But hang on, birds have wings. They get caught in storms. They get lost. Their compass goes faulty. They go a-roving. So perhaps it was a BTGW, and I hadn't looked to check. If I'd been a beginner, and particularly one with an old field guide with the range maps hidden in the back, I'd actually have looked. Looked with an open, not closed, mind. "Hm. yellow face, olive cheek, thick black streaks, yellow across the bum. Must be a Black-throated jobbie. Says here it's uncommon. Do you think we should tell that Naturalists Club guy?" I hope to heck that they would! ☺

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Conservation Report

By Rosemary Fox with contributions from Conservation Committee members

Northern Gateway Pipeline and proposed tanker port.

BC Nature and Nature Canada are busy preparing for the National Energy Board (NEB)/Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) Joint Review Panel hearings in 2012 on Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline project to transport bitumen from the Alberta tar sands to Kitimat, for export from there by tanker to foreign markets. (So far, Enbridge does not have any shipping contracts with potential buyers). Joint Review Panel (JRP) hearings are highly structured affairs, and groups and individuals wishing to participate must meet a number of strict deadlines. BC Nature and Nature Canada have made a joint application for intervenor status in the JRP hearings. The Kitimat Valley Naturalists (KVN) have also applied for intervenor status. While the KVN have applied separately, we will be (and are already) working together in many respects. The KVN have an intimate knowledge of the Kitimat River estuary and Douglas Channel on which they will be focusing, while BC Nature and Nature Canada will be focusing more broadly on pipeline and marine impacts of the project on birds, and on terrestrial ecosystems. We are also in touch with Raincoast Conservation to share information and avoid unnecessary overlaps, so that we and they can use our limited resources to best effect.

While the deadline has passed to participate formally in the hearings as intervenors, there are two other equally important opportunities still available for individuals and groups to participate. One is to make an Oral Statement at one of the community hearings that will be held along the pipeline route, starting in January 2012. The deadline to register to make an oral statement is October 6, 2011, and the JRP has indicated that only those who register by the deadline will be allowed to speak at the community hearings. Anyone who may want to make an oral statement, but is not sure, is advised to register by the October 6 deadline: you can always cancel. Regarding oral statements, West Coast Environmental Law, in its pamphlet on public participation in the hearings (see below), states: "Oral Statements are a very important way for you to express your views to the Panel. They may have a greater impact on the

Panel than simply writing a Letter of Comment: seeing real people who are expressing their thoughts, concerns, and emotions in relation to this project is important for the Panel in making their decision".

The other way to participate without being a formal intervenor is to send in a letter of comment. There is no registration for this, and the deadline for receipt of written comments by the JRP (copied to Enbridge) is March 13, 2012, 11 am Pacific Time or Noon Mountain Time. Email transmission of comments is not allowed.

West Coast Environmental Law has produced an extremely useful pamphlet on how to participate in the JRP process for the Northern Gateway project, entitled *When the Enbridge Review Panel Comes to Your Backyard*. Go to their website, www.wcel.org, scroll down the home page to "Recent Publications" in the dark blue panel on the right, and this pamphlet is dated May 25, 2011. As the pamphlet states: "Facts are important, but so are feelings. You can choose to include facts and argument in your letter, or to make a heartfelt pitch, or to do both". (I would just add to that the importance of always being courteous.). More information on how to participate in the hearings is provided in the Hearing Order, which is on the JRP website at www.gatewaypanel.review.gc.ca.

Kinder Morgan's Trans-Mountain Pipeline

While public attention has been focused on Enbridge's high risk Northern Gateway Pipeline project, another company, Kinder Morgan, has been quietly planning to expand its existing pipeline capacity to Vancouver to quadruple the amount of oil it now exports to Asia. According to the Vancouver Sun of June 27 2011 (Kinder Morgan pipeline is slipping in the back door, by Karen Campbell), currently around six dozen tankers come and go from Kinder Morgan's Westridge Terminal in Burnaby. The company's current expansion plans would increase this traffic incrementally over ten years, without the need for public hearings, to 576 annual tanker trips through Vancouver's Burrard Inlet. While the Lower Mainland and Juan de Fuca Strait have been at risk from oil spills from Kinder Morgan's existing tanker traffic for years without arousing widespread

public concern, the proposed quadrupling of tankers is a quadrupling of the risk of spills and needs to be exposed to public scrutiny. As the Vancouver Sun article states, "...if Kinder Morgan's plans unfold as they hope, tanker traffic will increase exponentially, and with it, the risk of spills or mishaps. A significant spill ... would threaten precious marine spaces and estuaries critical to the survival of some of B.C.'s most iconic species, such as sockeye salmon and resident killer whales, and vulnerable species like the cormorant and heron. A spill could also hurt tourism, recreation, industry and operations at the largest port in Canada".

The nature of north coast geography makes oil tanker traffic out of Kitimat particularly risky, but this does not mean that increased tanker traffic out of the heart of Vancouver and adjacent to the Fraser Delta is any more acceptable. The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development's December 2010 Report to the House of Commons on oil spills from ships found that the government is not prepared to deal with a major oil spill from ships, and that "the Coast Guard has not done a national risk assessment of oil spills from ships since 2000, and that its national emergency response plan is out of date. The audit also found that the Coast Guard does not have a reliable system to track spills. As a result, it cannot accurately determine the number of spills that occur each year, the size of those spills, their environmental impacts as well as how many required onsite responses".

How good are the B.C. and federal environmental assessment processes?

A recent (July 2011) report by the BC Auditor-General found that the BC Environmental Assessment Office has not been providing sufficient oversight of certified projects to ensure that potential significant adverse effects are avoided or mitigated <http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs/2011/report4/audit-bc-environmental-assessment-office-EAO>.

The North West Institute (NWI) in Smithers has just released another, even more critical report by environmental lawyer Mark Haddock, which compares the parallel but separate assessments of the Prosperity Mine project in central BC by the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Office. In its press release, the NWI concludes that the BC EAO recommendation to approve the Prosperity Mine was based "on incom

Continued on Page 8

plete evidence and was the result of a hurried, flawed and less than objective process conducted by the agency".

The NWI report is available on its website <http://www.northwestinstitute.ca>

While the NWI report found that the federal environmental assessment of the Prosperity Mine was more thorough and open, the federal government has recently slashed CEAA's 2012-13 budget by more than 43% and CEAA is being forced to reduce its full-time staff by one-third. Following on a 6.9% cut in the 2010-11 budget, CEAA now has 50% less funding than it did two years ago, while the federal government is subsidising the oil and gas industry to the tune of \$1.4 billion.

Proposed and Reopening Mines

The favourable price of some minerals has led to a proliferation of mine proposals around the province as well as re-opening of old or never-operated mines such as Endako and Galore. Yellowhead Mining Incorporated is proposing to build a copper-gold-silver mine about 20 km southeast of Clearwater. The mine will produce about 70,000 tonnes of ore per day over an 18 to 24-year life span. Only one person commented on this proposal. The proposed underground mine (lead, zinc, silver) not far away on Imperial

Metals' Ruddock Creek lead-zinc property, about 30 km east of Avola near Tum Tum Lake (upper reaches of the Adams River) has raised the ire of local First Nations.

Kamloops is just embarking on a heated "discussion" about The proposed Ajax copper-gold mine situated within the City and just outside its southern boundary. The project includes an open pit beside the popular fishing location of Jacko Lake, rock waste piles 90 metres high on local grasslands and immediately adjacent to a creek that serves as both domestic and irrigation water supplies. 24-hour operations of noisy vehicles and overnight lighting would impact residents living as close as 800 metres away. A three-kilometre long tailings "pile" up to 170 metres high would "grace" the Coquihalla entrance to the City boundaries of the City!

As mentioned above, all mine proposals must go through a structured review process. The following links to the federal and provincial environmental assessment websites include all projects, not just mines: <http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=D75FB358-1> or <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/epic/project-StatusCategoryReport.do#curr>

A gloomy future for Nechako River sturgeon.

- The future of the endangered Nechako sturgeon is very gloomy indeed right now. June Wood of Vanderhoof reports that "anticipated grant money from Western Economic Diversification was not forthcoming this year, and so plans for a hatchery have had to be shelved". The recovery plan is supposed to be "two-pronged", the hatchery being one and habitat improvement the other. There is some in-river research going on...gravel was placed on the known spawning areas near the bridge in Vanderhoof. These spawning areas are silted in resulting in either eggs not hatching or larvae not surviving - it's not known for sure. The river has been very high for the past month and will continue to be high until probably the end of August, making monitoring difficult if not impossible. This gravel project did not come cheap. It will be interesting to find out the results, if any, come fall. What's really needed to improve the river habitat is a change in flow pattern, but of course Alcan is not in favour of that and Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the technical arm of the Recovery Initiative do not have what it takes to recommend any change to the flows. ☺

Photo: Lisa Scott

A Summer with WiTS

By Christoph Mayer

The Wildlife Tree Stewardship (WiTS) program in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys focuses on monitoring several species of blue and red-listed birds, with an emphasis on Lewis's Woodpecker and Western Screech-Owl. As the summer student assistant this year, I was privileged to be involved in monitoring these amazing birds. In regards to the Lewis's Woodpecker (LEWO), my efforts were spread across three main areas of interest. A large portion of my time was spent doing a study for Partners in Flight, where I repeatedly monitored ten nest sites throughout the summer. This was an extraordinary experience as I witnessed the birds in several different stages of their breeding season, from incubation periods, through early nestling, late nestling, and finally the fledgling stage. The second focus of the year was to find new nests. I was assisted by 15 volunteer monitors from throughout the region, most of who belong to a local naturalist club. We were able to find 15 new nests, and we also monitored 56 old nests, of which 22 were reoccupied.

On the Western Screech-Owl (WSOW) project, I was able to witness juveniles just before they fully fledged and left the area. Together with volunteer monitors, I was able to detect WSOW responses to call playbacks in two regional parks in the Central Okanagan.

This has been a great year, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Canada Summer Jobs Program for making this position available, as well as all of our volunteers who make WiTS possible! ☺



Hard at work - Christoph Mayer

Discovering Townsend's Big-eared Bats!

Submitted by *Sylvia Pincott, Pender Island Naturalists*

With great excitement, on May 18th, we welcomed the return of "Batty" to the ceiling of our Pender Island carport storage cupboard! This began his third summer with us, following six or more months of hibernation. "Batty" is a Townsend's Big-eared Bat – a blue-listed species, not often recorded in BC. He is an ideal guest, asking nothing of us but quiet days to hang from the open ceiling of our cupboard. There he rests up for his nightly forays in search of flying insects – small moths in particular.

As you will see from his photograph, "Batty" is very cute – at least "only a mother could love" kind of cute! Another rather descriptive name he has been known by is the "Lump-nosed Bat".

Townsend's Big-eared Bats do not roost in narrow cracks as do the Little Brown Myotis, but choose an open ceiling situation. (Perhaps they need room for their ears!) The males roost alone, while the females gather in small maternity colonies. Ours was the first of his species recorded on Pender Island but, since writing about him in our local Pender Post, we have discovered two other male roosting sites several kilometers away. GPS coordinates and roosting details of our little friends have been forwarded to the BC

Conservation Data Centre to officially record these Pender Island observations.

Another distinction of this species is a special sensory ability to glean insects from vegetation. While other local bat species concentrate on aerial insect captures, the Townsend's has this additional talent. Learning this answered a question for me from awhile back when, during a bat-watching evening with young friends, I observed a bat swooping down and checking out a row of broad beans! As it turned out, this was next door to one of the other roosting sites that we later discovered.

Each September our little friend has headed off to his winter hibernaculum. Before leaving he would have accumulated an additional 40 percent of his summer weight to use as energy through that time. It is thought that Townsend's Big-eared Bats remain year-round within a radius of less than 50 kilometres. Very few hibernation sites are known in BC, but one is a cave on a nearby Gulf Island, within the 50 km range, so perhaps he winters on another island.

Now that Batty has returned, it's back to creeping quietly into our storage room, not wanting to disturb our friend during his daytime sleeps! ☺



"Batty" - Townsends Big Eared Bat
"Hanging around"

Unique features of the Townsend's Big-eared Bat:

This is a blue-listed "threatened" species within British Columbia. South of the border, with seriously declining numbers within most of its range, it is now listed as "endangered".

- Males roost alone during the summer, while females gather in small maternity colonies. Roosting is on an open surface, rather than within secluded cracks such as favoured by the Little Brown Myotis.
- TLC (The Land Conservancy of BC) has protected one of the few known maternity colony locations in BC.
- These bats accumulate an additional 40 percent of their summer weight in the form of fat to use as energy through winter hibernation.
- Males and females come together only at the hibernation site (usually a cave). Mating occurs prior to the hibernation period, but delayed fertilization occurs in the spring, with a single "pup" born in early summer.
- This species has the unusual ability to "glean" insects from vegetation or other surfaces.



Photo Ian Routley

The Whitebark Pine Ecosystem of Canada met here July 13 to 15 and held a Science and Management Forum. We also went on a field trip to the Yalakom. The Lillooet Tribal Council and the Lillooet Naturalist Society supported the event. It was a great success and the group enjoyed being at Lillooet. For more information on the Whitebark ecosystem visit www.whitebarkpine.ca

SLIME MOLDS - MIGRATING PROTOPLASM

By Terry Taylor

If you have hiked through the woods after a warm rainy period, you have probably seen the slime molds, even if you did not know what they are. For those of us who know about them, they are fascinating organisms. People who notice them, but do not know what they are, tend to have a more negative point of view.

