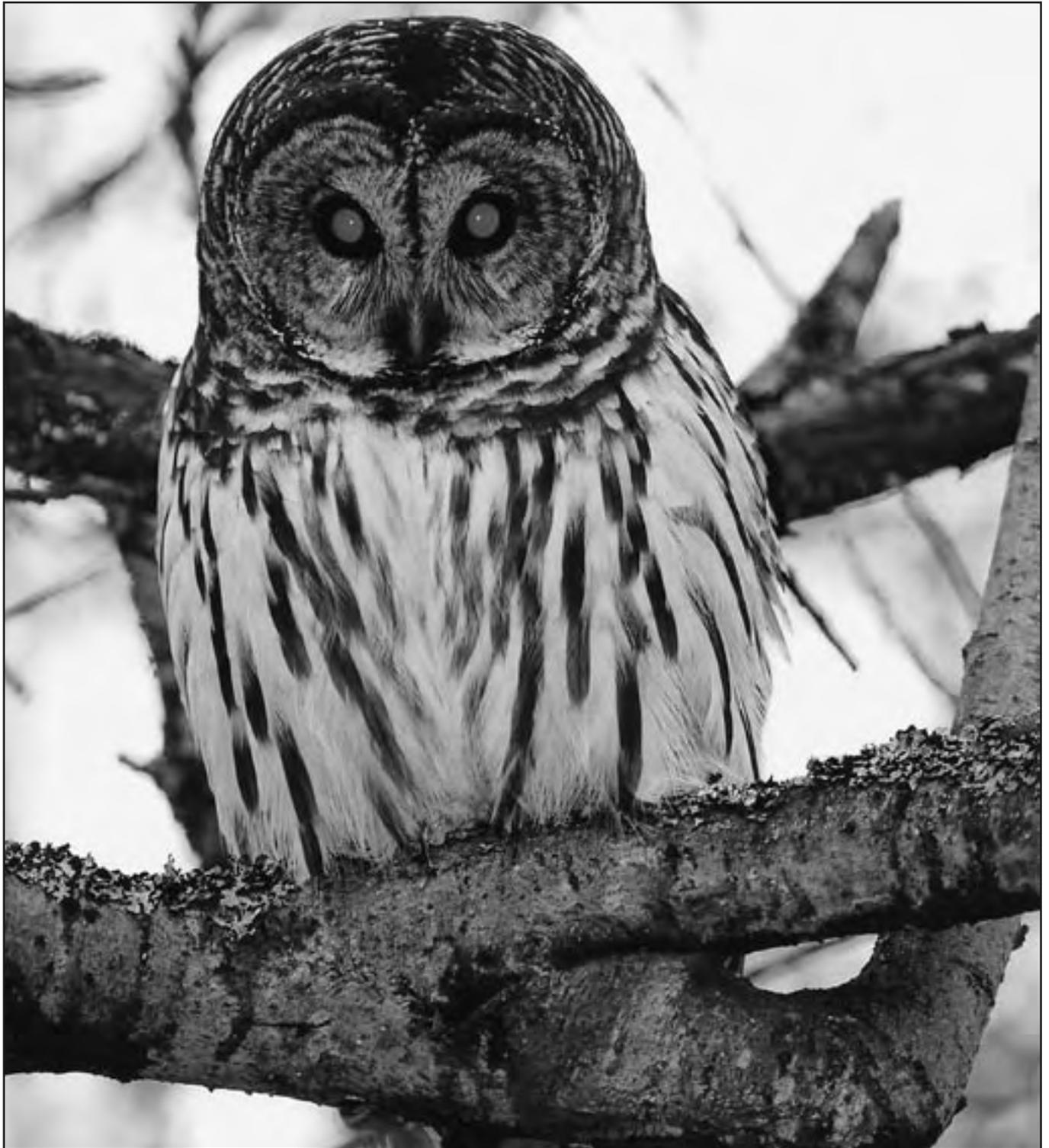




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The Victoria NATURALIST

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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We request submission of typed, double-spaced copy in an IBM compatible word processing file on diskette, or by e-mail. Photos and slides, and diskettes submitted will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material. Digital images are welcome, but they need to be high resolution: a minimum of 1200 x 1550 pixels, or 300 dpi at the size of photos in the magazine.

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Contents

VNHS Website News.....	4
Birding Sidney Spit: July 23, 2006 <i>By Jack Sutherland</i>	5
Rithet’s Bog: a Brief History of the Restoration Project and Update on Recent Events <i>By Sharon Hartwell</i>	6
Quelle Surprise! An Update on the VNHS School Project – Connecting Children with Nature <i>By Ann Nightingale</i>	10
“Campaign for BC’s Parks” Launched. Opposes New Resorts in Parks	14
Pass the Spark <i>By Gail Miller</i>	15
Redefining American Beauty, by the Yard <i>By Patricia Leigh Brown</i>	16
<i>Travelling the Dempster</i> and <i>Bird Songs of the Arctic</i> by John Neville <i>Reviews by Ann Nightingale</i>	18
HAT Tricks – 10 Years and Going Strong <i>By Geoff Huber</i>	19
Letters	20
Welcome to New Members.....	21
Calendar of Events.....	21
Bulletin Board.....	23

COVER PHOTO:
Barred Owl. *Photo: Marie O’Shaughnessy.*

In early August, a group of keeners headed over to Salt Spring Island and participated in what has now become my favourite fundraising event: an “eco-home” tour. The Salt Spring Island Conservancy Association organizes it, and it is a real treat to get a chance to see how others are trying to lighten their impact on the earth using green energy sources, locally sourced and alternative building supplies, and water conservation strategies. Even better than their individual efforts is their willingness to share their ideas and techniques with others – giving all the participants some of the “know-how” to do it themselves.

Some of the homes on the tour are completely “off the grid”, while others are built of clay, sand and straw. Cisterns are used to capture water we have in abundance in the winter to be used during the three-plus months of the year we get virtually none, and grey-water systems make further use of household water by irrigating their landscapes. Although many of the techniques look like novel ideas, most are old technologies being revisited.

A couple of things I would like to see more of on these tours: less homogenization of the planet’s flora through the use of horticultural plantings, and more food production. Instead of the 100-Mile Diet (<http://www.100milediet.org/>), how about at least a component being the 100-metre diet (p.16)? And why does a plant from Eurasia suit your landscape better than a red-flowering currant? And what about the impacts of these “foreigners” on our local ecosystems (p. 6)? We already have some of the “know-how” – we just need to apply it!

Claudia

VNHS Website News

www.vicnhs.bc.ca

In late 2001, VNHS launched its website. Through the efforts of John Taylor working diligently behind the scenes, contributions from a Mt. Douglas Secondary School class, and the support of Shaw Cablesystems, who provided the webspace, we were able to make VNHS information available to our members online. John has maintained the site since its inception, and it has become a valuable tool for many of our members.

After five years as webmaster, John has retired from the position this summer, and the role has now been assumed by Ann Nightingale. The transition has been smooth and comes at a time when we were planning to make some changes inspired by our members' comments.

The first thing you will notice if you visit our site is that there is now a beautiful photo on the home page. You will also see that this photo changes as you refresh the page or move back and forth between screens. Most of the pictures which are displayed on the front page are from our photo contest in 2004, but we are looking for more submissions from members. (More on that later in this article.)

While the structure of the website is essentially the same, there have been a few changes in the layout. As we get more and more regular features, we are instituting "quick-launch" URLs. For instance, if you are interested in the Schools project, you can go directly to www.vicnhs.bc.ca/schools/ or you can find Christmas Bird Count information by typing www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/. More will be added as needed.

We now also have a way for members to pay for their subscriptions online using credit cards and the PayPal system. If you are unfamiliar with PayPal, it is a site that allows people to make financial transactions either with credit cards or from their banks. You do not need a PayPal account for credit card transactions, but you would if you wanted to transfer funds directly from your bank account. There is a small surcharge for using this system, so you will notice the subscription and membership "prices" reflect this. You may also use this same system to make a donation to VNHS. Just click on the "donate" link on the home page, and you will be walked through the process.

