



The Victoria **NATURALIST**

MARCH
APRIL
2010
VOL 66.5

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





The Victoria NATURALIST

Published six times a year by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4
Contents © 2009 as credited.
ISSN 0049—612X Printed in Canada

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Desktop Publishing: Frances Hunter, 250-479-1956
Distribution: Tom Gillespie, Phyllis Henderson, Morwyn Marshall
Printing: Fotoprint, 250-382-8218

Opinions expressed by contributors to *The Victoria Naturalist* are not necessarily those of the Society.

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RARE BIRD ALERT: 250-704-2555

VNHS Website: www.vicnhs.bc.ca

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline for next issue: April 1, 2010

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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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COVER PHOTO

Trumpeter Swan. *Photo:* Marie O'Shaughnessy
Check out the results of the Christmas Bird Count (p.14)
to see how this species is doing in our region.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I catch a bit of teasing from friends about this column. I call it "my rant" and often it is, but not always! I do try to vary the tone, and, if you still aren't convinced, here's one I'll be able to lean on when people are niggling me about it. This here is an editorial dedicated to good news stories from the last month. Yeah, that's right: stories (plural).

Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Haida Nation signed an agreement to manage cooperatively the proposed Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area – an important step towards formal protection of mountaintop to seafloor that began in 1988. For more information:

<<http://www.cpawsbc.org/node/276>>

Bute Inlet has been given at least a year's reprieve. Plutonic Power's massive Bute Inlet Hydroelectric Project must be accompanied by an environmental impact statement and this has turned out to be a bigger challenge than the company expected, so they have decided to postpone their bid. If you haven't heard about this proposal involving the construction of 17 dams/river diversions, 440 km of power lines, 250 km of roads, and more than 100 bridges, then go to <<http://buteinlet.net/>> for more information.

In the Nov/Dec issue of this magazine there was a story about UN scientists visiting the Flathead Valley. Well, their report came in, and in it they recommended a moratorium on mining, as well as the development of a comprehensive trans-boundary conservation and wildlife management plan for the area. And the BC government listened – mining will not go ahead in the valley. Read more at: <<http://www.flathead.ca/news/491>>

Ecojustice won again! This is the case of the proposed Red Chris mine in an area known as the Sacred Headwaters (Stikine, Nass, and Skeena River source waters) in BC. The Canadian government was found to have violated its own Act and in the future the public must be consulted about major industrial projects. Imagine that! <<http://blog.ecojustice.ca/2010/01/ecjustice-wins-at-supreme-court.html>>

Hope this keeps you hopeful.

Claudia

President's Message

By Darren Copley

As with your own personal year-end, the Society also donates to worthwhile causes. This year was no exception, and saw our annual \$4000 go to support public programming at Swan Lake, as well as \$400 towards interpretive signage at Beacon Hill, \$700 to the local Science Fair, and our regular support of scholarships at the University of Victoria, Camosun College, and Royal Roads University. Because the signage at Beacon Hill Park cost less than we had originally budgeted for, and because the costs associated with the teaching shelter at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park were covered through grant applications and corporate support, we had an unexpected surplus. With this \$2000 of "leftover" money, your board chose to support The Land Conservancy's fundraising campaign to save Madrona Farm. In addition to the obvious reasons; food security and important habitat values, it was also an easy decision because Ruth Chambers, the original owner of the property, was an Honorary Life Member of our Society and her grandson David and his wife Nathalie, who currently run the farm, are also VNHS members. I am pleased that so many residents are supporting this worthy cause. Now with less than \$300,000 to go, the extension TLC was granted for a fund-raising deadline is March 15, 2010.

The other things that have been keeping your board busy this past year are all of the regular duties of the Society: presentations, field trips, advertising, producing *The Naturalist*, membership, correspondence, the FBCN, our financial health, and the many activities that promote our Society and natural history to others. We had our first public display of 2010 at the Westshore Town Centre's Hobby Show

and, after spending a shift there and getting a chance to visit with the public and other members who volunteered their time, I am more excited than ever about getting our message out there. If you enjoy spending time speaking with people, and promoting what we love most about our Society, then send me a note and we'll add you to our volunteer list. The more events we get to, the better able we are to meet the objectives of our Society, including stimulating an active interest in natural history. Here are just some of the upcoming events that we will be participating in: Swan Lake's *Native Plant Sale* (April 17-18 – display only), *International Migratory Bird Day* at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park (May 8 – display and field trips based out of the new teaching shelter!), and the *Organic Islands Festival* (July 10-11 – display and field trips) at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific/Glendale Gardens. If you are aware of any other events we should attend, please let me know.