They are called slime molds because they look like slime and act like molds, but these organisms are neither of the above. The giant ones are the ones we can see. They vary all the way from microscopic to many centimetres across. The giant ones are the ones I will be discussing. The usual appearance is like a patch of orange, yellow, or white slime on a rotten log. The most common species is the scrambled egg slime mold *Fuligo septica*. It, however, has been likened to other things, with a different connotation.

If you notice such a yellow or orange patch on an old log or stump, take a closer look, for it will start to show its true nature. Slime molds spend most of their lives moving around in the soil or over a surface looking for bacteria to eat. When they have grown big enough and conditions are favorable they start to prepare for reproduction. It is in this intermediate stage when we are most likely to see them.

So let's return to *Fuligo*. It is sitting there on its rotten log, having eaten its fill of bacteria. Look closely. It has two parts to it - an advancing edge, and a trailing edge. The advancing part is humped up, and behind it are narrow pieces like little river channels. The slime mold had previously been moving through the rotten wood, eating micro-organisms. It has come up onto the surface, where it will form a fruiting body full of spores. If some of these spores reach another rotten log, they will germinate and start the process over again.

What is a slime mold if it isn't just slime, it is not a mold and it is not a plant? Biologists argued rather vehemently about that before the advent of molecular biology. The botanists called them myxomycetes, because they form



Photo: Rosemary Taylor

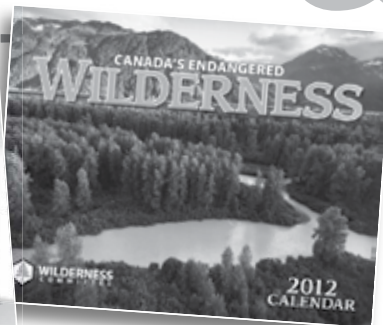
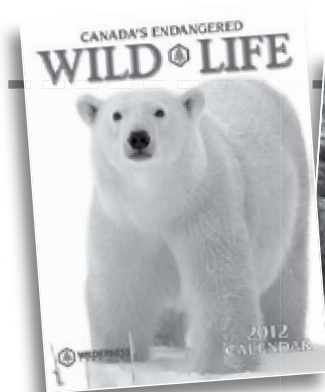
Slime mold in the wild

fungus-like fruiting bodies, and fungi were considered plants. The zoologists called them mycetozoa, because they considered them related to protozoa, and protozoa were, at one time, thought to be single-celled animals, as they move. It turns out that the zoologists were closer to the truth than the botanists.

What looks like colored slime is a giant single cell. It is like a gigantic amoeba. Unlike an amoeba, however, it has thousands of nuclei. A nucleus is the decision-making part of a cell, where the DNA is located. There is usually one per cell. Cells usually have walls around them to give them structure. Slime molds have very little rigidity, just enough to enable them to stay together and move a short distance. The protoplasm has moved through the sinuous channels into the advancing front. *Fuligo* forms one big spore case with millions of purple spores. Most other slime molds make many little spore cases. One of the most common is *Badhamia utricularis*, which forms orange slime on rotting oyster mushrooms.

Have a look at some images of slime molds on the internet, or in a fungus book, and take a visit to your local woodland. These little mysteries of nature are all around us. We just have to look for them in the right place at the right time. ↪

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Yorke Edwards - "A Natural Thinker" (1924-2011)

By Rob Cannings

Yorke Edwards was a pioneer in wildlife biology, nature education, conservation, and museum life across British Columbia and Canada, stimulating people to think more deeply about the world and our place in it. He died in Victoria on August 16, 2011; he was 86.

Roger Yorke Edwards was born in Toronto in 1924. As a child, reading the nature writings of Ernest T. Seton and Thornton W. Burgess plunged him into biology. The colourful Audubon bird charts that hung on the walls of his Toronto school drove him to memorize the plumages of all the species he saw. His passion for birds during high school was shared by his friend John Crosby, who later became one of Canada's foremost bird artists - Crosby painted the plates for Earl Godfrey's Birds of Canada. On their bicycles, the two birded fanatically around Toronto and became enthusiastic members of the Royal Ontario Museum's Intermediate Naturalists Club. His friends there were also to become well known in biological and naturalist circles -- Bob Bateman, Bruce Falls, and Bristol Foster.

From 1944 to 1948, Yorke studied Forestry at the University of Toronto; here lay the origins of the wildlife biologist and museum man. In the summers he studied small mammal populations in Algonquin Park and was a part-time preparator of vertebrate specimens at the Royal Ontario Museum. While studying in Toronto, Yorke heard Ian McTaggart Cowan lecture on wildlife research in the Rocky Mountain National Parks; he was enthralled, and eagerly accepted Cowan's invitation to study with him at the University of BC.

By 1950 Yorke had his Master's degree in zoology and botany. In 1951 he married Joan Thicke of Vancouver and began a challenging job as a research officer with the BC Forest Service in Victoria. In those days, provincial parks were managed by the Forest Service, and much of Yorke's wildlife research was concentrated in places like Manning and Wells Gray parks. In their attempts to introduce experi-



Photo: Steve Cannings.

Yorke Edwards at a Canadian Audubon (Nature Canada) summer camp, Peachland, BC, 1965

mental management tools such as controlled burning, he and his team often tangled with their forester colleagues.

Yorke championed a new cause in 1959 - nature interpretation in parks. He talked his superiors into giving it a try; they gave him a summer student, a hundred dollars, and said "go to it". Yorke scrounged a mildewed tent to go over a discarded tent frame in the Pinewoods area of Manning Park. They built exhibits of rocks and flowers, bird pictures, and beaver workings. A sign announcing "Nature House" hung over the door. Although the place was frequently mistaken for a washroom, the program never looked back. Over the years it brought nature houses, nature trails, interpretive signs and naturalists talks to most parts of the province. Widely admired, the program set a standard for outdoor education across the country. In 1967 Yorke accepted an invitation from the Canadian Wildlife Service to create the same thing on a national scale. During the following years, five Wildlife Centres sprang up across Canada, from Bonaventure in Québec's Gaspé to Creston in the BC Kootenays.

Yorke returned to BC in 1972 as the Assistant Director of the Provincial Museum and, from 1974 to 1984, he was its Director. In the 1960s he had been president of the BC Museums

Association and had written and spoken volumes about museums and the museum community. This, along with his museum experience in Toronto, and especially his extensive work in public education, prepared him for managing a major museum. Yorke served on the executive boards of many conservation and natural history organizations ranging from the Canadian Nature Federation to Owl and Chickadee magazines, from the BC Forest Museum to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. He won many awards for his dedication to the understanding and preservation of Canadian nature, including the Interpretation Canada Award for Outstanding Achievement, and Canada's 125th Year Medal. He is a Fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society of Canada and the Canadian Museums Association.

The scope of Yorke Edwards' writing is impressive; his publication list includes more than 320 entries. He published his first scientific paper on Meadow Jumping Mice *Zapus hudsonius* in 1945 when he was an undergraduate. Some of his wildlife management papers, especially those based on his ungulate studies in Wells Gray Park, are classics. He also wrote widely on birds, but perhaps his most influential works are those dealing with wildlife conservation and park interpretation. He recognized the value of writing for children and worked hard at it. Naturalists' newsletters and magazines are full of his articles, as are journals and books about museums. His book, *The Mountain Barrier*, was a popular treatment of the ecology of the mountains of western Canada.

Thousands of people who have visited parks, wildlife centres, and museums, or who have read his articles and heard his talks, have come away with a bit of Yorke Edwards. ☺

Rob Cannings is Curator of Entomology at the Royal BC Museum. This article is modified from a much longer version published in the former FBCN journal, *Cordillera* 4(1) (1997).

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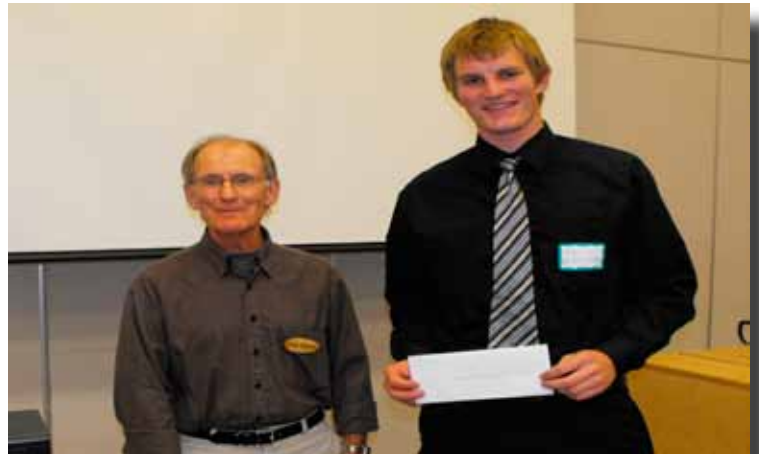
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Rene Savenye Winner "Thank you"



Dave Hutchings - Arrowsmith Naturalists presenting the 2011 Rene Savenye Scholarship to wade Van Herwaarden

We just wanted to express our appreciation for presenting the Rene Savenye Award to our son, Wade Van Herwaarden. He is truly an incredible young man, but I'm just the proud mama! Above, please find a photo of Wade receiving the award from Dave Hutchings, president of the Arrowsmith Naturalists club in Parksville, BC.

As well, we wanted to tell you that Wade was recently accepted into the Resource Officer Management Technology course at Vancouver Island University for this fall. We are very excited! Wade was one of 163 students that applied with only 70 asked for an interview and only 24 chosen for the available spots. It's quite the accomplishment for an 18 year old, as he was chosen over students in their 20's. After two years, Wade has the possibility of using the RMOT diploma credit towards achieving a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource Protection. He will continue in the tradition of protecting nature and our environment.

Wade has already spent some of his award money on a laptop computer, in preparation for his VIU courses in the fall, and the rest of the award amount is saved in his bank account awaiting for school.

Once again, please pass along Wade's thanks to your club. ☺

Submitted by Kathy Van Herwaarden

BC Nature Field Camps & Conferences 2011 - 2012

Sept 29 to Oct 2 - BC Nature Conference and FGM - Tsawassen - Hosted by Delta Naturalists. "Nature on the Move - Migration through Delta"

May 2012 - AGM - Hosted by Central Okanagan Naturalist Club

May 11 - 13, 2012 - Skagit Valley Bird Blitz

June 4-8, 2012 - Saltspring Island Camp

June 15 - 17, 2012 - Manning Park Bird Blitz

Slow Return of the Camas

By Frank Hovenden

For a naturalist these current times can be depressing with widespread ecological destruction being one of the constant themes of life in the new millennium. However optimism is also part of the human condition and with most naturalists it gains momentum every spring with perhaps the arrival of the first Rufus Hummingbird or the first salmonberry bloom.

For myself this moment happened last week in a walk through the Courtenay Air Park when I noticed several Camas plants in bloom. The Camas is a special plant intertwined with



Camas in Courtenay Air Park

the history of our region. The American explorer Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame described the beauty of fields of Camas so vast that they appeared as small lakes of clear water. Many early European explorers did not believe that a landscape so beautiful could be possible without man caring for it. In fact he was right. The Camas fields were not wild. Many First Nations tended these fields. The Camas produces a bulb which when steamed is a nutritious source of carbohydrate. The Camas bulbs were thus highly prized. They could be stored, used for making flour, and frequently traded amongst First Nations. Camas fields were highly valued, and were tended by their first owners though not in the traditional methods to which Europeans were accustomed.

There are two Camas species found locally, the Common Camas and the great Camas. Besides the size difference the flowers have slightly different diagnostics. The colour of the bloom varies from a pale lilac to a deep magenta. Occasionally a pure white bloom can be found.

The Camas is often associated with the Garry Oak ecosystem where it frequently grows. Unfortunately on Vancouver Island only remnants of this most beautiful of ecosystems remain. In the Courtenay Air Park the Comox Valley Naturalists have been working for many years to create a small piece of Garry Oak ecosystem. Non-native invasive plant such as Scotch Broom and Himalayan Black Berry have been systematically removed, while native plants such as Garry Oak have been planted and tended.

Over 5 years ago a large quantity of Camas seed were scattered and covered with mulch. I, for one had given up on ever seeing the Camas emerge. Last year I found a couple of flowering plants which I dismissed as a fluke. This year there was no mistaking that a small patch had indeed taken hold. When it is not flowering, the Camas is a rather nondescript lily-type plant. However in flower there is no mistaking this native blue jewel. Recent DNA testing has resulted in Camas being removed from the lily family.

I look forward to the day in the future when the Courtenay Air Park is blue with the blooms of Camas under the pale green of Garry Oak trees. The Comox Valley Naturalists' vision for this Park is part of their Wetland Restoration Project which fights invasive plants in the Courtenay River Estuary. Recently we have erected a new sign on the viewing platform overlooking the lagoon explaining our work in the area.

This work is made possible though funding this year received from the City of Courtenay, the Comox Valley Regional District, BC Nature, and Ducks Unlimited Canada for which we are grateful. ☞

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Heritage Center Programs in conjunction with the Elders Council

By Elise Roberts

The Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia is commemorating the history of B.C. Parks and the dedicated pioneers, by hosting 10 FREE nature interpretive programs for seniors at the Heritage Centre in Mount Seymour Provincial Park. The events are made possible by a grant from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Community Participation and Leadership Funding. I was thrilled to accept the position of Seniors Outreach Coordinator and the programs to date have been successful with lots of media attention.