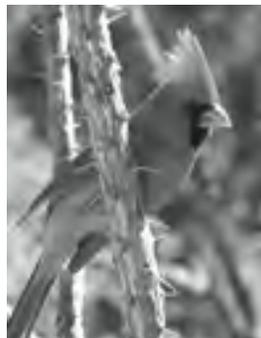
We want your photos. Ann has also offered to put together a library of members' digital photos for use on the website and for other VNHS purposes, such as publication in *The Victoria Naturalist*, use by speakers at VNHS presentations, sharing with other natural history groups, etc. If you have photos taken on Southern Vancouver Island or on VNHS field trips outside of this area that you are willing to share, we'd love to put them in our photo library. Contact Ann at motmot@shaw.ca or by phone at 652-6450 to arrange the best way to submit them. If they are of plants, animals, birds, insects or geological features, the title of the picture should identify the subject. If they include people, their names would be very much appreciated, if they are available. We'd also like to keep track of the dates and locations for historical purposes.

You can contact the VNHS webmaster at webmaster@vicnhs.bc.ca. Thanks again to John Taylor for creating and maintaining our website for the past five years!

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Birding Sidney Spit: July 23, 2006

By Jack Sutherland

Fourteen birders made the trip to Sidney Spit, now part of the new Gulf Islands National Park, on Sunday, July 23. The original plans had also called for boating around Mandarte Island, but our numbers did not warrant that part of the trip. Although it was one of the hottest summer days, with temperatures exceeding 30°C, Rick Schortinghuis did his usual outstanding job of leading the group. We caught the 10:00 passenger ferry from Sidney and, after arriving on Sidney Island, we spent the next 1.5 hours or so walking north along the spit. White-crowned and Song Sparrows were plentiful among the logs and vegetation there, while in the intertidal zone we saw two Spotted Sandpipers and one (possibly two) very young chicks, as well as several mixed flocks of at least twenty California and Herring Gulls. A Caspian Tern put on a good display of how to fish. Innumerable Barn and Violet-green Swallows were present all along the shores of the spit and island.

After returning to the shade near the ferry dock for lunch, we proceeded south along the west shore of Sidney Island (town of Sidney side). During our walk south to the camping area and old wharf at the site of the former brick plant, a mixed flock of 20 or so Least and Western Sandpipers along the water's edge gave us several opportunities for close-up viewing. We also saw five river otters along the way. A couple of Turkey Vultures were seen overhead. About half of the eight Purple Martin nesting boxes attached to poles at the old wharf adjacent to the camp site contained Purple Martins and again we had good, close up looks at both males and females attending their young. Also seen briefly over the campgrounds was a Peregrine Falcon that scattered all the birds. At the nearby picnic shelter about half a dozen adult Barn Swallows were observed feeding their young in the nests plastered to the shelter's rafters.

Next, we traversed the large, grassy field (east of the camp site) where, as anticipated, we saw several Savannah Sparrows. Upon entering the adjacent forest we saw a young Cooper's Hawk still in the nest tree, plus a dead sibling at the tree base. Further along the path we saw the usual array of forest birds such as Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos, a Hairy Woodpecker, and a very inquisitive Red-breasted Nuthatch. Apparently, for the Nuthatch

(and perhaps for Rick too) it was "love at first sight". We then headed back north through the forest and then along the beach to the ferry terminal, where most of us caught the 16:45 boat to Sidney. Sea birds that we saw, both from the ferry and while on the spit and island, included Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants, Rhinoceros Auklets, and Pigeon Guillemots. For the day, we saw thirty species of birds in a beautiful environment, one that's recommended for birding any time of the year. The ferry runs from May 1 to September 30, phone 655-4995 for the schedule.

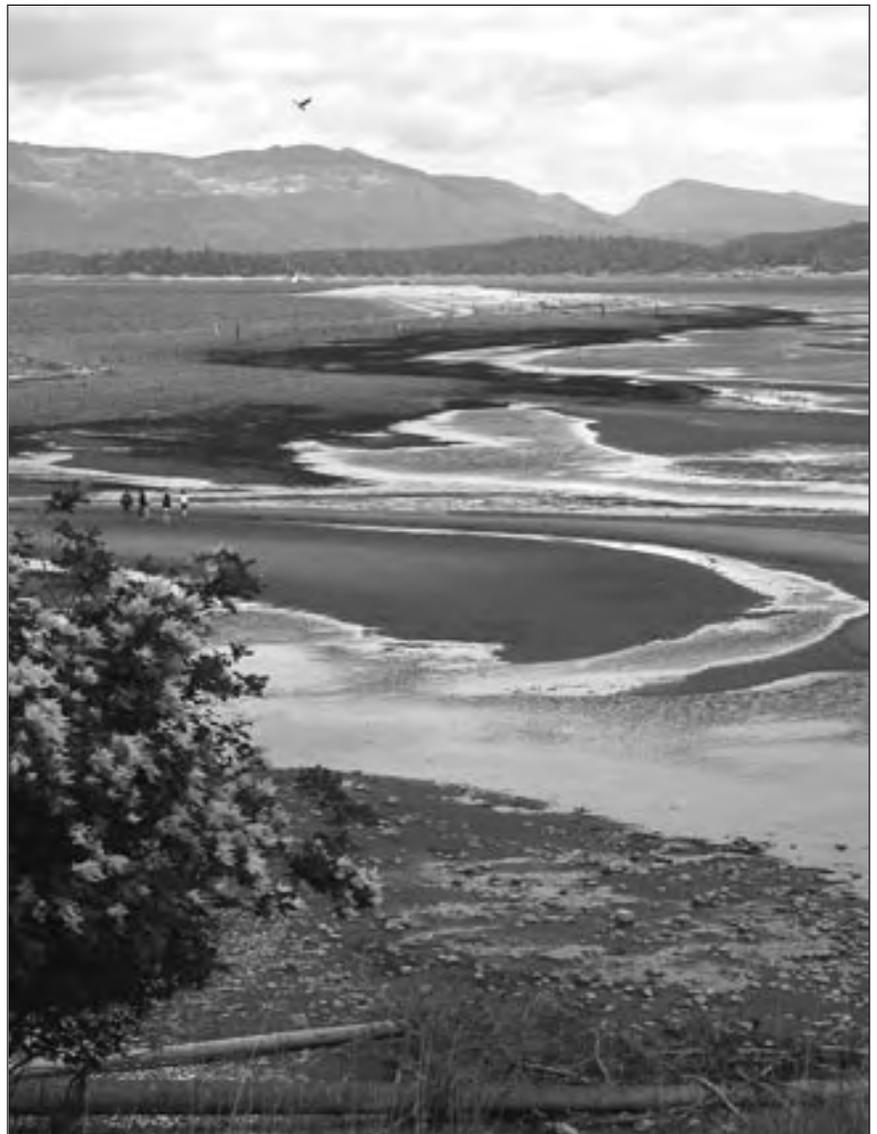


Photo: Darren Copley

Rithet's Bog: a Brief History of the Restoration Project and Update on Recent Events

By Sharon Hartwell, Rithet's Bog Conservation Society

Rithet's Bog is a 42-hectare Conservation Area located in the Broadmead area of Saanich. Well-known to birders and those seeking a quiet, bike-free area to walk, it is the last of seven large bogs once found on the Saanich Peninsula.

The property was donated to Saanich in 1994, but had already suffered severe ecological damage, due to drainage and agricultural use dating back to the 1880's, followed by intense urban development of the surrounding area. Despite these negative impacts, it remained an environmentally sensitive wetland within the Colquitz watershed. It was home to a rare plant community (the central shore pine/*Sphagnum* forest, with its associated bog species), three at-risk plant species listed by the BC Conservation Data Centre (the red-listed purple sanicle and foothill sedge, and the blue-listed Vancouver Island beggarticks) and a red-listed butterfly, the Vancouver Island ringlet. The open fields

surrounding the bog also provided significant waterfowl habitat when flooded.

By the time the bog became a Saanich park, it had degraded to the point that restoration efforts were essential if the bog were to survive. The water table had dropped dramatically and fluctuated widely. Shore pines in the central forest, which had increased in density due to the drier conditions, aggravated the problem by drawing the water table down further. The remnant *Sphagnum* moss community was rapidly disappearing due to the altered water regime and the encroachment of hardhack, which thrives under fluctuating water conditions. The peripheral wetlands were also disappearing as the once cultivated fields lay fallow (agriculture is not permitted in Conservation Areas) and were reclaimed by native willows.