International Migratory Bird Day coincides with the American Bird Conservancy's *National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day* with intent, so we can also use this day to talk about the impact that our pets are having on wildlife. I know some of you are already getting your fur ruffled, however I think it is important that we talk about it. Studies have shown that outdoor cats can kill between 35-75 birds per cat/per year and, that if asked, most outdoor cat owners underestimate the impact their cats have on wildlife. As far as I am concerned, native wildlife being killed by a subsidized predator is unacceptable. I should add here that I like cats, and have four indoor cats that were formally outdoors, rescued after being dumped in local parks.



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Perhaps our Society should get involved with the problem of feral cats in local natural areas. The Rithet's Bog Conservation Society is having a difficult time with feral cats being supported by feeding stations. Visit <www.rithetsbog.org> for more information. Swan Lake also has a feral cat population that is regularly fed just outside the sanctuary. These cats are caught and neutered or spayed, but they are still released back into the park, where they also feed on wildlife. Some people will tell you it is cruel to keep a cat indoors, and that being outside is best for them. The facts are that life as an outdoor cat can be hard. Parasites, cars, dogs, raccoons, poison, etc. can make life difficult. Check out this great *Keep Animals Safe* campaign and video being coordinated by one of our members' daughters for the Toronto Wildlife Centre: <<http://www.keepanimalssafe.ca/>>

Well hopefully you are still speaking to me, and are still willing to help us promote the Society. At the Annual General Meeting in March, I will announce a date for the first meeting of our new publicity committee – a brainstorming session about ways to increase our profile in the community. Join in with this discussion – I really want to hear your ideas.

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 16 new members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our "welcome" column:

Gladys Ogilvie
Central Saanich Road
Birds, wildflowers

Susan MacIsaac
Central Saanich Road
*Natural history, birding,
native flora and fauna,
ethnobotany*

Naoaki and Mie Kobayashi
Monterey Avenue
Birds

Andy Teucher
Lily Avenue
*All natural history,
especially birds, herps,
and invertebrates*

Anke Zimmermann
Penrhyn Street
*Nature, birds, the
ocean, the environment,
alternative medicine*

Mark Fraker
Lochside Drive
Botany, birds, mammals



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VNHS Trip to George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Vancouver, BC

Saturday, November 21, 2009

By Cheryl Oattes

Looking directly into the unblinking, yellow eyes of the pair of Great Grey Owls looking directly at me, I feel an upwelling of joy. My cup runneth over. I have seen so much splendour during this trip that the expansive sensation in my chest needs to be released through long, deep, grateful sighs.

I am not used to this. I know how to keep a lid on my heart's desires; those pesky yearnings such as to glory in the moment, to experience twinklings of transcendence, to share awe with like-minded others, to explore around the next headland and to need to know what lies in the shadow of that rock. I know how to trade time for money, working steadfastly in the vulgar world. But today the lid has been blown off and I am left unprotected and exposed to the beauty of nature.

This trip began when we all met up at 5:45 a.m. in the pitch black of a November morning and headed for the ferry to Tsawwassen. Rick Schortinghuis organized the outing. He is to be our leader today, as he often is on VNHS birding trips.

After cruising Ladner's back roads, 17 pairs of eyes on the look-out for fowl, we arrive at George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary near Ladner, BC. Almost. We do not quite make it into the parking lot without stopping to view a Barred Owl perched on a low branch, seemingly content to let us crowd around. We drag ourselves away from it and pay our entry fees, a mere four dollars each.

Within feet of the entrance, to our right, an adult and a juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron display their drastically different feather cloaks. Straight ahead, a pair of mature Bald Eagles sits facing down on us from the apex of a tall spruce. And to our left, at the top of a snag, is a Peregrine Falcon. What a spectacular beginning for a novice like me.

As we follow the trails, and move in and out of the viewing blinds, we see a myriad of species: Black-capped Chickadees willing to be hand-fed, several juvenile or female Northern Harriers, a pair of Wood Ducks at a seed feeder, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, Mallards, American Wigeons, American Coots, Red-winged Blackbirds, an American Robin, Spotted Towhees, Song Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Rick hears a Swamp Sparrow.