The program was launched in June with Naturalist David Cook delivering a fascinating program on the forests' history. In July, excerpts from journals of Emily Carr during sketching trips at Goldstream Park were theatrically presented by Patricia Mason. "It was there that Carr began a new phase of her artistic career by experimenting with new ways of seeing and interpreting the forest". Then we joined Kevin



Photo: Elise Roberts

Alex Douglas of the Mount Seymour History Project leads a Heritage Hike to George Rennie's cabin, a program organized by Elise Roberts, Seniors Outreach Coordinator for the Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia.

Bell for a nature walk, followed by a workshop with Nature Journalist, Rosemary Taylor. To build partnerships with other organizations, Donald Grant from the Hollyburn Heritage Society was invited to present "Hugh Aikens: Mountain Photographer," a film that took us on a journey through the history of our local mountains.

On August 18th, Alex Douglas (Mount Seymour History Project) offered a historic walk to a heritage cabin, built by the late George Rennie who was involved in early canneries. On September 11, Grandparents' Day, we are partnering with

the Young Naturalists Club. Puppet show "The Adventures of Cheetwoot the Black Bear," edited by Betty Carrington and adapted from a story by early naturalist and school teacher, R.S. Sherman, this show promises to entertain and educate!

On "Rivers Day", Patricia Mason will present an evocative recreation of past and present, accompanied by music and featuring archival photos. 'Women of the River' depicts a past when the river formed a visual backdrop to the beautiful Klee Wyck estate in West Vancouver and inspired the work of several prominent B.C. artists. The river played a vital role in the storytelling tradition of the Squamish people. ☞

For information registration contact: *Elise Roberts at (604) 986-4892 or eliseroberts@shaw.ca*

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Where do rattlesnakes go on summer vacation?

By: Jessica Gosling, Thompson Rivers University

Modeling thermal habitat use with Geographic Information Systems

Northern Pacific Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus oreganus oreganus*) are the only species of venomous snake in British Columbia. Known most widely for their distinctive rattling sound, these snakes can also be recognized by a relatively large triangular head, and a brown pattern of large square splotches which transition to alternating bands on the tail, culminating in the segmented rattle.

These cryptic animals are blue-listed in BC and play an important role as a predator in the arid ecosystems of BC. Found primarily in the grasslands and dry forests of the Thompson-Okanagan, rattlesnakes use a wide variety of microhabitats, such as rocks, talus, brush, and fallen trees. Unfortunately, habitat loss and persecution have resulted in a significant drop in the rattlesnake population from historical numbers.

In managing and conserving any wildlife species, the key is knowledge. The more we know about an animal, the more effective our management strategies can be. That's where I come in. I am pursuing my Master's degree at Thompson Rivers University, and my goal is to fine tune our knowledge of rattlesnake habitat use in BC, in order to properly protect this unique species. To do this, I am focusing on the fact that rattlesnakes are ectothermic (use the environment to maintain their body temperature) and that this might be a large factor in their life style and choice of habitats.

My project centers around a model built in Geographic Information Systems (ArcGIS) which uses solar radiation as a proxy for temperature on a landscape scale so that we can look at the relative temperatures of many habitats that snakes may use. Snakes from 10 dens have been tracked using radio-telemetry to map their habitat use. The furthest distance from the den reached by an individual snake was 3.95km in 2010.

The project is in its second year, and so far the snakes indeed seem to take temperature into account when choosing habitats. In May and June, when temperatures are more variable, the snakes prefer warmer areas and will



Photo: Jessica Gosling

A large male in early spring near Ashcroft, BC.

find the warmest spot locally to bask in the sun. In July and August, when the summer weather is hot, the snakes still choose warm habitats overall, but choose the coolest spots within them, such as hiding from the sun under a big rock, but still on a south-west facing slope.

Currently, rattlesnakes in BC are protected at known denning locations. Unfortunately, this study has shown that snakes are moving well beyond the boundaries of the protected habitats as early as May. Knowing that the snakes will most likely choose warm areas of the landscape will help in designing protected areas that better encompass the habitat used by the snakes over their entire active season. This will assist wildlife managers in ensuring that our rattlesnake population in BC is kept healthy over the long term. ☞

Manning Park Bird Blitz 2011



Forty Four participants of the 29th annual Manning Park Bird Blitz stand together at Lightning Lake following the Saturday night barbecue. Guest speakers Al Grass and Anne Murray presented to the group on Friday and Saturday nights respectively. More than 90 species were seen (including the first sighting of a Grey Catbird), though late-melting snowpack limited access to high elevation trails in the park. ☞

Finally! A Kermode bear sighting

By Betty Davison

For the last 35 years, my husband and I have been cruising the waters of our beautiful BC Coast. For the last 15 years, we have been venturing up into our mid coast waters. The scenery is spectacular, the little bays and inlets are generally free of other boaters. The solitude is heavenly and ideal for all sorts of nature observation.

We first had heard of the elusive kermode or “spirit bear” through some of our books on board, and one night we watched the movie on the Kermode bear and the drive of a young man named Simon Jackson who was instrumental in helping to get the Kermode Bear protected. Inspired by the movies and books on the Kermode, we started our quest to find this elusive bear. We have been fortunate to have seen many black and grizzly bears in our travels, but for many years we continue to be stymied in our search for the Kermode. I venture to guess that I have dragged my husband through hundreds of miles of inlets and bays for an opportunity to immortalize my viewing of this bear through my camera lens. “Patience” he kept telling me. So binoculars in hand and camera around my neck, shore scouring it was! Low tide is always the best for bear spotting as most bears like to do their rock turning and feeding when the rocks are exposed by the falling tide.

So determined was I this year, that at the end of our annual trip north, I was going to hire a guide out of either Hartley Bay or Klemtu for a hike into the forest in search of this beautiful creature. This did not need to happen!

The first week of June on our way to Alaska this year, we were leaving our evening anchorage, where we had been watching a grizzly sow with her cub during the evening tide. This was pretty awe inspiring in itself! In the morning when we were ready to leave, I loaded the camera with fresh batteries, empty camera card and with binoculars in hand, we started our slow cruise northward. My husband was doing chores around the boat, so it was up to me to drive and bear spot at the same time. Being able to multi task sure is a bonus! It was a beautiful sunny day and when bear-spotting on the shore, your eyes tend to naturally wander to sun faded stumps and white or light colored rocks. At our slow cruising speed, it was easy to verify all



Photo: B. Davison

Kermode Bear on Princess Royal Island

the stumps and rocks on shore. While driving up the channel one of these stumps suddenly moved. If my scream of “Oh my god, there he is” didn’t scare him away, nothing would! We were approximately 60-70 feet from shore and there he was, nonchalantly chewing off mussels and barnacles from some low slung water logged branches.

The only sound from our boat was the clicking of my shutter and the pounding of my heart! This bear did not seem to be bothered by our presence as he kept crunching away on the mussels and barnacles. Every once in a while, he would look up to human-watch. We watched him for more than 15 minutes before leaving him to his breakfast in peace. ☺

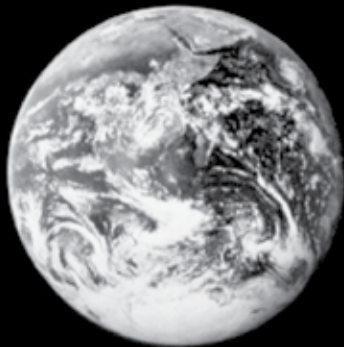
The Kermodes bear (*Ursus americanus kermodei*), also known as a “spirit bear” is a subspecies of the American black bear living in the central and north coast of British Columbia, Canada. It is noted for about 1/10 of their population having cream-coloured coats. This colour morph is due to a recessive allele common in the population. They are not albinos and not any more related to polar bears or the “blonde” brown bears of Alaska. National Geographic estimates the spirit bear population at 400-1000 individuals, saying that “the spirit bear may owe its survival to the protective traditions of the First Nations, who never hunted the animals or spoke of them to fur trappers”. While the cream colored bears have been sighted in northeastern British Columbia and as far east in North America as Minnesota, Kermodes bear lives in the greatest numbers on the islands off the north-central coast of British Columbia. Kermodes bears are found most frequently on Gribbell Island and Princess Royal Island, situated between the coastal mainland and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Scientists believe there is a high concentration of the Kermodes bears on these islands because they are geographically isolated from other black bear populations.

Because of their ghost-like appearance, “spirit bears” hold a prominent place in the mythology of the coastal First Nations and American Indians of the area. Scientists have found that black bears are not as effective at catching fish as kermode bears, as the Kermodes bear are less visible from the perspective of the fish. While at night the two colors of bears have similar success rates at catching fish, such as salmon, during the day the kermode’s bear are 30% more effective. A male Kermode bear can reach 225 kg (500 lb) or more, females are much smaller with a maximum weight of 135 kg (300 lb). Straight up it stands 180 cm (6 ft) tall.

The Kermode bear was named after Francis Kermode, former director of the Royal BC Museum, who contacted William Hornaday, the zoologist who described it.

Information taken from Wikipedia and <http://www.kitasoo.org/forestry/landplan/Kermode.html>: Erin Roberts

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Introduction Honourary Editor-in-Chief of BCnature magazine

Please join us into welcoming Penelope Edwards to the BC Nature's communications team. Penelope will take on the role of Editor-in-Chief for BCnature Magazine.

Penelope has been assisting *Victoria Natural History Club* in producing the *Victoria Naturalist* for several years. "My background is in business journalism and public relations, not biology or other natural sciences, but I have a keen interest in marine life and am learning a lot more about other aspects of nature, through observation and reading. I have completed the "Between the Tides" non-credit, continuing education course offered at the University of Victoria, and the Marine Naturalist Training offered by The Whale Museum, Friday Harbor, and am a certified Marine Naturalist, under terms of the Whale Museum's program. I am also a Trustee for the Maritime Museum of British Columbia." ❧

BC Nature at work for you

Letters Received

August 2012 - Response from Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource operations on a letter sent out by BC Nature outlined our concerns with the possible changes to visual quality objectives in the lakes TSA

Letters Sent

July 2012 - Joint Letter between BC Nature and Nature Canada to Enbridge Northern Gateway Project for intervenor status

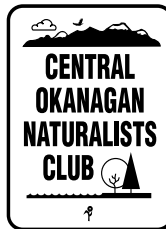
August 2012 - Eight (8) Resolutions - Covering letters sent to all relevant levels of government and organizations together with the eight resolutions passed at the May AGM (which were printed in the summer magazine)

August 2012 - Comments on the Metro Vancouver's Draft of their Ecological Health Plan

Meetings Attended

AGM - Williams Lake

Thompson Okanagan Regional Meeting - Vivian Birch Jones and Interior BC Nature Clubs



AGM 2012 - May "Mark your Calendars"

It's the 50th Anniversary of the Central Okanagan Club and we will be hosting the 2012 AGM. Please join us in learning about "The Future of Nature in the Central Okanagan". Expert speakers and field trip leaders will showcase the natural history of this region of the province. ❧

Registration and programme details will be in the winter edition of BCnature magazine. Check back soon at www.bcnature.ca and www.okanagannature.org

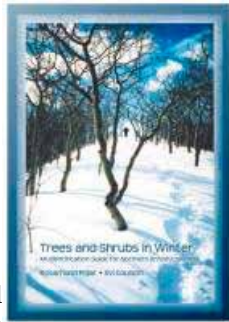
Book Review

Trees and Shrubs in Winter

By Rosamund Pojar

Publisher - Creekstone Press

Reviewed by Dawn Hanna



Many native plant enthusiasts fall under the spell of wildflowers with their showy petals, perfumed fragrances and bewitching ways. But some of us have a soft spot for plant life that is often overlooked – and there is no form of plant life that is more often overlooked in winter than deciduous trees and shrubs.

For most people, trees and shrubs only start to get some attention when the year's new leaves emerge, and then again in fall, when the same leaves go out in a blaze of autumnal glory. But for those months when deciduous trees and shrubs go naked and leafless, they seem, for most, only stark reminders of winter's dark, cold duration.

But really, isn't this the best time to get to know your neighbours? When they've shed their fancy clothes and look-at-me ways, when you can get to see them in all their beautiful simplicity?

Last winter, I took the time to get to know many of the native deciduous trees and shrubs in my neighbourhood. I became intimate with the sweet-smelling buds of *Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa* (black cottonwood); I figured out which of the shrubs in a nearby meadow were *Corylus cornuta* (beaked hazelnut) and which were *Amelanchier alnifolia*

(Saskatoon) and I tried to sort out the different *Ribes* species, using prickles – or the lack thereof – as a guide.

How I wished I had had a field guide – and not the usual field guides that focus on leaves, flowers and fruits, but one that focused on twigs, buds and bark. There are some out there, but they tend to be for east-ern North America or are expensive and unwieldy tomes.

This winter, however, I will have a new guide to help me: *Trees and Shrubs in Winter* by Rosamund Pojar. Although the book is subtitled "An identification guide for northern British Columbia", you'll find many species of coniferous trees and shrubs, and deciduous trees and shrubs that are found throughout much of the province.

The book, conceived originally as a study aid for natural resources classes taught by Rosamund, is a terrific resource for anyone with an interest in native trees. There are simple keys using characteristics seen in winter (foliage and cones for the conifers, bark, buds and twigs for the deciduous species) to help steer you in the right directions. Each species gets a detailed write-up with specific descriptions as well as notes on similar species and how to tell them apart, geographical ranges and interesting tidbits of information.