University of Victoria graduate student Karen Golinski undertook extensive studies of the bog, including comparisons



Sphagnum "moss" and "bog cranberry".
Photo: Bruce Stewart



Top left: Rithet's bog area ca. 1950, viewed from the hillside above what is now Emily Carr Drive. Photo courtesy of Jack Burdge. Bottom: Rithet's from Foxborough contemporary: Rithet's bog from Emily Carr Drive, 2003. Photo: Bruce Stewart



Top: The north end of the Chatterton field, May, 2002, prior to restoration work; viewed from Chatterton Hill.
Bottom: North end of Chatterton field, May, 2005, two and a half years after restoration work; viewed from Chatterton Hill. *Photos: Russ Cozens*

There have also been some surprise problems. Willows and reed canarygrass were expected to invade the cleared wetlands, and require yearly cutting. Instead, it is primarily cattails that have increased dramatically in both size and distribution.

with undisturbed bogs, and made recommendations for a conservation and restoration strategy. In 2001, a partnership was formed to undertake watershed-based restoration work; the partners included Saanich Parks, the Municipality of Saanich, Ducks Unlimited, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society. A plan was formulated based on Karen's work and additional surveys undertaken by Ducks Unlimited and Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The primary goals of the restoration project included:

- Create conditions that would maintain the ecological function of the bog, and incorporate it as a functioning wetland of the Colquitz watershed
- Reduce water level fluctuation in the wetland
- Filter storm water entering and leaving the wetland to improve water quality (by reducing sediment and contaminants, lowering temperature and slowing water flow) and provide enhanced downstream fish habitat in the salmon-bearing Colquitz
- Provide open water habitat for wintering, migrating and breeding waterfowl by substantially reducing the growth of willow in the wetlands surrounding the bog
- Maintain recreational use of the trail surrounding the bog, and educate the community about the requirements for long-term sustainability of the bog

The restoration work was initiated in 2002. The above goals were achieved by installing a weir at the bog outlet to regulate water levels; clearing four hectares of willows from the Chatterton field to re-create areas of open water; using the vegetated perimeter ditches as biofiltration swales to slow and filter storm water, and plugging an inlet ditch to direct incoming storm water away from the central bog forest and into the peripheral shrub wetland where filtration would occur.

Ongoing monitoring at the bog has indicated that the restoration goals are still being achieved: water levels are up, the *Sphagnum* community in the central forest is increasing in size and vigour, seasonal wetlands have been created on the former Chatterton fields, and water quality conditions fall within acceptable limits for fish habitat. The rare species found at the bog have maintained or in some cases increased their numbers.



Top: Purple Sanicle. This trailside population of Purple Sanicle has survived and increased in size. Bottom: The Vancouver Island Ringlet population consistently has the highest numbers for Victoria during the monthly Butterfly Count. *Photos: Bruce Stewart.*

There have also been some surprise problems. Willows and reed canarygrass were expected to invade the cleared wetlands, and require yearly cutting. Instead, it is primarily cattails that have increased dramatically in both size and distribution. Stands 3 to 4 metres tall have established on the perimeter and formed large clumps further out from shore. While the cattails provide nesting habitat, their size is frustrating birders and limiting views of the wetland. Ducks Unlimited has established experimental plots in these stands, and is testing clipping of the plants as a control measure for select areas.

Reed canarygrass has become invasive, but not in the central wetlands. It is instead advancing on the perimeter



Above: The weir installed at the outlet to Rithet's Bog maintains water levels during dry summer months. Right: Tree Swallows at a nest box installed near the outlet weir. *Photo: Bruce Stewart.*

of the wetland, in the perimeter ditches and onto the dry uplands areas surrounding the bog. Saanich and Ducks Unlimited are investigating repeated mowing as a control measure. Clearing the grass from plugged ditch culverts will also be undertaken, to prevent flooding of the trail during winter rains. After the ditch clearing work, willow stakes will be planted to stabilize the ditch walls and shade the ditches, hopefully limiting future growth of reed-canary grass.

This year the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society undertook an "enhanced biological mosquito control" project: installation of swallow nest boxes. Expert Darren Copley used the materials we provided to build the boxes precisely to required specifications (thank you, Darren!). Volunteers then assisted in mounting the boxes on signposts near the perimeter trail (thanks to Mac and Chris Rodin, Dave Atterby, Frank Brawn and Linda Towne). Of the seven boxes erected, five were occupied – one by Tree Swallows, and the other four by Violet-green Swallows. All appear to have been successful in rearing young. We plan to expand the program by mounting more boxes next spring.

We are delighted that Habitat Acquisition Trust has chosen Rithet's Bog as the next site for its "Good Neighbour" outreach program. Todd Carnahan has planned many exciting educational events and projects that are sure to attract attention to the bog and lead to ongoing involvement by good neighbours near and far.

Meanwhile, if you are interested in helping out at the bog, RBCS members hold regular work bees on Wednesday evenings from June to October and on Sunday afternoons from October to May. Noxious weed control is the main focus: Scotch broom, poison hemlock, hairy willowherb and blackberries are all being cleared. For more information please see our website at www.rithetsbog.org.





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Quelle Surprise!

An Update on the VNHS School Project – Connecting Children with Nature

By Ann Nightingale

It was with more than a little trepidation that I prepared for my first field trip as part of the VNHS Schools Project. Not only would I be guiding 23 grade three students from Deep Cove Elementary, it was a *botany* field trip. I am pretty comfortable leading birding field trips, and I have a reasonable background in tide pool biology, but botany? I have learned a lot in the time I have been a member of the VNHS, from field trip leaders such as Adolf Ceska, Marilyn Lambert, Claudia Copley, Hans Roemer and Rick Schortinghuis, but would not consider myself any kind of expert in this area. I just kept remembering something a teacher friend once told me: “You don’t need to know calculus to teach grade three arithmetic.” I was seriously hoping the same would apply for botany!

The trip was to Horth Hill Park in North Saanich, so the day before, I took an exploratory walk, Pojar and McKinnon in hand. I thought about Adolf’s field trips that often don’t require walking more than a couple of hundred meters, but felt certain that I could not contain a class of eight and nine year olds that way, so sought out the more “showy” plants to highlight. Fortunately, there were many native shrubs in bloom, as well as plenty of invasive species to point out. Horth Hill has a great variety of plants, demonstrating the use of diverse habitats and survival strategies. Suitably prepared, I felt a little less nervous, but resolved to arrive early so that I could review the class questions before we headed out.

I knew I was in trouble when I signed in at the office, and asked for directions to Louise Beaudry’s class. “*Madame*



Photo: Darren Copley

I was impressed with how much many of the students already knew. We talked about all sorts of natural history, not just the plants. Human use of plants, the effect of sunlight, invasive species, deciduous trees versus coniferous trees, and animal scat were among our many topics.

Beaudry”?” was the response. I was headed for a French immersion class! Sure enough, the student handouts were all in French. And I had only prepared for Latin!

It’s constantly amazing to me how much information remains in our brains years after we learn it. It’s been more than thirty years since I studied French. As I looked at the

strange words and funny accents, I could actually understand the questions that the teacher had prepared. It struck me that things that students learned on this field trip might lurk in their memories and affect some of their choices years in the future. It is for this reason alone that the VNHS school project is so important.

Thankfully, the teacher and the class were not expecting me to present the field trip *en français*. Of course, all spoke English as their primary language, so we were set. I was impressed with how much many of the students already knew. In this group, there were a few students who were involved in advanced programs and had lots of information to contribute. We talked about all sorts of natural history, not just the plants. Human use of plants, the effect of sunlight, invasive species, deciduous trees versus coniferous trees, and animal scat were among our many topics.

I was grateful that I had taken the field trip leaders’ course offered last spring (funded by a grant from the FBCN), as this was not my typical audience. Whenever possible, I let the students teach each other, and tell us what they knew. My favourite lesson was how to identify a Douglas-fir cone. Through the eyes of a child (and now through my eyes) the distinctive bracts resemble the rear ends of mice running into the cone. Have a look. They really do!