Take for example, this comment on *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas fir): "Surely this tree must suffer an identity crisis! Its common name suggests that it is a fir when it is not, whereas its Latin name means 'false hemlock' – all because European explorers who first discovered it had never seen a tree like it before as it is endemic to the west coast of North America and they were confused as to what to call it."

The illustrations by Evi Coulson are terrific and are the perfect complement to the text. All in all, *Trees and Shrubs in Winter* is a book that you need on your shelf or in your backpack. I can't wait for all the leaves to fall. ☞

Trees and Shrubs in Winter is published by Creekstone Press. To find bookstores that sell the book, go to <http://creekstonepress.com/index.php/ordering/>



70% of the natural wetlands near our cities have disappeared. Where does the carbon they stored go now?



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TOURS FOR NATURALISTS

BC FALL COLOURS/ WATERFALLS

8-11 October 2011 (4 days) Cost \$725 (dbl occup) + HST from Vancouver

This tour has the dual objective of visiting 15 of BC's greatest waterfalls at the time of year when the interior landscape is ablaze with the golden foliage of maples, cottonwoods, aspen and birch.

We visit Wells Gray PP, "the waterfall park", and admire some of its great waterfalls including Helmcken, Spahats & Dawson. The itinerary also takes in the Cariboo, the Duffey Lake Road & the Sea to Sky Highway. Participants will receive a signed copy of tour leader Tony Greenfield's book 'The Waterfalls of British Columbia'.

ARIZONA IN FEBRUARY

22 February – 4 March 2012 (12 days) Cost \$2600 (dbl occup) from Phoenix

Arizona is home to some of the most unique, famous and unforgettable landscapes in the world.

The Grand Canyon, the mesas and buttes of Monument Valley and the silhouette of a saguaro against a golden sunset are images so famous that we have grown up with them since childhood.

The tour includes The Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly, Sedona, and the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts. Join us for a midwinter tour to the blue skies and fascinating deserts of this famous state.

SOUTHERN UTAH & DEATH VALLEY

17-27 April 2012 (10 days) Cost \$2500 (dbl occup) from Las Vegas

Planet Earth contains an infinite variety of landscapes, but in southern Utah random geologic events have conspired to create rare, unexpected and beautiful consequences. The mighty

Colorado River, aided by the arid erosion cycle, has waged battle across the eons with the sandstone strata and fashioned landscapes so unique and bizarre that they are more redolent of an extra-terrestrial origin. We visit Bryce Canyon, Valley of the Gods, Arches NP, Canyonlands NP, Monument Valley, Zion Canyon and more. Death Valley has been added to the itinerary this year.

YUKON & DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

Land of the Midnight Sun

Tour I, 18-29 June 2012 (12 days) Tour II, 1-12 July 2012 (12 days)

Cost \$3500 (dbl occup) + GST from Whitehorse

The Yukon is a fabled land whose very name evokes archetypal images of wilderness and a frontier populated by colourful characters. On this tour we will experience both the natural and human landscapes of this fascinating and beautiful land, visiting the Klondike, the Dempster Highway, and the Mackenzie Delta. The Dempster is renowned as a naturalist's paradise with its varied and beautiful landscapes, sought-after bird species, large mammals and we visit at the peak of the wildflower display. At latitude 66N we cross the Arctic Circle and enter the Land of the Midnight Sun. We also fly across the Mackenzie Delta to Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean.

Leader: Tony Greenfield

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Focus on IBAs: Laskeek Bay Important Bird Area

By: Krista Englund

Waves crashing. Orca's breaching. Birds calling. These are all sights and sounds experienced by visiting volunteer citizen scientists on Limestone Island in Laskeek Bay Important Bird Area, Haida Gwaii. Since 1990, hundreds of volunteers, schoolchildren, and visitors have taken part in volunteer monitoring and stewardship projects run by the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society (LBCS).

It all started around a campfire in 1989 when Dr. Tony Gaston of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), was lamenting the end of his six-year research project on Reef Island's Ancient Murrelets with some friends. Intrigued by this work, a handful of people recognized the need for long-term monitoring. An idea developed, which grew into a vision of involving local people and visitors as volunteer citizen scientists in a long-term monitoring project. The following year, 1990, the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society (LSBC) formed and a field camp was established on East Limestone Island. The field camp has run every year since.

For three months each summer, volunteers are transported to East Limestone Island and spend a minimum of one week in the camp, assisting with the field programs and the tasks of running the camp. Since 1990, more than 550 volunteers have participated – approximately half from local communities. The others have come from across Canada and 15 other countries. Local schoolchildren and high school students also come to Limestone each year to experience first-hand biological research and

gain work experience. Over the years, LBCS has touched most of the families on Haida Gwaii and their programs are regularly mentioned at high school graduations and in yearbooks as a highlight of the student's experience. In 2010, an intern program for senior year university students was initiated to provide them with invaluable field research skills to complement their studies. Since 1991, more than 20 university students have worked in the camp and undertaken studies on the island.

The key species of interest for the research and monitoring activities in Laskeek Bay is the Ancient Murrelet. The islands of Haida Gwaii are the only place in Canada where Ancient Murrelets nest, with approximately 50% of the global population breeding there. These seabirds connect the waters of the offshore marine environment, where it feeds, with the tall trees of the coastal temperate rainforest, under which it nests. Ancient Murrelets are at risk in Canada because of the threat of introduced predators; their populations have been devastated throughout their range in Alaska, Russia and Japan by foxes, rats, racoons and other species. The LBCS undertakes a variety of activities to minimize the impact of introduced predators on Laskeek Bay's murrelets, and monitor the impacts of introduced predators and control efforts.

Laskeek Bay IBA is not only important for Ancient Murrelets. The Limestone Islands are a hotspot for biological productivity, and together with neighbouring islands and surrounding waters, support a variety of marine birds such



Ancient Murrelet and Chick

as Marbled Murrelets, Cassin's Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, Storm-Petrels, Glaucous-winged Gulls, and Black Oystercatchers as well as marine mammals and rare plants. The Society's 15 monitoring programs cover a broad range of the marine birds and mammals, rare plants, and introduced species (black-tailed deer, squirrels, racoons and plants), making Laskeek Bay an exciting place to be a citizen scientist. The Society is also in an excellent position to share their knowledge - they distribute a bi-weekly newsletter, write articles for a local paper, and maintain an exhibit, a hydrophone for marine mammals, and nest boxes for Pigeon Guillemots at the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Lnagaay in Skidegate, BC.

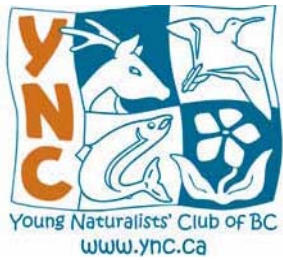
LBCS has now compiled more than 20 years of data on the Ancient Murrelet, its life history and biology, and the population changes of a small colony threatened by racoons. This is the longest running, continuous, seabird monitoring data set in British Columbia. It provides life history information needed for management planning and effective conservation decision-making and is invaluable for monitoring the effects of climate change, potential oil drilling, forestry, and wind energy projects. At a time when government funding is very limited and public interest is growing, the role of citizen science non-government organizations is increasingly important. The 20 years of work by the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society and their volunteers provides an exciting model. ∞

For more information, to make a donation or to inquire about volunteer opportunities, please visit www.laskeekbay.org.



Map Courtesy of Google Earth

Laskeek Bay is an expanse of water open to Hecate Strait on the east coast of Louise Island, and north of Lyell Island on Haida Gwaii. The IBA includes the islands of Skedans, Low, South Low, Limestone, Reef, Lost and Kingsway Rock, which lie within the broad boundaries of the bay. Skedans, Limestone and Reef Islands are included within a provincial Wildlife Management Area, while the other islands are Crown Land and fall outside the boundaries of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve.



What do butterflies, bogs, camps and grandparents have in common?

YNC Update by Kristine Webber

If you answered the "Young Naturalists' Club of BC" you'd be correct. Read more below to find out how. It is a busy and exciting time at the YNC; here are just a few of the things clubs and members are doing.

Butterflies- Heather Kharouba is a UBC PhD candidate interested in how butterflies are adapting to the impacts of climate change. This summer Young Naturalists across the province helped Heather with her research by photographing and recording observations of **butterflies** across BC.



Bogs- Vancouver Young Naturalist, Maja, spent her summer organizing youth work parties to **help restore Beaver Lake Bog** in Stanley Park. She was awarded a generation green award from Vancouver Foundation for this project. You can follow her progress by linking onto her bogger blog from the www.ync.ca website.



"My family are a bunch of computer nuts who don't spend enough time outdoors, and camping is something I would really like us to do so we can connect with each other & explore the natural world." camping 101 participant

Camps- Camping is a great way for a family to enjoy the natural world together but can seem daunting for families that have never camped before. This summer



This Christmas...

Give a Young Naturalists' Club membership to the children in your life. For \$25 they will be enrolled in their nearest nature club, participate in Explorer Days, the Action Awards Program and receive NatureWILD Magazine quarterly. Best of all, no batteries required. Purchase online at www.ync.ca.

Contact Information:

Daphne Solecki, President daphsol@telus.net
 Kristine Webber, Executive Director info@ync.ca
 Tammy Keetch, Club Coordinator coordinator@ync.ca

the YNC offered Camping 101 for Lower Mainland YNC Members. The program was offered in partnership with Metro Vancouver Parks who provided an evening bat program and canoeing trip on day 2.

Grandparents- There is something extra special about rediscovering nature through the eyes of a child. This fall, in partnership with the Elders Council for BC Parks, the YNC offered a special nature program for **grandparents** and grandchildren to mark Grandparents' Day. We hope to make this an annual event and celebrate Grandparents' Day (Sept 11) across the province in 2012 so mark your calendars!

New Clubs- we have a new YNC Club starting on Quadra Island this fall led by Dionne Lapointe-Bakota.

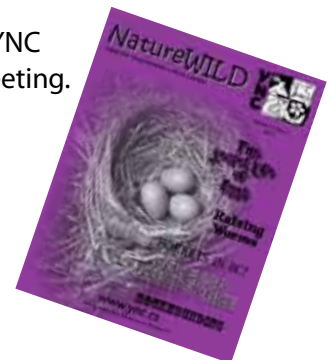
Volunteer Opportunities

YNC Leaders needed- the YNC is seeking co-leaders for the Nanaimo and North Okanagan YNC clubs.

Call for Nature Mentors- share your expertise and knowledge about the plants, animals and ecosystems of BC with YNC members on Explorer Days.

Register with the YNC as a Nature Mentor and we'll connect you with your local YNC club.

Come by and visit us at the YNC booth at the Fall General Meeting.



Young Naturalists' Club of BC
 1620 Mt. Seymour Rd.
 North Vancouver BC V7G 2R9
 Office: 604-985-3057 www.ync.ca



Club Chat

By Betty Davison

Lower Mainland

Abbotsford Mission Nature Club

~Submitted by Jacqueline Reznick

As I write this report, countless Cedar Waxwing are gorging on the Cascara trees black shiny seed. In the last month, three pairs of Black Headed Grosbeaks and many American Goldfinches have adorned the yard. There were also Northern Flickers hiding behind the leaves of the Alder trees waiting for the slowly maturing blueberries, producing unusual sounds. The Indian plum scrub is also slowly shedding its leaves. Fall must be on its way!

In June, Abbotsford Mission Nature Club members enjoyed our annual picnic. This year it was at Fishtrap Creek Park. A park with many connecting trails located very centrally in the City of Abbotsford. One of the trails is "Discovery Trail" which we walked after dinner. Fishtrap Creek Park has a pond with a few resident beavers and their work on local trees is evident. We continue to explore the idea of a Nature Hut and the real need for its presence in our area. This park will be high on the list as a possible location for a Nature Hut.

Our Club has once again been invited by the City of Abbotsford to the Canada Day Celebration. We set up our display inside Rotary Stadium where Gerry Powers, Steve Howard and I shared the Metro Vancouver Park tent. We partnered with Metro Vancouver Park to talk about creatures of the night. We had more than 2500 people of all ages pass our booth. Gerry's and Steve's displays are a great tool to educate the public regarding wild life.

In July we had planned to attend Colony Farm Regional Park to observe bird banding by Master Bander, Derek Matthews. The weather did not cooperate and it was cancelled. We hope to attend a future banding session.

We continue to write letters to all levels of government regarding many local developments. We have sent a letter to the Provincial Government regarding the proposed aggregate mine on Sumas Mountain, that

if approved would have a life span of one hundred years. We are glad to see the City of Abbotsford is also against the proposed mine.

The City of Abbotsford has included our recommendation to the Species at Risk task force and recorded it on their newly released report. They have also sent out Requests For Proposals to conduct an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, including green energy, green economy and environmental management planning.

We have confirmed speakers for the upcoming season. Larry Cowan on 'Birds from Ecuador', Pamela Zevit on 'The Work of the South Coast Conservation Program', Dr. John Richardson of UBC Department of Forest Sciences on his ecology and conservation biology activities and Dr. Kent Mullinix of Kwantlen College on 'Sustainable Agriculture and how it can Benefit Wildlife'. ☺

Chilliwack Field Naturalists

~Submitted by Helen Turner

As here it is mid-August already and summer is almost over. Did we even really have summer? Our activities reduce during the summer to a monthly field trip and an evening work session at the Camp River Wildlife Area for either clipping back blackberries or knocking down other invasive weed species such as morning glory or thistle!!

Our club is very saddened to have lost a founding member of the Chilliwack Field Naturalist Club. Val Whetter passed away July 29, 2011. She was truly an amazing lady at almost 92 years of age and will be missed by many as well as her fabulous photography, we are so grateful Joachim brought her out to attend our Club picnic in June at the Camp River Wildlife Area. That visit will be a very special memory.

In June several members went to Willbrand Creek to wander the trails and enjoy exploring a new location. Then off to The Little Farm House for lunch. In July a trip to Manning Park to see the flowers in the Heather Meadows, the timing of our outing was just as the trail opened due to the delay in snow melt. August was spent locally, wandering the trails along the Vedder and picking blackberries.

In May, Janne and Helen ventured to Williams Lake to attend the Spring General Meeting. It was great to meet up with fellow naturalists and old friends and to see some new sites. We also hope to be able to make some of the fall meeting activities. Soon we will be back to having our monthly meetings as well. ☺

Delta Naturalists Society

~Submitted by Ursula Easterbrook

The Summer was late coming, but now the sun is here – hurry! After a very eventful Garden Party in June, where

more people than ever attended, we separated for the summer.

The FGM Committee kept meeting, the Delta Casual Birders kept birding and everyone else took turns going on holiday.

The plans for our FGM are coming along famously. There are lots of great field trips and lectures planned. Our registrations are already above our minimum required, so we're all very happy! "Fall Migrations Through the Delta" has lots to offer we hope to see you there!

Plans have been made for the 2011/2012 season – and almost all the speakers are booked. It looks like another great year of entertainment and education.

In Tsawwassen, the Southlands are back in the news. There is a new working plan proposal for only 950 houses on 107 out of 537 acres, with the rest going to parks and agriculture. It seems a done deal. Council hasn't objected to anything. The new proposal will be coming up in September and there is an election in November... we will wait and see.

The Fraser Perimeter Road is definitely taking shape – and there now is a very definite proposal for a second Deltaport Terminal to be completed by 2025; and the tunnel is already filled bumper to bumper with trucks who will NOT be taking the new highway.

The Sandhill Cranes managed to raise their one remaining chick and it is now flapping around the Reifel along with a few junior Great Horned Owls and a multitude of Canada Goslings and ducklings (see the DNCB blog <http://dncb.wordpress.com/>).

Continuous plans are made by Tom, our President, for Delta Nats to maintain our high profile. We will be showing off our newly updated display at three upcoming events; "Festival of Birds at Boundary Bay Regional Park", sponsored by BCEATS (BC Ecological Agricultural Trust Society), an organization formed back in March to try to buy the Southlands, and "Metro Vancouver's Starry Night at Deas Island Park" and the "Richmond Raptor Festival at Terra Nova Park". And there is the now usual "Birds on the Bay" walk in September. And then our year starts anew on Sept 12 with David Drummond from Blaine who will regale us with tales of "Merlin – The Birds". We'll concentrate on the good side for now. ☺

Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society

~Submitted by Marg Cuthbert

Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society is celebrating our 10th Anniversary with a potluck party at the Grass Shack August 27 and with a larger Project Partner and Volunteer Appreciation Reception October 16. *Continued Page 24*

Club Chat Continued

Jude Grass continues to meet the challenges and do a great job coordinating our "Birds on the Bay & Beyond" program which provides an opportunity for our numerous fellow Naturalist groups to participate together to provide hundreds of free nature events for people of all ages every three months year round.

The team have accomplished much this spring and summer and have attended numerous public events with educational displays and activities. More than 25 people attended the Shorekeepers methods training workshop in May with Department Fisheries and Oceans support and all six sites in Boundary Bay were again surveyed with the excellent project coordination of Sharon Jones. We are anxiously awaiting Department Fisheries and Oceans data entry to the Shorekeeper atlas.

It was exciting to again be mapping the eelgrass meadows in Boundary Bay this year after a sojourn of three years with the BC Seagrass Conservation Group who is providing project support. Our project coordinator Alison Prentice had few very low tides this year thus mapping concentrated mainly on the *zostera japonica*. In June, we also hosted an Eelgrass mapping & monitoring methods training workshop with over 50 people attending. Alison also coordinated our participation and contribution to the *Spartina anglica* removal effort in Boundary Bay providing volunteers for mapping, plant removal and seed head clipping.

World Ocean Day in June was a great success with approximately 2500 people attending a gorgeous, sunny day at Blackie Spit Park. More than 30 exhibitors provided informative educational displays and fun family activities. This event also formally launched our summer Beach Hero Marine Interpretive Program and this year Christina and Amanda have done an amazing job of guiding families and school groups in gaining beach etiquette and knowledge of the marine environment. They continue to collect data on recreational fishing and crabbing and also report poachers to Department Fisheries and Oceans whose funding support is essential for us to provide the program. Attending numerous public events and farmer's markets they are raising public awareness about Boundary Bay and its importance for migrating birds.

Mid September we will again be participating in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup at Blackie Spit where coordinators Alison & Andrew Prentice will organize volunteer teams for debris removal of the sensitive salt marshes. Other cleanups this year have removed huge amounts of Styrofoam and plas-

tics from important migrating bird and fish spawning habitats. Numerous invasive plant removals at three project sites have managed to support the native plants striving for light and water and another planting at Blackie Spit in October is planned.

The Interpretive signage project for the Little Campbell River Park is well into development and we plan to have two thirds of the signs installed for an unveiling on site during our October 16th Appreciation Event.

As we enter the fall season, our educational coordinator Yvonne Dawydiak with Lynn Pollard resume the school program scheduling classes of students for the "Birds in Focus", "Marine Discovery" or "Pond/Wetland Discovery" programs. We continue to provide teachers with a resource kit, introductory presentation and an outdoor nature experience with nine resource kits available. The program successfully reached more than 1000 students this past 2010/2011 season.

Financial cutbacks have presented many challenges to us for ongoing delivery of programs but our volunteer team is amazing and their dedication makes all the difference. ♪

Little Campbell Watershed Society

~Submitted by David Riley

Little Campbell Watershed Society members are currently extremely concerned about a proposal to load structural fill along the bank of the main stem where important coho spawning occurs. Decades ago gravel was extracted from the site and it has since been used for grazing. If the proposed fill sloughs off or fine sediment enters the river and spawning gravels, members believe the river will be irreparably damaged.

Volunteers continue to closely monitor other development sites and meet with city staff regularly to voice concerns. The role of watch dog is not welcome but what choice is there in these days of development rules.

Little Campbell Hatchery volunteers continue to work around the clock and this past spring they hosted more than 80 school tours and released over 30,000 salmon fry. They continue to monitor local wildlife and nesting birds, the barn owls laid another brood, great horned owls raised young as did spotted sandpipers, Rufus Hummingbirds, Red Breasted Sapsuckers, barn and tree Swallows etc. Active beavers and river otters keep things lively.

The interpretive signage project is raising awareness about the current status of the riparian and forest plants, some being overwhelmed by invasives such as buttercup, Himalayan blackberry and grasses. The fall planting

will enhance the native species and address some of these concerns.

Please visit our website: www.lcws.ca

Nature Vancouver

~Submitted by Dorothy Nelson

The highlight of our summer has been camp, this year held at Waterton National Park, Alberta. Our camp committee, comprised of Don Griffiths (chair), Kitty Castle, Elly Brok, Fred Hornby, Helen Gowans, Peg Neilon, Nigel Peck and Bill Kinkaid, are to be commended for once again selecting a wonderful site for the camp and managing both without a hitch. Both camps were close to maximum attendance (50). In addition to the beauties of the park itself, the journey to and from Vancouver was particularly pleasant, greener than usual due to our long wet spring.

In July we had our picnic at Lighthouse Park in West Vancouver for members and guests, a fine day for guided trail walks before and after the picnic. This first time event will no doubt become a summer tradition.

A well-attended 93rd Annual General Meeting of Nature Vancouver was held in April. The Conservation section reported their focus this year has involved drawing attention to increased oil tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet, searching for ways to protect a little known wetland in rural Richmond, and urging that the North Arm Jetty be incorporated into Iona Beach Regional Park. The Marine Biology section continues to enjoy a supportive partnership with the Vancouver Aquarium. Field trips included eelgrass beds near the Tsawwassen ferry terminal, the Marine Mammal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, the invertebrate teaching lab at the Vancouver Aquarium and the intertidal zone at Stanley Park. Botany and Geology sections are chaired by David Cook, and included talks on vegetation change on the Saanich Peninsula, Cypress through the Seasons, Wind as a Natural Disturbance Agent in Coastal BC Forests and field trips to study the geology of the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve, geology of Jericho Beach park, ascent of Mt. Strachan, hikes to Dog Mountain and Norvan Falls. Jude Grass is chair of the Birding Section which enjoys well-attended monthly meetings and many birding field trips. Nigel Peck, chair of the Outreach Committee, with Sue Garber and Nellie Bacou participated at such events as Earth Day at Jericho and Everett Crowley Parks, Commercial Drive Car Free Day, and farmers' markets to promote Nature Vancouver. Membership Committee, chaired by Jeremy McCall reports membership consistent at 650-700; concern about retention of members led to a members' survey created

Continued Page 25

Club Chat Continued

by Daphne Nagorsen to help discern members' needs and wishes within the organization.

Publications include reprinting of the pamphlet *Explore the Rocky Shore at Stanley Park*, by Sheila Byers as a small booklet; an *Updated History of Nature Vancouver* and the *Discovery Index*, committee chair Cynthia Crampton, expected at the end of this year; a *Birding Guide Update*, Jude Grass/Cathy Aitchison; *Discovery*, editor Jeremy McCall, now published once a year; and the club newsletter, *Vancouver Naturalist*, editor Julian Hudson, published four times per year.

Ron Long chairs the Photography Section which attracted 230 photographs from 32 photographers for the annual competition, including five Young Naturalist Club members. He conducted four photography classes at the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary this year which were fully subscribed. Kelly Sekhon continues his able management of our website - www.naturevancouver.ca; complementing the Nature Vancouver website is a Nature Vancouver Facebook page which features upcoming events, news and announcements. Kelly also provides a weekly e-mail to members for reminders of upcoming events. Jude Grass continues to coordinate evening programs and workshops.

YNC Vancouver is now in its 10th year under the leadership of Eva Nagy and there are now two new clubs in the Vancouver region: YNC Stanley Park and YNC North Vancouver as well as YNC Lower Mainland home learners, all of which provide excellent monthly programs to their members, children and families in the Vancouver area. ☺

Sunshine Coast Natural History Society

~Submitted by Daniel Bouman

Members of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association had a very busy summer and the pace is accelerating as we move into fall. Most of our organization's activity right now involves the Habitat Area Nomination Project, the first phase of which is about collecting data to support Marbled Murrelet Wildlife Habitat Area nominations and also nominations for Fisheries Sensitive Watershed (FSR) designation. Currently there are no FSR designations in the province. Our goal is to change this! The project has an educational component underway as well; in December we will begin a schedule of public presentations about biodiversity, old growth, and species and plant communities at-risk in our region.

During the summer, SCCA members packed out the Roberts Creek Hall to hear Alexandra Morton speak

about saving the wild salmon. We also brought Treaty 8 Tribal Chief Liz Logan and Diane Culling from the Peace Valley Environment Association to the hall to talk about impacts to biodiversity from the proposed "Site C" dam.

We are working on responses to several provincial initiatives such as the Species At Risk Task Force and five new draft Landscape Unit Plans (Bute East, Bute West, Brittain, Cortes and Howe). As well, the Sunshine Coast Forest District is undergoing a Timber Supply Review and we are participating. A 38% increase in the rate of annual timber harvesting is proposed. Our members are skeptical that this can be accomplished without doing substantial harm to fish and wildlife populations. Our responses to these and many other issues, are available on the SCCA website www.thescca.ca

This is a civic election year and as usual the SCCA will host the Green Issues Forum just prior to our November election day. It's important (and very interesting) to give all candidates an opportunity to voice their environmental perspectives. And of course, preparations are underway for the SCCA's annual November fundraising gala the Celebration of Conservation. Everyone is welcome! ☺

WildResearch

~Submitted by Christine Rock

In mid-August, WildResearch assisted with organizing the 4th Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group Meeting; held at Simon Fraser University. WildResearch offered three field trips for the meeting participants to shorebird hotspots in the lower mainland. Samantha Franks organized the field trips and the field trip guides included Christine Rock, Willow English, Nathan Hentze, Paul Levesque, Anna Drake, and Samantha Franks.

WildResearch's Fall Bird Monitoring Program started mid August at Iona Beach Regional Park in Richmond, and will run until mid November. The objectives of this monitoring program are to conduct a) conservation science through obtaining information on the abundance, species diversity, and demographic composition of migratory birds using Iona Beach as a stopover site during migration, and b) education and training by increasing public awareness and appreciation for wildlife and their habitats.

WildResearch also organized a pelagic birding trip aboard the M.V. Frances Barkley from Ucluelet to La Perouse Banks. The trip was advertised internationally and drew participants from Ontario, Alberta, Washington State and across British Columbia. The pelagic trip was a major fund raising event and membership drive. We also had a sharp

increase in website traffic that lasted for over four months. Paul Levesque was the lead organizer of the pelagic trip. ☺

Northern BC

Kitimat Valley Naturalists

~Submitted by April MacLeod

The spring and summer of 2011 have been very busy for the Kitimat valley Naturalists. As intervenors in the Enbridge projects, KVN have been busy with meetings, gathering data and reviewing data provided by Enbridge to the public. We are in the process of writing our technical report for the NEB hearings that will commence in 2012.