Naturalist training session at Swan Lake Nature House. *Photo:* Claudia Copley

The students' favourite experience had to do with the sori on the underside of sword ferns. One student approached me with a bit of a fern and asked what the dots on the underside of the leaves were. One of her friends had suggested that they might be spider eggs. I explained to her that they held the spores, the "seeds" for the ferns. Since she was wearing a dark sweatshirt, I tapped the fern on her shirt so that she could see the spores as they were released from the plant. She had a great time telling and showing her classmates this. When we stopped at Horth Hill for a snack and a break, we got out the magnifying glasses and everyone had a chance for a close-up look of fern sori and spores. The three-hour trip passed very quickly, and Madame Beaudry promised that next year, she would plan for a full day.

It was only two years ago that the VNHS Board of Directors received a request from Briony Penn (through Tony Embleton) to work with her on helping get natural history education back in the schools. The task was daunting, so much so, that the Board demurred, citing lack of resources for such a huge project.

Then Anne Adamson passed away and left a legacy that has changed the focus of many of VNHS's activities for the past two years. With the bequest we received, the Board felt that we now had the resources to make some inroads. We set aside about a third of the bequest to purchase books for the school libraries. Every public school, elementary to senior secondary, in the Victoria, Saanich and Sooke school districts, has now received two packages of current field guides and resource books to ensure that all teachers and students have access. A third package containing a children's art calendar and more resources will be distributed in the early fall.

The perpetual Children's Art Calendar is possible through the efforts of Claudia Copley, Frances Hunter of Beacon Hill Communications Group and students from the Greater Victoria area, and the generous financial support of the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment. This full-colour calendar (viewable on our website at www.vic-nhs.bc.ca/schools/) showcases the artwork of Minju Park, Marina Insley, Dylan Church, Alyssa Liao, Jonah Cardwell,



August

Some things to watch/listen for:

- Northern Alligator Lizards give birth this time of year. They are our only native lizard on the Island.
- Pinesap (see below) seed heads will be releasing their fluffy seeds for miles.
- Torchies are flying around in August as well. Finding niches and new niches for to show off.
- Shaker's Jays return to Victoria on the year. The Berry Chats produce a longer crop of worms.

Interpretational Day of the Week!
 Judgement People
 Interpersonal Speech Day

The large millipede seen in our forests are coloured black and yellow to serve as a warning. They can secrete cyanide to keep predators away. It can be detached at a insect's mouth.

We only have Black Bear living on the Island (the Grizzly Bear), but they do come in a variety of colours, including brown. The bear's tusks to see one are often opening rivers.

Cover and sample pages from the perpetual Children's Art Calendar

Every public school, elementary to senior secondary, in the Victoria, Saanich and Sooke school districts, has now received two packages of current field guides and resource books to ensure that all teachers and students have access.

Kim Robinson, Kristy McGeogh, Carmen Eilertson, Delaine McDonald, Nikki Charles, Hannah Gordon, Kaitlyn Prowse, Ramandeep Sanghera, Brandi Sandford, Colton Askey, Max Hintz, Alex Cowden, Jassy Bhullar, Danica Neral, Zoe Bidner, Liam Horgan, Abigail Christ-Rowling, Jason Buckley, Noah Anderson, Nic, Gwyn Dahlquist-Axe, Katelyn Bowers, Alanna Brooks, Mark Blundell, Brandon, Kim Payton, Emily Crooks, MacKenzie Byng, Mackay Porter, Shayna Richards, Tamsyn Cullimore, Elena Ho, Jean Newell, Christa, Joshua Lidner, Avneet Atwal, Kassidy Stirling, and Geoffrey Newell.

Each month, the calendar lists predictable events to listen and watch for, such as the return of the salmon to Goldstream, the chorus of Pacific Tree Frogs and the blooming of Indian plum, as well as space for the teachers to add their own and their students' observations. As a perpetual calendar, it can remain in the classroom for years.

Nature Canada has provided a grant so that we could purchase class sets of tools to use on our school field trips. These include binoculars, bug nets, magnifiers, and other useful items. When not being used for VNHS field trips, these resources are being made available to the Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary for their programs.

The word is getting out about our project, and we have received a number of requests to lead field trips and make classroom presentations. Some of these have been more challenging than others. High school students, in particular, don't always show enthusiasm for the topics, but as stated earlier, planting the seeds now may yield positive results later. We'd love to hear your ideas on how to reach this particular audience! Special thanks go to the coordinators and volunteers who are making this aspect of the project possible.

Looking at the world through the eyes of children is a very rewarding experience, and one I would encourage all to consider. If you are interested in assisting with this project, please contact David Newell at dnewell@sd61.bc.ca or 592-0360. Contact the Goldstream Nature House at 478-9414 or use our online form at www.vicnhs.bc.ca/schools/ to book an event.

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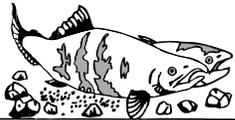
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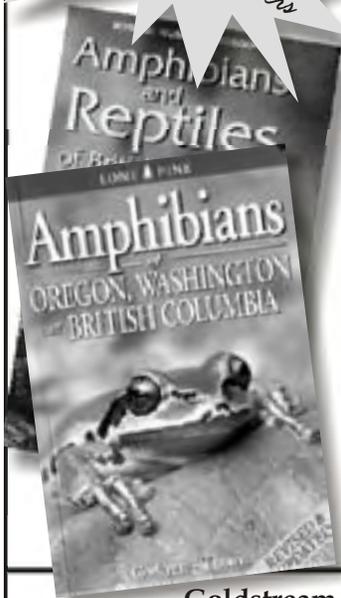




Goldstream Park Bookstore

At the Goldstream Park Nature House

10% discount for VNHS Members



Get the low down on herps with the latest from the Royal BC Museum and the newly revised, all colour, Lone Pine Amphibians Guide.

Proceeds support environmental education at Goldstream Park.

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Goldstream Nature House
Open daily 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
478-9414 - goldstreamnaturehouse.com

“Campaign for BC’s Parks” Launched, Opposes New Resorts in Parks

Editor’s Note: This was a news release sent out August 3, 2006 by the campaign organizers.

A group of high profile British Columbia conservationists have joined forces to deal with the challenge of maintaining the integrity and sustainability of BC’s Class A Parks. “Right now we are faced with a surprise announcement made last week by the BC government who announced a call for proposals for roofed accommodations in 12 provincial parks. We are all strongly opposed to the building of new for-profit accommodations, including resorts and hotels, in Class A provincial parks,” said leading environmentalist Vicky Husband.

“BC’s internationally renowned parks are a sacred trust for wildlife, nature and for our children and they must be protected. Resorts and hotels belong outside parks, not inside. We will continue to support environmentally sustainable tourism development outside of parks,” commented Husband.

Groups who oppose this government initiative include the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Canada Parks and Wilderness Society – BC Chapter, World Wildlife Fund Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, Federation of BC Naturalists, EarthCare Society, Wildsight, Sierra Club of Canada – BC Chapter, Valhalla Wilderness Society, Transboundary Watershed Alliance, West Kootenay Eco Society and West Coast Environmental Law.



BC Parks’ beloved mascot: Jerry the Moose. *Photo:* Darren Copley

“It’s time to put developers on notice. Should bids be accepted to develop in parks, we will take a targeted message to the marketplace against these new operations to ensure they stay out of our Class A provincial parks,” said Gwen Barlee, representative of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

“The tourism industry needs to move wisely on this issue,” states Husband. “While we will oppose new resorts in parks, the Campaign for BC Parks will work with the tourism industry and those operators who are interested in

building environmentally appropriate facilities outside of parks, not inside. We all strongly oppose any new hotels and resorts in parks. We know that many tourism operators agree with this. This is not good for BC, local communities, tourism, BC’s parks, or the wildlife that live there. Any threat to our world renowned parks and protected pristine wilderness will impact on our international reputation.”

“With these types of developments come parking lots, staff housing, logging for fire blocks, helicopter traffic, sewage, and electricity. Can you imagine how caribou or grizzly bears will react to daily helicopter traffic taking guests and staff to the resort? How will that affect the wilderness experience? When does a park stop being a park?” said Ellen Zimmerman of Wildsight.

“British Columbians love their parks, they want the wilderness in parks to be protected, not blighted by resorts,” says Chloe O’Loughlin of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. “What we need is a new vision for parks – where well-managed parks result in thriving communities, healthy families and fit citizens. They are a priceless natural legacy that must be looked after for generations of British Columbians to come.

“Today we are launching the Campaign for BC’s Parks to rally British Columbians to join us in keeping the wild beauty and natural integrity of our world class parks system for the generations to come,” Husband said.