We have also had time to do some fun activities: 4 members of KVN attended the spring meeting of BC Nature hosted by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. The bird outings were great, the talks excellent and the people fabulous!

Back in Kitimat the naturalists are taking part in several activities: Storm Drain Marking and Long term monitoring for Amphibians. Also the recording of birding data goes on year long. We participated in the fourth year of the breeding bird atlas project with many sightings this spring. ☺

Prince George Naturalists

~Submitted by Clive Keen

The Prince George Naturalists Club is continuing to rediscover its feet, with a number of field trips and evening presentations, with talks ranging from sturgeon recovery to effective wildlife photography, and trips ranging from a visit to The Ancient Forest to a guided walk around private parkland.

For birders in the club, a high spot was production of a new edition of the *Checklist of North-Central Birds*. This guide, which lists 297 birds known to have occurred in the area, also clearly indicates when they are likely to be seen, and how likely they are to be seen. It is a gem -- and yet we were all delighted when it was made slightly out of date when the first breeding record of a Lazuli Bunting was recorded not long after the guide emerged from the printers.

Members are also contributing to conservation issues both practically with bird-box erection (a forthcoming project -and by contributing comments about developments with potentially negative effects on the environment. A wide range of activities is currently (Mid August) being finalized for the Fall. ☺

Skeena Valley Naturalists

~Submitted by Judy Chrysler

At our April AGM, Margaret Kujat Agave a very good overview of the

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Club Chat continued

comprehensive programmes that the Lakelse Watershed Society participate in and around the Lakelse watershed. She is the coordinator of the programmes that address fish issues, water quality issues and aquatic plant survey, to name a few. The club has tripled its membership from four to 12. Several new members expressed an interest in participating in local birdwalks so five were arranged and led in Spring.

The club has become involved with an extensive amphibian monitoring programme here in the northwest.

Dr Purnima Govindarajulu in MOE and Dr Norma Kerby, a local consultant have spearheaded the funding and construction of the boards with our cooperation. Dr Kerby and her son, Ken have installed boards in 55 locations creating 134 sites. From west of Dease Lake, down to Ft St James, in the Bulkley Valley and out to Lakelse Lake where 15 boards have been installed, members are monitoring their boards, once a month.

To celebrate BC Parks's 100th birthday, we partnered with Dennis Horwood of the Kitimat Valley Naturalists on a guided walk to the Williams Creek Ecological reserve, with a BC Park Ranger. Later in the summer, we participated in an amphibian awareness and celebration day, held at the government campsite at Furlong Bay at Lakelse Lake

More than 75 people attended and participated in children's activities on a drizzly cool day. Dr. Purnima Govindarajulu addressed the throng and Dr. Kerby led a smaller group on an amphibian search, alas to no avail this time. Some of us are planning to attend the Fall General Meeting, see you there! Reifel is not to be missed! ❧

Williams Lake Field Naturalists Society

~Submitted by Fred McMechan

We enjoyed being the hosts for the BC Nature AGM and Conference. We appreciated being able to show the registrants the beauty and nature of the Cariboo Chilcotin.

The Scout Island Nature Centre was an active place during the summer. We employed four university students to act as nature interpreters. They and our educators stayed busy giving programs to school classes, children's and family groups in the summer and acting as hosts to the visitors to the Nature House.

We continue to operate a nursery to provide native trees and shrubs for this area. Weed management and trail maintenance also kept our volunteers busy. During the Nature Centre banquet Rob Butler was the guest speaker

and we celebrated the 40th anniversary of The Nature Trust of BC. ❧

Thompson Shuswap Okanagan

Central Okanagan Naturalists Club

~Submitted by Don Guild

The CONC 50th anniversary events are successfully unfolding. In June these activities included bicycle birding along Mill Creek (Cec Dillabough), a botany outing in Mission Creek Regional Park (Peter & Kitty Green) and a geology walk in Glen Canyon Park, Powers Creek and the Gellatly trails (Bob Fulton). July brought an interpretive hike to Angel Springs (Bob Fulton); a tour of a xeriscape demonstration garden (Gwen Steele & Heather Doherty); a family pond study day (Dr. Ian Walker); a riparian walk along Mill Creek, Chichester Pond and Mission Creek (Doreen Wierenga); wildflowers at Big White Mountain (Peter & Kitty Green) and a butterfly outing to learn about their lifecycle was attended by 15 people (Denis St. John, SONC). In August there has already been an historic fur brigade trail hike on the west side of Okanagan Lake (Linley McKenna). Coming up in August, there is a discover nature hike in Myra-Bellevue Prov. Park (Penny Gubbels {FOSS} & Brenda Thomson) and at the end of August, a look at a section of Mission Creek modified by dikes will examine what would be needed to restore it to a naturally functioning stream (Dr. Peter Dill & Dr. Leif Burge).

In mid June, the annual picnic was held at Keloya Park in Oyama where 30 members shared a potluck supper, short walks and enjoyed conversing in the peaceful setting of the park.

Twenty five CONC members camped out at Otter Lake and several hotels in the Tulameen area from June 23-26 and were joined by some of the Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists to enjoy hiking and nature exploration in the area.

For the major summer hike, 19 members met in E. C. Manning Prov. Park from August 2-7 and tackled a wide variety of trails there, ranging from hikes around the lower elevation lakes to a more strenuous climb up the parks highest peak, Mt. Frosty. The first day was spent enjoying the flora around Lightning, Flash and Strike Lakes. The next day saw the group hiking the Heather Trail. Most of the group hiked Mt. Frosty on the third day. At the mid elevations on this hike a wonderful Western Larch forest, carpeted in some areas by Glacier Lilies, delighted us. Upon reaching the summit an exceptional panorama of mountains in all directions greeted us with unusual visibility to the horizon due to the clarity

of the sky. No outings were organized on the last day, so everyone did what suited them best.

A reunion tea will be held at the Benvoulin Church end of August.

There are still a number of events coming up to celebrate 50 years as a club, culminating in the BC Nature 2012 AGM (see the website at <http://www.okanagan-nature.org/EventsSchedule.pdf>). ❧

Kamloops Naturalists Club

~Submitted by Teresa Corbooy

This spring the Kamloops Naturalist Club hosted a series of trips for the public through Kamloops Parks and Rec. The Complete Naturalist series was hosted every Wednesday night over a six week period. The talks were on a variety of topics; Waterfowl, Songbirds, Trees, Geology, Amphibians and Reptiles. People who attended all the trips were given a membership in the club for the upcoming year.

The club celebrated parks day mid July with a day on Dew Drop flats in Lac du Bois Grasslands Provincial Park. Members of the public were invited to attend walks and talks by club members. Topics included; Big Horn Sheep, Spadefoot Toads, Rattle Snakes, Bluebirds and the ecological reserve its local history and the work of volunteer wardens.

This fall we are looking forward to resuming our regular monthly meetings our kick off meeting in September will feature polar bears and walrus. ❧

Lillooet Naturalists Society

~Submitted by Vivian Birch Jones

Ten of the Lillooet naturalists travelled to Williams Lake for the AGM and events. Well done Williams Lake Field Naturalists! (At the AGM I volunteered as regional coordinator for our area and we held a well-attended meeting in Merritt mid July) The BC Hydro funded FWCP research reports on the bats, falcons and owls from last season are in and very good to see. We have a copy of the bat report in the library. We also purchased a copy of the latest bat reference book "Bats of the Rocky Mountain West". Lillooet is a very bat friendly town. Kim North attended the Rivershed Society meetings with three other naturalists. We are sponsoring two youth to go on the rafting trip this summer. We are looking forward to Fin Donnelly and the rafting crew arriving in Lillooet on the day we celebrate the Salmon in the Canyon, August 20th.

Work on the second edition of the *Lillooet Hiking Guide* is in progress now that some of the access issues have been cleared up with MOF. Of course this means a great deal of hiking is going on.

FWCP Grizzly Bear work has started

Club Chat Continued

and the biologists are visiting the area as always we enjoy providing some local logistical support. The cooler weather delayed some of the field work, as well as our spring flowers

In partnership with the St'at'imc Tribal Council we hosted the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation of Canada conference in July. The presentations were fascinating and we all enjoyed to field trip to the Yalakom and Poison Mountain. Bluebird box outing in June during which we enjoyed a sighting of a Prairie Falcon. We held a weed day at our WHA, where the new educational sign is up, and a few brave souls came out to fight the invasive weeds. It's very good we have the new Invasive Species group starting up in our area, and that they have received some government funding. We were invited to participate in the Provincial Park planning process and the BC Hydro Water Use Planning process. Time permitting, we would like to do both. We are planning to host at BC Nature camp at Lillooet in the fall of 2012, more information to follow when dates finalized. ☺

Nicola Naturalist Society

~ Submitted by Alan Burger

Our amphibian monitoring project got under way this spring and summer in the Merritt area. With funding from the BC Public Conservation Assistance Fund (to our society) and the BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (to our professional collaborators at Biolinx Environmental Research Ltd. in Victoria) we were able to purchase waders, nets, minnow traps and other equipment needed to monitor frogs. The Biolinx team (Dr. Kristiina Ovaska, Lennart Sopuck and Christian Engelstoft) visited Merritt three times in May, June and July to train volunteers from our society and establish the monitoring protocols. A training workshop at the Merritt Civic Centre mid May led by the Biolinx herpetologists drew 26 adults and children and was followed by field training over the next few days and in June and July. Our field efforts focused on reconnaissance – mapping out lakes and ponds which had breeding amphibians – and testing sites for multi-year monitoring. A highlight was the discovery of several sites with breeding Great Basin Spadefoots – a threatened species in Canada - in the grasslands of the upper Nicola Valley and Douglas Lake plateau. We also discovered some thriving breeding populations of Western Toads (a species of special concern), Columbia Spotted Frog, and Pacific Chorus Frog (formerly tree frog), plus a few sites with Long-toed Salamanders. More details and photos can be seen at our website: www.nicolanaturalists.ca. Amphibians are excellent species to

monitor the quality of local wetlands – but it is also such fun to yield to one's inner child, grab a net, put on gumboots and go frogging! Other activities this summer included bird identification outings and participation in the *BC Breeding Bird Atlas* program. ☺

North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

~Submitted by Pamela Jenkins

Members, Peter and Hylda Mayfield, were honoured with an environmental award from the City of Vernon in June.

Cools Pond signs and viewing platform repairs were made possible using a grant from BC Nature for the signs, and help from the city for the platform repairs.

Weeding, planting and watering are continuous activities at the Swan Lake property. A parking space has been provided by the city giving access avoiding some private property. More plans are being made for interpretive signs, trails and lookout blinds in this evolving nature park. A display of NONC activities at Swan Lake was set up at the Fintry Field Day in May.

There is much concern about the grassland area known as the Commonage. Various conservation groups, including ourselves, are attempting to prevent further rezoning, which inevitably leads to more lands disappearing to various developments. We have been attending city council meetings to express our preservation points of view.

In June, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of BC Parks and the 25th anniversary of Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park at the Kal Park Twin Bays picnic site between the two bays. There were official Parks and government people in attendance. NONC had set up their display again.

No one has reported about recent birding activities, but I do know there are weekly birding trips at the weekends. Snowshoeing continued into June on Silver Star Mountain. There have been some good Thursday outings, including one to Twin Lakes, which has only recently become accessible because of the abundant snow pack this year. Our summer "camp" was held in Wells Gray park. Ten of us chose to stay at the Clearwater Country Inn and campsite and drove into the park each day to see spectacular waterfalls and hike various trails. There were thunder storms and showers every night, a few during the day time, so real camping would not have been a good idea. One day we hiked to the Trophy Mountain Meadows to see hillsides covered with glacier lilies. The snow had only just gone. ☺

Shuswap Naturalists Club

~Submitted by Janet Pattinson

One project for our club has been the production of a new bird list. It includes 291 species, of which 166 are breeding in the area.

Several members have been writing articles for the "Nature's Corner" column in one of the local newspapers.

To support our activities we have undertaken some fund-raising projects. We organized a garage sale, some guided tours and a dinner party hosted by members.

Our club takes a continuing interest in the Peter Jannink Park in Salmon Arm where many of our native plant species are growing. This summer we hired a student to do some weeding there.

Shuswap Naturalists applaud the work and dedication of Karen Beggs, a member who has recently retired from her role as manager of the Kee Two Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre after 20 years of service to the community.

This fall our club will present its annual award to a student of Thompson Rivers University in memory of Margarete Johnson, a long-time member who passed away in January. ☺

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

~Submitted by Glenda Ross

Our club has had a very busy few months even with it being summertime. Our new website is now up and running, check us out at <http://southokanagannature.com/southokanagan>.

Bob Handfield has worked with Okanagan Falls Parks & Rec commission and installed a slightly modified version of our Okanagan Lake Waterfront bird sign on the KVR Trail in Ok Falls. We've been busy working with the Penticton Museum and NNC (Nature Conservancy of Canada) organizing our 50th anniversary to put a six month long show on the history of Conservation in the Okanagan and we continue to work with Penticton Golf & Country Club collecting bird data. At the end of August at the Subaru Ironman Canada we will again clean up a section of the course, with money earned going toward our Okanagan College Bursary and an award for the local Science Fair.