For more information contact:

Coalition for BC Parks, Vicky Husband, spokesperson, 250-478-0388, 250-920-9355

Western Canada Wilderness Committee – Gwen Barlee, policy director, 604-683-8220 (w) 604-202-0322 (cell)

For additional information please contact:

Canada Parks and Wilderness Society – BC Chapter, Chloe O’Loughlin, Ex. Director, 604-685-7445

David Suzuki Foundation – Bill Wareham, 604-732-4228 extension 223

EarthCare Society, Lloyd Manchester, Executive Director, 250-712-9713, 250- 878-9352

Federation of BC Naturalists, Bev Ramey, President, 604-224-7689

Sierra Club of Canada – BC Chapter, Lisa Matteus, Acting Executive Director, 250-888-6267

Transboundary Watershed Alliance, Nola Poirier, BC Campaigner, 604-812-4804

Valhalla Wilderness Society – Anne Sherrod, 250-358-2610

West Coast Environmental Law, Jessica Clogg, Acting Executive Director, 604-601-2501

West Kootenay Eco Society, Matt Lowe, 250-352-6346

Wildsight, Ellen Zimmerman, Director, 250-348-2225

World Wildlife Fund Canada, Dr. Chris Elliott, Regional Vice President, 604-678-5152

Pass the Spark

By Gail Miller, Volunteer Services Manager

It seems that young children have a spontaneous curiosity about our natural world. An ant or two (is there ever one ant?) can entertain, interest, and amaze the young entomologist. The seashore seems to have a never-ending supply of creatures to hold the inquisitive mind. With age it seems the wonders of nature lose their appeal as the structure of schooling, sports, and indoor life gain more importance to the growing child.

For some, with age and a change in priorities, an appreciation for our environment returns. Maybe it's a slower lifestyle that allows time for consideration of the world about us and an understanding of the fragility of our ecosystem. Or maybe a lingering childhood interest sparks a return to a fascination with our natural history.

The Royal BC Museum is fortunate to have a group of volunteers, Docents, who like to learn and to sow the seeds of excitement of the wonder of nature in both adults and children. School Program Docents have the opportunity to show children how a barnacle eats or why wetlands are important. They prepare, through September training, for the school groups that attend museum programs from October until June. The weekly commitment is about 2.5 hours. School programs also tell human history stories about B.C.'s pioneers and explorers.

Adult visitors are introduced to the wonderful diversity of our province through the adult tour program. Although training is on going, initial training starts in September and takes most volunteers about eight months. Tours are about 1.5 hours long and offered about once per week. A recent graduate was delighted to find that even on a lovely summer

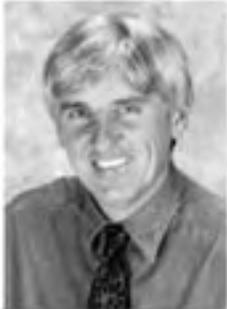


Photo provided by the author

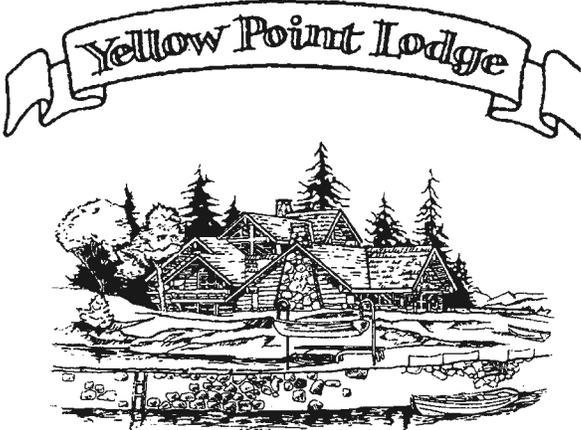
day her initial tour group grew as she led it through the galleries and intrigued visitors along the way.

If you are interested in inspiring children through school programs or adults through tours, contact the Royal BC Museum's Volunteer Services by August 30.

Training for either challenge starts the first week of September. For more information call 387-7903 or visit the RBCM website at: www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca



Jim Farrell 477-7291 jamesbfarrell@shaw.ca



3700 Yellow Point Road,
Ladysmith, B.C. V9G 1E8
(250) 245-7422

Redefining American Beauty, by the Yard

By Patricia Leigh Brown

Editor's Note: This was first published July 13, 2006 in The New York Times.

When Cecilia Foti, a seventh grader at the Bancroft Middle School in Lakewood, California, was asked to write a “persuasive” essay for her English class in the spring semester, she did not choose a topic deeply in tune with her peers – the pros and cons of school uniforms, say, or the district’s retro policy on chewing gum and cellphones.

Instead, she addressed the neighborhood’s latest controversy: her family’s front yard. “The American lawn needs to be eradicated from our society and fast!” she wrote, explaining that her family had replaced its own with a fruit and vegetable garden. She argued for the importance of water conservation, the dangers of pesticides and the dietary benefits and visual appeal of an edible yard. “Was the Garden of Eden grass?” she reasoned. “No.”

In this quintessential 1950’s tract community about 25 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles, the transformation of the Foti family’s front yard from one of grass to one dense with pattypan squash plants, cornstalks, millionaire eggplants, crimson sweet watermelons, dwarf curry trees and about 195 other edible varieties has been startling.

“The empty front lawn requiring mowing, watering and weeding previously on this location has been removed,” reads a placard set amid veggies in oval planting beds fronting the street.

The sign is a not-so-subtle bit of propaganda proclaiming the second and most recent installment of Edible Estates, an experimental project by Fritz Haeg, a 37-year-old Los Angeles architect and ersatz Frederick Law Olmsted. The project, which he inaugurated on the Fourth of July weekend in 2005 in a front yard in Salina, Kan., is part of a nascent “delawning” movement concerned with replacing lawns around the country with native plants, from prairie grasses in suburban Chicago to cactus gardens in Tucson. It is a kind of high-minded version of “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” As Mr. Haeg put it, “It’s about shifting ideas of what’s beautiful. It’s about what happens on that square of land between the public street and the private house. It’s about social engagement. I wanted to get away from the idea of home as an obsessive isolating cocoon.”

The Fotis volunteered for the project after reading about it in early 2006 at treehugger.com, an environmental Web site. Cecilia’s father, Michael Foti, a 36-year-old computer programmer and avid gardener who raises chickens in the backyard, was eager to put his environmental politics into practice. “I am looking to think differently about this space,”

Mr. Foti said of the family’s once-placid front yard. “I want to look outward rather than inward.”

The delawning was accomplished over Memorial Day weekend by a SWAT team of some 15 recruits who read about the project on Mr. Haeg’s Web site. Mr. Haeg arrived armed with three rented sod cutters, a roto-tiller and a dozen rakes and shovels, and within three days the yard was transformed.

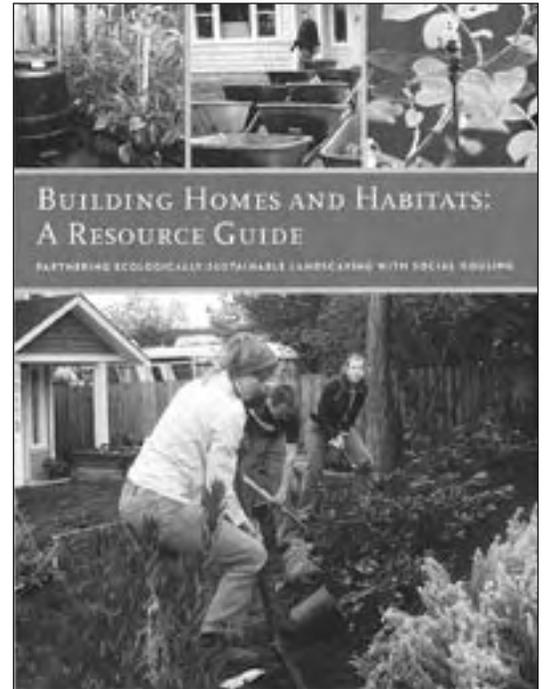
The new garden has caused much rumbling in the neighborhood, a pin-neat community originally built after World War II for returning G.I.’s where colorful windsocks and plastic yard butterflies prevail. Some neighbors fret about a potential decline in property values, while others worry that all those succulent fruits and vegetables will attract drive-by thieves – as well as opossums and other vermin – in pursuit of Maui onions and Brandywine tomatoes.