With the return of September we start up our monthly meetings. With the slower birding months of winter we will have to look into reprinting the *Okanagan Valley Birding Trail* as we've been busy with sales. ☺

Vermillion Forks Field Naturalists

~Submitted by Cathie Yingling

This year beside the usual hikes and evening presentation and ongoing

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Club Chat continued

work at Swan Lake we participated in two events.

The first was the Meadow Lark Festival. We organized three hikes. Each Hike met at the Riverside for coffee and muffins and hospitality. The morning hikes were lead by Sue Elwell to Vermilion Bluffs and the Hoodoos for Birding and Madelon took a group to Swan Lake also for Birding. In the afternoon Madelon lead 19 hardy souls to the "Top of the World" for wildflowers and views. All the evaluations came back as excellent. The evening presentation of the "The Last Grizzly of Paradise Vally presentation by Jeff and Sue Turner (local biologists and international documentary producer) was attended by over 100 people and was well received.

The second presentation was a display of Birds and Birding and fauna at the "Arts in the Park event celebrating "100 years of Parks" in Manning Park. This was organized by our umbrella group Princeton Community Arts Council and we had members there to talk with the public. Joan Kelly, Madelon Schouten, Trish Reid all participated. Wonderful photos of local birds were provided by our own Amanda La Haie. This was well attended and we were very pleased with the event. Looking forward to the fall hikes and speakers particularly Sue Elwell's presentation of local birds. ☺

Vancouver Island

Arrowsmith Naturalists

~Submitted by Pam Helem

Our programs committees arranged excellent spring events for us to experience the differing habitats in our area. These included the mighty giants in Cathedral Grove, dunes and marshes along Oyster River, riparian habitat along Kitsuksis Creek dyke in Port Alberni, and a local, non-profit native plant nursery in Nanaimo. Particularly popular was a guided trip to Harewood Plains in late May, during which Charles Thirkill, coordinator of Friends of Harewood Plains shared his expert knowledge of this unique habitat. The mossy meadows were a canvas of pink, blue and yellow. Sea Blush, Camas and Yellow Monkey-Flower are associated species for an endangered species (COSEWIC) called Lotus pinnatus. The tiny yellow and cream pea-like flowering plant's needs are simple.... seasonally wet meadows, shallow soils on conglomerate rock, such as found on Harewood Plains. However, these meadows are surrounded by Douglas Fir coastal forest, and privately owned by private stakeholders. Charles and his dedicated volunteers have worked tirelessly in broom removal and to have permanent protection from logging,

development, and ATVs' damage. In May, our guest speaker was Cowichan Valley's Genevieve Singleton, warden for the Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve and wildflower enthusiast. With wonderful photos and commentary, she described a year's progression of wild flowers on Vancouver Island. At June's meeting, members' slides revealed their passion for photographing nature's beauty, whether in their own backyard or beyond. The reluctant arrival of summer made our wind-up picnic at Rath Trevor Beach Park a little chilly, but the potluck was delicious, and a raffle raised enough to cover the Park fee.

As weather warmed, so appeared the ubiquitous Spotted Knapweed, which became the vengeful target of the "broom bashers" down at the Englishman's River estuary.

Our sincere thanks to Pat Bourgeois, our dedicated Director for several years, who has passed the baton to long-term environmentalist Sandy Gray.

In September, we will meet again to share summer stories and continue educating and inspiring others about our special natural world. ☺

Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society

~Submitted by Eric Marshall

Our Monday morning CoffeeHouse sessions finished the season in May with a tour of the Koksilah River from Cowichan Bay upstream as far as the Kinsol Trestle. Stops were made at various places en route and we saw several sites where steps were being taken to stabilize banks and provide better fish habitat. A barred owl kindly posed at our lunch stop in Bright Angel Park for the photographers in the party.

The BC Nature AGM in Williams Lake saw three couples from CVNS in attendance and we were all pleased to be able to take in the various field trips and see different birds from our usual coastal species. The Williams Lake folk put on a really great conference!

The Tuesday evening program closed for the summer break with a picnic in Eves Park in June where some of our Young Naturalists joined the 'old' naturalists for a pot-luck meal followed by young and old heading off in small groups in search of aquatic species, fungi and historical artifacts in the park.

In May and June Dr Rusty Sweeting from the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo continued his study of Chinook fry moving into Cowichan Bay from the Cowichan River. We provided volunteers to haul in the seine. The by-catch was always of interest and changed from week to week and site to site. In June one of our members presented the first CVNS annual bursary to Kevin Ianson a student heading to Carleton University. Over the past year

a small committee has been working on the details of the bursary and then selecting the successful candidate.

The 100th Anniversary of BC Parks was celebrated in Eves Park in June with a talk on invasive species. This was followed by a work party which removed a huge pile of invasives (mostly broom and Daphne) from the Park. The workers were then served a lunch of local produce. A cake was cut following some short speeches celebrating the occasion. In the afternoon there was a talk on local geology which was followed by guided tours of the park.

Funding has been offered to build an Interpretive Centre for the Cowichan Estuary. The funding is contingent on our raising \$35,000. A number of fundraising events have been held and at time of writing \$5,000 is still needed and 3 weeks remain before our deadline. The Land Trust has taken the lead in this project.

In late July the Land Trust organized a work party to try to reduce the large number of baby Western Toads being killed each year as they cross two of our local roads. Volunteers erected plastic fences to guide the toads into pit-fall traps by the roadside as they leave the pond where they were born. Volunteers regularly emptied the traps and carried the toads to the other side of the road until the migration was over.

Over the past year there have been discussions locally over abandoned boats in our waterways which may sink, become adrift or otherwise cause a nuisance. Meetings with our local MLA and MP have now resulted in our MP, Jean Crowder, drafting a Bill, C-231 "An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (derelict vessels and wreck)", which will be coming before Parliament in September. This bill designates the Canadian Coast Guard as being responsible for dealing with abandoned vessels. At the present time the Coast Guard can only deal with them when they are clearly a danger to the environment or other vessels and this usually only happens too late for steps to be taken to prevent any problem. ☺

Pender Islands Field Naturalists

~Submitted by Gerald McKeating

April - A wildflower walk led by Bonnie Parks was well attended. A late spring disrupted blooming. A few lilies were left to view; however, there were more than 300 Calypso orchids in evidence. Our observation elsewhere is that Calypsos were very prolific this year. In April, Richard Philpot gave a lively talk entitled "Close ... Encounters with Whales and Dolphins" - this was a photo-based presentation with marine mammal vocals accompanying the slide show. This special event was

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Club Chat Continued

cosponsored by the Pender Island Conservancy Association. Again, this talk filled the Library meeting room.

June - The sailing trip to Saturna Island on the "Blue Jacket" was a great success. We had two trips in June, attended by 11 field naturalist members. Except for the winds, the weather cooperated and under Jack Ferguson's expert seamanship, we traversed Boat Pass at high tide slack both days. The Belle Chain Islets were virtually covered with wildlife, hundreds of seals hauled out on the rocks and on the first trip, some sea lions. Numerous Pigeon Guillemots floated on the water close to the cliffs, resplendent in their black and white plumage and bright red legs. Eagles seemed to be everywhere. On Cabbage Island, we watched a young eagle on its nest, exercising its wings, almost ready to go to try life in that great big world. A highlight for most of us, was the exploration on foot of Cabbage Island. The geology on the Georgia Strait side was especially interesting and on the first trip we had the benefit of David Spalding's presence to interpret it.

Future Activities - Geology Hike with David Spalding, September, Stanley Point, Boat trip to Race Rocks, October
Working/Executive Committee - Judith Allen retired from the committee after several years and she was thanked for her input into the planning of events for the Club. We welcome two new members to the committee: Denny Ferguson and Diane Swindell. ☺

Rocky Point Bird Observatory

~Submitted by Shona Lawson

2011 season is in full swing. RPBO started in June with our Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program. This year's successful season took place at Witty's Lagoon Capital Regional District Park and Madrona Farm, a working farm and a property of The Land Conservancy. In late July our fall migration monitoring season began at Rocky Point a Department of National Defense (DND) property. Rocky Point is a unique area that has both Garry Oak Meadow and coastal Douglas Fir habitats, that support many federally and provincially species and ecological communities. In addition, the property is an important migration corridor on the Pacific Flyway as it is a short jump as the bird flies from Vancouver Island to Bainbridge Island, Washington State and the US mainland. The fall migration field season runs until October 31st. Fall migration targets passerines though sometimes a few interesting bird such as a, Coopers Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) are also caught and banded. As passerine monitoring winds down RPBO starts

monitoring Northern Saw-whet Owls *Aegolius acadicus* on their fall migration. The NSWO Project runs from mid-September until October 31st. RPBO continues to do public education and outreach regarding bird awareness and conservation.

In addition, RPBO has several new fundraising projects this year where people can adopt a bird and/or sponsor one of our fall migration passerine or owl nets through RPBO "Adopt-A-Bird, Sponsor-A-Net" and "Sponsor-An-Owl-Net" programs or buy Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* cards as a fundraiser for the Hummingbird Project of BC. If you are interested in supporting RPBO's various programs or learning more about our activities please visit our website at rpbo.org. To keep up-to-date on the fall migration season at Rocky Point visit RPBO's blog <http://rpbo2011.blogspot.com/> where weekly banding news and bird identification quizzes will be posted. ☺

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club

~Submitted by Nieke Visser

Regular activities: Another successful year was marked by interesting weekly outings exploring all corners of our island as well as Vancouver Island. Participation is always great, but we have encountered a shortage of leaders in the past couple of years. This problem seems to worsen as time goes on.

Overnight excursions: Last September about 40 club members spent three days exploring Quadra Island. In May, 30 club members went to Tofino and stayed in the Ecolodge at the Tofino Botanical Gardens, an excellent facility for retreats. Outings included shoreline explorations, excursions to Flores Island and Meares Island and boat trips into and around Clayoquot Sound for bear and whale watching. We also enjoyed an evening presentation on sea otters by a local marine biologist and great bird watching.

Trail maintenance: Trails in our provincial parks have been maintained by our club regularly for many years. This past fall, however, this came to a grinding halt when BC Parks changed their policies. Hence trails in Ruckle, Maxwell and Burgoyne Bay Parks are in bad shape. Many trails are overgrown and /or blocked by downed trees; board walks and bridges are decaying. On the positive side, we were able to continue our annual broom pull in May and have successfully managed the eradication of broom (for now, the broom will be back in due time). Next year we will focus on broom in other parks such as Burgoyne Bay.

Christmas Bird Count: Turnout of volunteers was high. Comparing to a 10 year average we noticed some

remarkable counts, such as a significant increase in Northern Flickers, White-fronted Geese, Barrows Goldeneyes, and Anna's Hummingbirds; not recorded in the last ten years but included in this count were Long-billed Dowitchers and Western Sandpipers. Robins and Siskins were down in numbers

Presentations: On our monthly presentations nights we had very interested speakers. Some of these evenings were jointly organized with the SSI Conservancy.

Acquisition of a Salt Spring Nature Reserve:

The acquisition of the 320 acre Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve by the SSI Conservancy is another example of the joint efforts between the SSI Conservancy and SSTNC. The official inauguration took place with the Indridson family in attendance as well as most of the significant sponsors and donors. A number of SSTNC members were invited as well to acknowledge their contributions to the purchase.

The future: Looking ahead, SSTNC will be hosting another BC Nature Field Camp, this time from June 4 to 8, 2012. Details will appear in the BCnature Magazine and on the website as they become available. ☺

Victoria Natural History Club

~Submitted by James Miskelly

The Victoria Natural History Society is currently enjoying our summer schedule of field trips. We had a cold spring that created hardships for birds, insects, and plants, but as I write this the weather has become more seasonal. In September, we will return to a full speaker program, with four presentations each month. Also this fall, we will again hold a member-appreciation barbeque. This will mirror last year's event, held in conjunction with Hawk Watch at East Sooke Regional Park.