But the biggest concern seems to be the breaching of an unspoken perimeter. “What happens in the backyard is their business,” said a 40-year-old high-voltage lineman who lives down the street and would give only his initials, Z.V. “But this doesn’t seem to me to be a front yard kind of a deal.”

In spite of its contemporary media-savvy title, Edible Estates is a throwback to the early 20th century, when yards were widely regarded as utilitarian spaces, particularly in working-class neighborhoods. As recently as the 1920’s and 1930’s, decorative lawns – which in this country date back at least to George Washington’s Mount Vernon and Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello – were still largely the province of the elite, according to Ted Steinberg, a historian at Case Western Reserve and the author of the new book “American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn” (W. W. Norton). The yard was for putting food on the table, Dr. Steinberg said, in the form of vegetables, goats, rabbits and small livestock.

It was not until the postwar period that the notion of the lawn as the “national landscape” developed as a vehicle for upward mobility, with zoning setbacks designed to encourage clover- and dandelion-free perfection – “the living version of broadloom carpeting,” Dr. Steinberg said.

While backyards remained private, the front yard evolved into “a ceremonial space that appears effortlessly and without labor,” said Margaret Crawford, a professor of urban design and planning theory at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. “In middle-class neighborhoods,” she said, “the idea of actually using the front yard is extremely unusual.”



The VNHS was involved in a project at the Habitat For Humanity (Victoria Chapter) site in Sidney. Along with several other organizations we converted a sod (“pre-edible”!) landscape to veggie gardens and native plant beds. The final report about this project is available on our website (vicnhs.bc.ca). *Photo: Angela Deering*

Mr. Haeg, who was raised in suburban Minneapolis, now lives in a geodesic dome in East Los Angeles with a subterranean sprayed-concrete cave worthy of Dr. No. Covered in mouse-brown asphalt shingles, it dates to 1984; he found it on the Internet in 2000. Soon after he moved in, he began cultivating edible plants like kale and pineapple guava in his terraced garden, and he surrounded the dome with trellises for grapevines.

Mr. Haeg is perhaps best known in Los Angeles for his Sundown Salons, which transform his three-level, shag-carpeted home into an alternative cultural space that attracts artists, other architects, recent M.F.A. graduates and assorted gadflies. The theme and tenor of the once-a-month gatherings, which began shortly after he moved in, have varied; they’ve included traditional literary gatherings as well as gay and lesbian performance art and all-night knitting and “make your own pasta animal” sessions.

Mr. Haeg has taught at several colleges, including the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Calif., where he oversaw his students’ design and construction of Gardenlab, a campus community garden, beginning in 2001. He is now designing a house for a film executive in the Silver Lake section of Los Angeles and a rooftop garden for an apartment complex in downtown Los Angeles.

Mr. Haeg selected Salina as his first Edible Estates site for its heartland symbolism – it is close to the geographic center of the country – and found his first subjects, Stan and Priti Cox, through the Land Institute, a Salina-based organization dedicated to ecologically sustainable agriculture, where Mr. Cox worked as a plant geneticist. “I didn’t feel any emotion,” Ms. Cox, 38, said of her defunct sod expanse.

“It was monotonous. Now my senses are stimulated.”

Mr. Haeg is planning seven more Edible Estates sites. (Coming soon: Baltimore and Minneapolis.) Though he lacks training in landscape architecture or horticulture, he has been shrewd in his recruitment of plant-literate people with sunny, treeless front yards. So far each “estate” has been planted to reflect its region: the Cox garden in Kansas is heavy with okra and corn, with a smattering of bitter melon, pimento and curry trees in deference to Ms. Cox’s Indian roots. The Fotis’ yard in California is resplendent with pomelos, oranges, mandarins and other citrus fruit.

Mr. Haeg regards the Edible Estates project as something of a manifesto. He fantasizes about setting off a “chain reaction” among gardeners that would challenge Americans to rethink their lawns – which he insists on calling “pre-edible” landscapes – though he knows the chances are slim. Still, he wants to make a point. “Diversity is healthy,” he said. “The pioneers were ecologically-minded out of sheer necessity, because they had to eat what they grew. But we’ve lost touch with the garden as a food source.”

What is theoretical for Mr. Haeg, of course, has become everyday reality for Michael Foti, who must live with his edible estate and arrive home from a long day at the office to prune and weed and smite caterpillars into the wee hours – without pesticide, he is quick to note. Mr. Foti is taking the garden one day at a time, A.A. style, a bit uneasy at the thought of waning daylight. The biggest pest, he noted, is “inertia.” “We sometimes joke that it’s the garden that ate our marriage,” he said, then added wearily: “I do feel a certain pressure not to fail. The whole neighborhood is watching.”

Travelling the Dempster

By John Neville

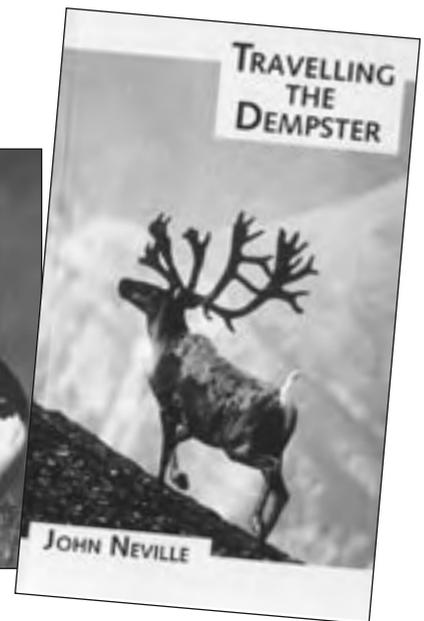
Trafford Publishing (2005)

Bird Songs of the Arctic Along the Dempster Highway

By John Neville

2 CD set

Review by Ann Nightingale



T*ravelling the Dempster* is John Neville's first book, designed to accompany his latest volumes of birdsong recording, *Bird Songs of the Arctic – Along the Dempster Highway*, although each is worthwhile on its own. John is a well-respected recordist, whose works have appeared in several TV and film productions.

Travelling the Dempster is a travel journal well-reinforced by local history of numerous stops along the route. The trip from Dawson City to Inuvik had a purpose – to allow John to record bird songs of the region, but it is clear from the text, that John and his wife, Heather, did an amazing amount of research into many other aspects of life along this northern route. The bibliography lists 43 reference works.

As the pair and their dog, Falco, made the journey in their motor home, the “Bird Mobile,” John provides detailed information about the characters and colourful history during the early days of exploration and gold mining in the far north. The book follows the road with each chapter covering a particular section of the highway. John takes us along as he discovers birds (and sometimes other animals) to record, and introduces us to people he met along the way.

The author writes in a very personal style, and makes me think that he would be a big fan of blogs on the internet. The rambling, story-telling style could have made it difficult to return to specific sections for reference later, but John has addressed this by providing “keywords” indicating the main topics that each chapter holds.

Travelling the Dempster is not a run-of-the-mill, travel guide. You won't find a lot of reviews of accommodations or restaurants in this volume. It does, however, offer a glimpse into the challenges of bird recording in the current century and settlement of this land in previous ones. It will be of particular interest to those who have traveled this route themselves, or who intend to do so, and for history buffs who have an interest in northern Canada.

The postscript to the book discusses the process to produce the CD set, *Bird Songs of the Arctic, Along the*

Dempster Highway, including the experiences in the studio.

This two CD set (John's ninth CD effort) contains 88 tracks, almost all of which were recorded on this trip along the Dempster Highway. As well as birds, sounds of red squirrels, gray wolves, beaver and muskrat are included. John comments on each of the recordings, identifying not only the species, but the situation in which he was able to make the recording. Listening to both discs takes about 90 minutes. The discs are organized as the birds and animals in the order they were heard along the route, so are not sorted taxonomically or by similarities. This makes the set more of an audio book than a reference, but as each bird and animal has its own track, it can still be used as a song-learning aid.

John's recording, as one could predict from his previous work, was excellent. I found some of the birds singing in the background of a few tracks a little distracting, but the recordings reflect what it is really like to be hearing these birds in the wild. Just as we have to filter out extraneous sounds when we are birding by ear, we sometimes need to do the same when listening to *Bird Songs of the Arctic*.

The discs could easily have been made to be more of a training tool, and thereby reached a larger audience, if the narration followed the birdsong, as it does on a few tracks, rather than proceed it, as it does for most. This ordering of narration and sample reinforces the feel of the set as an audio diary of John and Heather's trip, rather than as a training device. Like the book, the primary audience for the CD set will be those who have previously made the trip and wish to reminisce or those who are about to travel the Dempster Highway and want to prepare their ears with the songs of the birds they might expect to see along the way.

The book and two-CD set are available at: www.nevillerecording.com or by mail order at 138 Castle Cross Rd., Salt Spring Island, B.C., V8K 2G2, Phone/Fax: (250)537-4121.

HAT Tricks



10 Years and Going Strong

By Geoff Huber, HAT Outreach and Restoration Specialist

In 1996, a long and successful ten years ago, the Victoria Natural History Society gave birth to Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT). Our mission was to use land acquisition, conservation covenants, and community education to protect significant habitats forever. Our 1996 acquisition of the salmon-bearing Ayum Creek gave momentum to the movement to protect the Sooke Hills as a Sea-to-Sea blue-greenbelt. Ayum Creek was our first step, and ten years later HAT is still going strong. Since then, we've matured and adapted our strategies. We now focus on public education and stewardship while our commitment to preserve and protect the unique ecosystems of our region has never been stronger.

In our diamond-studded tenth anniversary year, HAT has been working on several fronts to conserve our region's unique natural environments. This spring we wrapped up our award-winning *Good Neighbours* project in the Colquitz River watershed and moved to the Esquimalt community of West Bay beside our newly acquired Matson Conservation Area (MCA).

HAT's *Good Neighbours* projects help landowners protect and enhance significant natural areas like the MCA by turning their lands into supportive habitat buffers. Using the MCA, HAT involves the community in land care projects that teach valuable habitat stewardship skills like

gardening with native species that attract birds and butterflies, removing invasive weeds, and maintaining existing native vegetation. Property owners who are *Good Neighbours* of protected natural areas create wildlife friendly buffer zones on their properties that can strengthen the overall integrity of natural habitats.

HAT launched the *Good Neighbours* program in 2002 with the Tod Creek watershed Stewardship Project. Since then, we have met or spoke with more than 1700 private landowners around Colquitz River Linear Park, Durrell Creek, Mill Hill, Highrock Cairn Park, Uplands Park, Swan Lake/ Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, Oak Haven Park, Esquimalt Lagoon and Mount Douglas Park.

In the fall of 2006, HAT's *Good Neighbours* project will return to the Colquitz River watershed. This time, we will meet with neighbours of Rithet's Bog, focusing on improving water and habitat quality in the Bog. The cleaner water flowing from this subwatershed will directly help the salmon spawning process in the Colquitz River.

Also in the spring of 2006, HAT staff completed our first phase of the sharp-tailed snake *Good Neighbours* project. HAT is helping these endangered, secretive serpents by providing information and property assessments for landowners with potential snake habitat. We hosted educational seminars and met with interested landowners to set up snake monitoring stations at properties on North Pender Island, William Head, Metchosin, and the Highlands. The project is delivering successful results: three new sharp-tailed snake sites were found by residents! This fall we will expand this project to South Pender Island, Galiano Island, Mayne Island, Saturna Island and further reaches of the Highlands. Through this expansion HAT will develop new partnerships with the Mayne Island Conservancy and the Galiano Conservancy Association. Check out our website for information on sharp-tailed snake habitat requirements and identification. If you've seen a Sharpie, we would love to hear from you.

With the hard work of our Board of Directors, our dedicated volunteers, and HAT staff, HAT will continue to shine for years to come. Volunteers and inquiries are welcome! If you would like to become a member or start a monthly giving plan, please contact us.

Habitat Acquisition Trust
PO Box 8552 Victoria BC V8W 3S2
(250) 995-2428, hatmail@hat.bc.ca
www.hat.bc.ca and
www.conservationconnection.bc.ca
(Your online directory of conservation organizations and events in the CRD.)

Letters

Letters of appreciation for the books donated to school libraries through the VNHS School Project.

Dear John Defayette,

On behalf of the students at Willows Elementary School, I would like to thank you for the natural history books your organization donated to school libraries. At Willows School we have a strong interest in this area of study and our field guides are well used.

Yours truly,

Judy Ashurst, Teacher Librarian

Dear Mr. Defayette,

On behalf of the students attending École Quadra School and South Park Family School, I want to thank the Victoria Natural History Society for the donation of a number of natural history books to our libraries. These new resources will be a great benefit to both staff and students. I have already enjoyed using the *Birds of Southwestern British Columbia* and will keep it at my home until the schools re-open in September.

Yours truly,

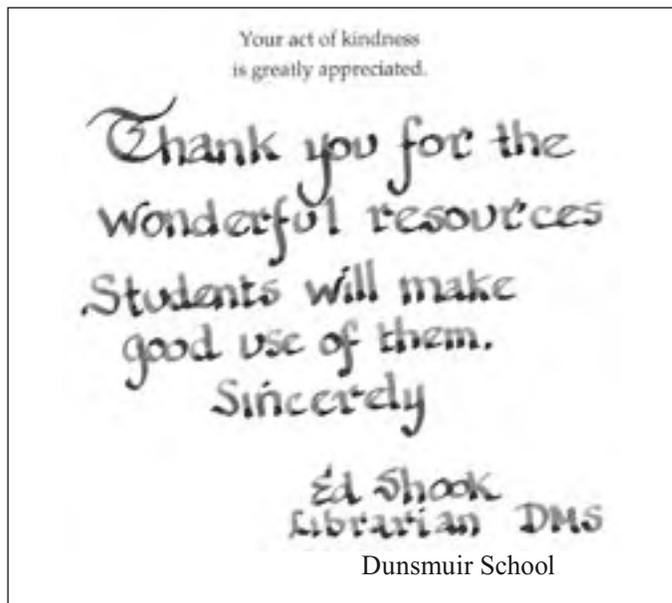
Denise Dunn, Teacher Librarian

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for the generous donation of nature titles to our school library. The books and guide provide valuable curriculum support, and will be of interest to students wishing to know more about bugs, mammals, coastal marine life, dragonflies and plants. I will make teachers aware of the resource booklets and guides from the stewardship series: Naturescape B.C.

With much appreciation,

Vivian Hicks



Dear Sirs,

Enclosed is a picture I received from a friend via e-mail. He said it was a laughing Snowy Owl!

Can anyone of your experts tell me what on earth the owl is doing?

Yours truly,

Robert C. Kensett



Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 10 new members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our "welcome" column:

Rand and Margaret Harrison
Emily Carr Drive

Doris Young
Dallas Road

Diane McNally
Linden Avenue
*Lots of interest,
little time*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held September-April on the following days: **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.); **Natural History Presentations:** the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., in Murray and Anne Fraser Building, Room 159, University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature House; **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser Building, Room 159, University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., in Murray and Anne Fraser Building, Room 159, University of Victoria. Locations are given in the calendar listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>, and is updated regularly.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 2

FIELD TRIP

Shorebirding in Vancouver

The Fraser delta has an amazing shorebird migration in the spring and fall, and the fall is the best because the migration stretches out over three months. Meet at the entrance to Beaver Lake Park on Elk Lake Drive at 6 a.m. to car pool for the 7:00 a.m. ferry, returning on the 5:00 p.m. ferry. We will be birding Boundary Bay and other areas depending what is around at the time. Bring a lunch. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 652-3326 if you need more information.

Saturday, September 9

FIELD TRIP

Birding the Victoria Shoreline for Shorebirds

Marie O'Shaughnessy (598-9680) leads this search for migrant shorebirds. She will be stopping at Cattle Point, the end of Bowker, Oak Bay Marina, Clover Point and the Ogden Point Breakwater. Meet at Cattle Point at 7:30 a.m.

Saturday, September 9

EVENT

Wild ARC Walk or Run for Wildlife: 3km Fun Walk, 5km Trail Run and Rover's Run

Walk with your four-legged friend if you have one, or just come, have fun, and make a difference walking for the animals. Royal Roads University at 9:00 a.m. For details and registration materials: www.spca.bc.ca/walk

Tuesday, September 12

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Saving Snakes

Morgan York, of Snake in the Grass, an exotic snake rescue organization based here in Victoria, will be visiting to talk about her organization, their policies, and the types of snakes they rescue, and you'll be able to meet some of the snakes her organization has rescued. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building, bring your friends, children and grandchildren, this is one presentation you don't want to miss.