This past spring the VNHS surveyed its membership for the first time in many years. Board Member Shona Lawson coordinated and analysed the survey, which covered a range of topics. Results were very positive. The majority of respondents assist the society in a number of ways, especially in promoting our events to family and friends. However, many members were unaware of existing volunteer opportunities. Our members should expect more taps on the shoulder in the future! Other recommendations from the survey included a desire for more social events, a greater variety of field trips, and an increased emphasis on conservation. Results of the survey will be invaluable to the board as we work on new projects in the upcoming year. ☺

BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists)

	Member	Phone	Email
President	John Neville	250-537-4121	songbird@saltspring.com
Vice President	Vacant		
Past President	Bev Ramey	604-224-7689	bevramey@telus.net
Treasurer	David Tsang	778-688-5777	david.t.tsang@gmail.com
Secretary	Claudia Copley	250-479-6622	dccopley@telus.net
Conservation Chair	Rosemary Fox	250-847-5150	foxikrj@bulkley.net
Kootenay Regional Coordinator	Greg Ross	250-489-2566	gsross@shaw.ca
Lower Mainland Regional Coordinator	Jude Grass	604-538-8774	judegrass@shaw.ca
Northern BC Regional Coordinator	Fred McMechan	250-392-7680	fred_mcmechan@telus.net
Vancouver Island Regional Coordinator	Vacant		
Thompson Okanagan Reg'l Coordinator	Vivian Birch-Jones		vivianbj@telus.net
Parks and Protected Areas Coordinator	Don Guild	250-768-3334	guilds@telus.net
Education Chair	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633	snowdance@shaw.ca
Communications Director	John Neville	250-537-4121	songbird@saltspring.com

Other positions:

Awards Chair	Pat Westheuser	250-769-6605	hughwest@shaw.ca
IBA Coordinator	Anne Murray	604-943-0273	sanderling@uniserve.com
Young Naturalists' Club President	Daphne Solecki	604-736-9471	daphsol@telus.net
Young Naturalists' Club Coordinator	Kristine Webber	604-737-8001	coordinator@ync.ca
BC Naturalists' Foundation	Bob Dyer	604-922-9798	bob_dyer@telus.net

Consultants to BC Nature:

Ross C. McCutcheon	Partner, Mailland & Company, Barristers and Solicitors	700-625 Howe, Vancouver V6C 2T6
Reid/Hurst/Nagy	Certified General Accountant	105-13900 Maycrest Way, Richmond V6V 3E2

Lower Mainland	Director	Address	Phone	Email
Abbotsford-Mission Nature Club	Jacqueline Reznick	Box 612, Abbotsford V2S 6R7	604-557-1828	mareznick@hotmail.com
Alouette Field Naturalists	Duanne Vandenberg	506-12148 224th St., Maple Ridge V2X 3N8	604-463-8743	jdomer@shaw.ca
Bowen Nature Club	Everhand van Lith de Jeude	602 Collins, Bowen Island V0N 1G6	604-947-9562	foreverlyn@telus.net
Burke Mountain Naturalists	Elaine Golds	554 Yale Rd., Port Moody V3H 3K3	604-937-3483	egolds@sfu.ca
Chilliwack Field Naturalists	Helen Turner	47564 Mountain Park Dr., Chilliwack, V2P 7P6	604-792-0972	hturner59@gmail.com
Delta Naturalists' Society	Ursula Easterbrook	Box 18136 - 1215 C-56th St., Delta V4L 2M4	604-948-1749	urs@telus.net
Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society	Margaret Cuthbert	15425 Columbia Ave., White Rock V4B 1K1	604-536-3552	blueheron@birdsonthebay.ca
Langley Field Naturalist Society	Annabel Griffiths	Box 56052, Valley Centre PO, Langley V3A 8B3	604-530-2778	amgriffiths@shaw.ca
Little Campbell Watershed Society	David Riley	4700 224 St. Langley V2Z 1N4	604-536-2636	independenthouse@hotmail.com
North Shore Urban Bear Club	Betty Carrington	221 1st Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7H 1R8	306 280-2040	bearinitiative1999@hotmail.com
Pender Harbour & District Wildlife Society	Joe Harrison	Box 220, Madeira Park V0N 2H0	604-883-9958	jhrsn@dccnet.com
Royal City Field Naturalists	Gareth Llewellyn	903-1219 Harwood St., Vancouver V6E 1S5	604-609-0679	gllaw@telus.net
Squamish Environmental Conservation Soc.	Mary Mitchell	Box 2676, Squamish V8B 0B8	604-815-0801	mlmitchell99@gmail.com
Stoney Creek Environmental Committee	Alan James	7551 Kraft Cres., Burnaby V5A 1Z4	604-420-0771	alan_james@handshake.ca
Sunshine Coast Natural History Society	Tony Greenfield	Box 543, Sechelt V0N 3A0	604-885-5539	tony@whiskeyjacknaturetours.com
Surrey Environmental Partners (SEP)	Deb Jack	7680 - 143 Street, Surrey, BC, V3W 9Y4	604-590-3037	dbjaq@telus.net
Texada Stickleback Group Association	Tim Atwood	Box 353-2404 Van Anda Ave, Van Anda, V0N 3K0	604-486- 7775	coordinator@texadastickleback.org
Nature Vancouver	Dorothy Nelson	4175 W 10th Ave., Vancouver V6R 2H2	604-224-5668	dnels@shaw.ca
Nature Vancouver	Margaret Coutts	302-1230 West 12th Ave., Vancouver V6H 1M1	604-512-1413	margaretcoutts@shaw.ca
Whistler Naturalists Society	Kristina Swerhun	P.O. Box 845 Whistler V0N 1B0		kswerhun@hotmail.com
White Rock and Surrey Naturalists Society	Esther Johnson	Box 75044, White Rock V4A 0B1		estherj40@hotmail.com
WildResearch	Christine Rock	1222 East 22nd Ave, Vancouver, BC, V5V 1W6		rockchristine@gmail.com

Kootenays	Director	Address	Phone	Email
Fernie Nature Club	Bob Livsey	3 Elkview Pl., Fernie, BC V0B 1M3	250-423-6699	naturebob@telus.net
Rocky Mountain Naturalists	Greg Ross	Box 791, Cranbrook V1C 4J5	250-489 2566	gross@shaw.ca
West Kootenay Naturalists' Association	Joan Snyder	2410 12th Ave., Castlegar V1N 4I8	250-365-7633	snowdance@shaw.ca

Northern BC	Director	Address	Phone	Email
Bulkley Valley Naturalists	Anne Hetherington	3377 Mountain View Rd., Smithers V0J 2N6	250-847-4618	Anne.Hetherington@gov.bc.ca
Kitimat Valley Naturalists	April MacLeod	72 Skeena St., Kitimat V0C 1Y9		mac2aa@citywest.ca
Mackenzie Nature Observatory	Vida Tattie	Box 1598, Mackenzie V0J 2C0	250-997-6913	vireo@mackbc.com
Prince George Naturalist Club	Clive Keen	5980 Salmon Valley Road, Prince George V2K 5W2		clive_keen@hotmail.com
Quesnel Naturalists	Lorna Schley	128 Lindsay St., Quesnel V2J 3E3		lschley@quesnelbc.com
Skeena Valley Naturalists	Judy Chrysler	1677 Lupine St., Terrace V8G 0G1	250-798-2535	weena@telus.net
Timberline Trail & Nature Club	Meredith Thornton	701 105th Ave., Dawson Creek V1G 2K5	250 782-7680	mthorntn@pris.ca
Williams Lake Field Naturalists Soc	Fred McMechan	1305A Borland Dr., Williams Lake V2G 5K5	250-392-7680	fred_mcmechan@telus.net

Thompson-Shuswap-Okanagan	Director	Address	Phone	Email
Central Okanagan Naturalist Club	Don Guild	Box 21128 RPO Orchard Park, Kelowna V1Y 9N8	250-768-3334	guilds@telus.net
Kamloops Naturalist Club	Theresa Corboy	#68 1221 Hugh Allan Drive, Kamloops V1S 1M7	250-320-0889	teresa_corboy@hotmail.com
Lillooet Naturalist Society	Vivan Birch Jones	Box 1065, Lillooet V0K 1V0	250-256-4062	vivianbj@telus.net
Nicola Naturalists	Alan Burger	Box 2539, Merritt V1K 1B8	250-378-2468	aburger@uvic.ca
North Okanagan Naturalists' Club	Pamela Jenkins	Box 473, Vernon V1T 6M4	250-545-0490	pamj@telus.net
North Shuswap Naturalist Club	Rudy Vervoort	Box 24030, Scotch Creek V0E 3L0	250-679-8763	clodcarl@telus.net
Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalists	Harold King	Box 1181, Osoyoos V0H 1T0	250-495-6907	hwking12@gmail.com
Shuswap Naturalists Club	Janet Pattinson	2451 Sherry Road, Sorrento V0E 2W1	250-835-2270	scouse5@telus.net
South Okanagan Naturalists' Club	Dennis St. John	Box 23050, Penticton V2A 8L7	250-498-6651	dsjohnster@gmail.com
Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists	Trish Reid	Box 2074, Princeton VOX 1W0	250-295-6002	trishmaryreid@yahoo.ca

Vancouver Island	Director	Address	Phone	Email
Arrowsmith Naturalists	Sandra Gray	Box 285 - 1300 Grafton Ave., Errington	250-752-9171	saninerr@shaw.ca
Comox Valley Naturalists Society	Jackie Gray	Box 3222, Courtenay, V9N 5N4		jgray@telus.net
Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society	Genevieve Singleton	Box 361, Duncan V9L 3X5	250-746-8052	twinflower@telus.net
Nanose Naturalists	Carolyn Dodd	2345 Eaglesfield Place, Nanose Bay V9P 9G7	250-468-5437	ron-cardodd@shaw.ca
Pender Island Field Naturalists	Gerald McKeating	6618 Harbour Hill Dr., Pender Island V0N 2M1	250-629-3840	geraldmckeating@shaw.ca
Rithet's Bog Conservation Society	Sharon Forrester	6429 Bryn Road, Saanichton, V8M 1X6	250-652-5950	s.forrester@shaw.ca
Rocky Point Bird Observatory	Shona Lawson	954A Queens Ave. Victoria, V8T 1M6	250-508 4021	lawson.shona@gmail.com
SaltSpringTrail & Nature Club	Nieke Visser	145 Rourke Road, Sall Spring Island V8K 2E6	250-537 5443	niekevisser @shaw.ca
Victoria Natural History Society	Tom Gillespie	Box 5220, Stn. B, Victoria V8R 6N4	250-361-1694	twgille@telus.net
Victoria Natural History Society	James Miskelly	Box 5220, Stn. B, Victoria V8R 6N4	250-477-0490	james.miskelly@gmail.com
Victoria Natural History Society	Darren Copley	Box 5220, Stn. B, Victoria V8R 6N4	250-479-6622	dccopley@telus.net

Affiliate Groups

BC Spaces for Nature - Gibsons	www.spacesfornature.org	North Shore Black Bear Network - N. Vanc	www.northshorebears.com
Boundary Bay Conservation Committee - Vanc.	www.sunburyneighbourhood.ca/BBCC/	Raincoast Applied Ecology - Vancouver	www.raincoastappliedecology.ca
Burns Bog Conservation Society - Delta	www.burnsbog.org	Raincoast Education Society - Tofino	www.raincoasteducation.org
Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area - Cres.	www.crestonwildlife.ca	Riverview Horticultural Society - Coquitlam	www.rhcs.org
Delkatla Sanctuary Society - Masset	http://www.massetbc.com/html/delkatla_sanctuary.html	Ruby Lake Lagoon Nature Reserve Soc. - Madeira Pk	www.lagoonsociety.com
Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Soc. - N. Vanc	www.cypresspark.bc.ca	Sargeant Bay Society - Sechelt	www.sargbay.ca
Friends of the Stikine - Victoria	www.panorama-map.com/stikine/stikine.html	Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society - Dunc	www.somenosmarsh.com
Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society	www.garryoak.info	Sunshine Coast Conservation Association - Sechelt	www.thescca.ca
Hope Mountain Cen. for Outdoor Learning - Hope	www.hopemountain.org	The Nature Trust of BC - North Vanc.	www.trailsbc.ca/
Malaspina Naturalist Club - Powell River	www.armourtech.com/malanat	Wild Bird Trust of BC (WBT) - North Vanc.	www.wildbirdtrust.org



BC Nature Weekend & Fall General Meeting 29 September to 2 October 2011



Nature on the Move ~ Fall Migration through the Delta

Hosted by Delta Naturalists' Society
at the Coast Tsawwassen Inn, 1665 - 56 Street, Delta

Come and experience the world-class Fraser River estuary and Boundary Bay ecosystem and enjoy guided tours and presentations with experts in diverse aspects of wildlife and nature. This weekend event takes place during the height of fall migration when nature is on the move and plant life is preparing for winter.

Highlights include: presentations on migration, whales, salmon, owls and cranes; birdwatching trips with expert leaders; marine biology on the beach; grassland ecology; boat trip on the Fraser River estuary (numbers limited); walks in Burns Bog and along the Boundary Bay dykes; and a visit to OWL wildlife rehabilitation centre. Social events include a Barbecue in the Park and a delicious Banquet with Silent Auction and special guest speaker, Russ Cannings.

To Register:

To see the full program and to register: go to www.bcnature.ca or check out the summer edition of BC Nature magazine for a program schedule and registration form. Early registrants receive a free eco-bamboo sports shirt, with embroidered logo: we still have a few available! For accommodation see website or Coast Tsawwassen Inn www.tsawwasseninn.com.

For registration after 6 Sept, late charges apply. Cut-off date for meal registration is 22 September, so please be sure and register before then. We are not accepting drop-in registrations on the day. For the Silent Auction, only cash or cheques are accepted. Remember to bring a passport if you plan to join in the Point Roberts, WA, trip.

We very much look forward to welcoming you in Delta. Any questions, please contact Anne Murray, FGM 2011 Registrar, at sanderling@uniserve.com or 604 943 0273



“Know Nature and Keep it Worth Knowing”

Come and enjoy BC Nature with us!

Enjoy birding, botany, geology and marine biology; join in camps, field trips and more in communities throughout BC. Participate in local stewardship projects such as restoring a marsh, monitoring bird life, caretaking important habitat, providing nest boxes, removing invasive species or helping run a nature house. The benefits of membership include our quarterly magazine, participation in our field camps and spring and fall conferences. Your membership gives strength to the provincial naturalist voice that BC Nature provides.

Getting involved with nature is as easy as joining any of the local clubs throughout BC (you also become a member of BC Nature). Or you can join BC Nature directly. Check www.bcnature.ca for the club nearest you or phone (604) 985-3057.

Annual direct membership fee: \$20 + Donation (optional) : _____ = \$ _____ total
 If paying by cheque, please make payable to BC Nature

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Income tax receipts will be issued for donations over the annual membership fee.

* Donations can also be made at www.bcnature.ca through PayPal (look for the Support Us button).

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