Saturday, September 16 and Sunday, September 17

EVENT

Victoria's Monthly Butterfly Count

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers, so get out your field guide. Call **James Miskelly** (count coordinator) at 477-0490.

Saturday, September 16 to Sunday, September 24

EVENT

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

Gather your friends and family and join thousands of volunteers in cleaning up Canadian rivers, streams, lakes and ocean shorelines during the 2006 TD Canada Trust Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (GCSC). This event runs from and offers the perfect opportunity for families, individuals and school and community groups to practice hands-on conservation work. WWF-Canada is proud to be a conservation partner of the GCSC. **Join this exciting community event now by registering your group before August 31 at <http://www.vanaqua.org/cleanup>.**

Tuesday, September 19

BOTANY NIGHT

Looking for Rare Plants Around Clearwater and in Northeastern British Columbia

In summer 2006, **Adolf** and **Oluna Ceska** were working on two pipeline projects looking for rare plants. They will show some rare and not so rare plants and will discuss the pros and cons of similar surveys. 7:30 p.m. Swan Lake Nature House.

Sunday, September 24

FIELD TRIP

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Join us on this trip on the M.V. *Coho* on a sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. The crossing takes 1.5 hours and this is the best opportunity to see pelagic bird species (shearwaters, fulmars, phalaropes) usually found further out to sea. We will be birding from the bow of the boat so dress warmly. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10 a.m. for the 10:30 sailing of the M.V. *Coho* (allow plenty of time for parking). Ferry cost is \$18.00 (US) \$24.80 (CAN) return. You should have two pieces of ID (at least one with a photo) for Customs. We'll return on the 12:45 p.m. sailing. Leader is **Ed Pellizzon**: 881-1476.

Sunday, September 24

FIELD TRIP

Hawk Watch at East Sooke Park

Join **Dannie Carsen** to check out the raptors at the peak of their migration at East Sooke Park. There is the possibility of seeing up to 14 species of raptors, usually 8-10 species are seen. The other highlight is the large numbers of Turkey Vultures; hundreds may be seen at once. Meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 8 a.m. to carpool, or at the Aylard Farm parking lot at East Sooke Park at 9 a.m. Call Dannie at 544-2117 for more information.

Monday, September 25

MARINE NIGHT

Contaminant Levels In First Nations' Traditional Marine Foods

Nicola Eyding, MSc candidate at the University of Victoria, will present research results from a joint First Nations and University of Victoria project on the presence of organic pollutants and metals in marine species. Some species near fish farms have elevated levels of contaminants, raising concerns among First Nations about the safety of traditional marine foods harvested close to farms. Nicola will describe what kinds of organisms are consumed and how they are prepared by First Nations. 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, September 27

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Birding Costa Rica

Gabriel David has lived and worked in the tropical forests of Costa Rica for two years. In March 2006, he led a 12-day birding tour down to the "Switzerland of Central America". VNHS members comprised the majority of the group. He will present the incredible birds which stirred their imagination, and describe the diverse habitats which they inhabit. Many of the photographs to be shown were taken by participants during the trip. (Please note room change for this evening only) We are

meeting in the Matthews/McQueen Theatre (Room C103) of the David Strong building at 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome, as always.

Saturday, September 30

FIELD TRIP

Birding at Whiffen Spit, Sooke

In recent years a Grasshopper Sparrow, Lapland Longspurs, a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and a Ruff have stopped at this migrant trap in Sooke. Meet your leader, **Bill Dancer**, at 7:30 a.m. at the Helmcken Park and Ride to carpool or meet in the parking lot at the foot of Whiffen Spit Road at 8:30 a.m. Call Bill at 721-5273 for more information.

OCTOBER

Sunday, October 1

FIELD TRIP

Mosses and Lichens in Thetis Lake Park

This was so good last year, we've asked for a repeat performance! Let's join **Gerry Ansell** as he shows us the many different mosses and lichens that make this Park so very special. Meet at the main parking lot at 10 a.m. Parking is free in October. No pets please. Contact **Agnes** at thelynns@shaw.ca or 721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, October 10

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Members' Night

Did you take lots of pictures or even maybe some video of your natural history adventures this spring and summer, maybe you would like to show them off, then Members Night is the place for you, it's just like show and tell, we can accommodate all types of digital presentations and 35mm slide presentations. If you are interested in doing a presentation, call **Ed Pellizzon** at 881-1476. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building at UVic. Everyone is always welcome.

Tuesday, October 17

BOTANY NIGHT

Exploring the Flora of a Vancouver Island Peak

Judith Holm, Hans Roemer, Ken Wong and a few other botanists have explored a large limestone area of Vancouver Island and they will share their findings with us. 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature House. Everyone is always welcome!

Sunday, October 22

FIELD TRIP

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Join **Rick Schortinghuis** for this trip on the M.V. *Coho* on a sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. The crossing takes 1½ hours and this is the best opportunity to see pelagic bird species (shearwaters, fulmars, phalaropes) usually found further out to sea. We will be birding from the bow of the boat so dress warmly. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10:00 a.m. for the 10:30 sailing of the M.V. *Coho* (allow plenty of time for parking). Ferry cost is \$18.00 (US) \$24.80 (CAN) return. You should have two pieces of ID (at least one with a photo) for Customs. We'll return on the 1:45 p.m. sailing. Call Rick at 652-3326 for more information.

Wednesday, October 25

BIRDERS' NIGHT

The Condors are Coming! Birds and Biology of the Mountains of Saint Peter the Martyr, Baja California

Bryan Gates will present a slide-illustrated talk on the international program to save the California Condor, a bird that may have been an irregular visitor to British Columbia. Bryan spent eight days in the highest mountains of the Baja peninsula, photographing birds and mammals and visiting Mexico's remote rearing and monitoring site for this highly endangered species... the largest of North America's vultures. Mountain Quail, Hermit

Warbler and Horned Toad are among other species featured. Everyone is welcome. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building at UVic. Bring a friend.

Monday, October 30

MARINE NIGHT

TBA

At press time a speaker had not been finalized. Please consult the VNHS web site at <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/calendar.html> for details of this talk. 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Fraser Building, University of Victoria.

BULLETIN BOARD

Interested in eagles and habitat protection?

WiTS (Wildlife Tree Stewardship Program) is looking for a volunteer coordinator for the CRD area. For more information please call **Gwen Greenwood** 652-2876

Are you going to one of the VNHS meetings?

Willing to pick up a VNHS member in the Fairfield area? If yes, then please telephone 382-7202. Thank you for your consideration.

Are you going on one of the VNHS field trips?

Willing to pick up a VNHS member in James Bay? If yes, then please telephone 384-7553. Thank you for your consideration.

Year-round Tuesday morning birding group

Meet at the foot of Bowker Avenue at 9:00 a.m. Birding activities take place at various locations around Greater Victoria. For information, contact **Bill Dancer** (721-5273) or dcdancer@shaw.ca.

Travelling companion wanted

I am seeking a travelling companion from the Victoria area to join me on a group birding trip to Hawaii in March, 2007. The trip is being led by **Doug Pratt**, author of *Birds of Hawaii* and Curator of Birds at the North Carolina Museum of Natural History. Please contact **Marcia**: marcias56@hotmail.com or 474-6890.

Travel Costa Rica

In March 2006, **Gabriel David** led a birding tour down to Costa Rica for 13 people, the majority of whom were VNHS members. In 10 days they travelled to seven distinct "life

zones" and observed 430 species of neo-tropical birds. The trip was synchronized precisely with the Three-wattled Bellbird's arrival to the cloud forests of Monteverde. As the majority of birds breed in the dry season, countless nests were encountered during the trip; including that of the Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant. The group felt particularly lucky to have seen five Resplendent Quetzals in various locales. For those who weren't able to come along, Gabriel has decided to do an encore! He will be leading another two-week birding trip to Costa Rica in early March 2007, for 12 people. The itinerary will be revised to include more destinations harbouring specialty species not observed previously. If you are interested, or would like more information, please contact Gabriel at: (250) 721-5476, or gabriel david@mexico.com.



Royal Flycatcher. *Photo: Gabriel David*



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