A Northern Shrike rests on a bare tree for so long that we have time to observe it at length from above, on the 10-metre high observation tower, and from the ground, as we follow the trail in a 180-degree arc around its perch. We also spot a Pied-billed Grebe, a female Ruddy Duck, a Rough-legged Hawk, fourteen Sandhill Cranes, Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, a Cooper's Hawk, a Northern Flicker, and Cedar Waxwings.

The advertised main event of this trip was to see thousands of Snow Geese. As the sanctuary website notes, they are part of the nesting population from Russia's Wrangel Island and have flown 4,000 kilometres to get here. Their sight is nearly as breath-taking as their sound, as they surge into the air as though compelled by their choreographer.

Being with this many knowledgeable birders raises this experience from an eight to a 10 for me. I would have counted myself as blessed to have walked around this sanctuary on my own, yet I wouldn't have spied or been able to identify more than a small portion of what I am getting to see and hear today because of my interesting, enthusiastic, and more experienced companions. My hat is off to them, and to fore-thinking people like George H. Reifel, who created the sanctuary in his father's name.

We eat our brown-bag lunches in a woodstove-heated warming hut, shared this day with birders from two local clubs. A few steps away is the gift shop. Retrospectively, I wish I had spent money there or made a donation, because the sanctuary is itself a gift to visitors, and I wonder if it runs on a shoestring budget.

As we slowly leave this wondrous place, in the vicinity we see Ring-necked Pheasants, Western Grebes, an adult male Northern Harrier, Great Blue Herons, Black-bellied Plovers, Surf Scoters, and a tidy row of Dunlin on a log.

As though our sightings here haven't been glorious enough, we detour to a barn long known to shelter a Barn Owl. Our hushed entry is rewarded by the presence of a pair sitting shoulder to shoulder on a lofty rafter. The female is discernibly larger. They peer down at the 17 of us peering up at them until the male blinks, leans forward, and noiselessly flies to a beam at the other end of the barn.

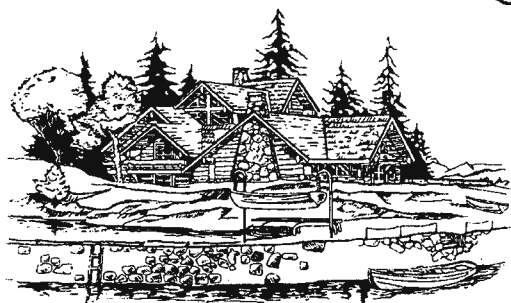
Given the wildly windy and wet skies, our stop at Boundary Bay is only momentary, leaving time now to go to Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, O.W.L., in Delta. There is a wooden donation box by the entrance and we all pitch in. More experienced birders might think they are cheating to see the raptors this way, but I am jubilant at the unusual opportunity for such a close-up viewing. We get to see a pair each of Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles, three Peregrine Falcons, a Gyr-Peregrine Falcon, a Western Screech-Owl, a Red-tailed and a Rough-legged Hawk, a Northern Pygmy Owl, Turkey Vultures, Barred Owls and, the last straw for me, the pair of Great Grey Owls.

In the fading light as we turn toward the return ferry, I marvel to myself at how sharing such an awe-creating day nourishes and renews me, and reminds me to say "Yes" to opportunities to spend time in wondrous places with people who love to share their acquaintance with birds and the outdoors.



Saturday, January 16 birding trip to Esquimalt Lagoon. *Photo: Yinan Scott Shi*

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Guided Nature Trips: Reforming a Sceptic

By Shona Lawson

After attending Brent Reed's presentation on Botswana's Kalahari Desert and Okavango Delta, it not only re-fuelled my desire to go to Africa, especially the Okavango Delta, but it also reminded me how great it is to have a really knowledgeable person, intimate with the area you are visiting, share their knowledge with you. I have traveled and birded in various place throughout the world, but had never had the desire or funds to hire a guide – I usually explored on my own.

That all changed in 2007. In the spring of that year I had an amazing experience with a local guide in the town of Kumily, in the southwest state of Kerala, India. India is a place where it is almost, if not impossible, to explore natural areas such as forests, parks, and sanctuaries on your own. You have to have a guide, it's the rule. So our driver set my friend (and recently turned birder) and I up with a local guide. So there we were at 5:30 a.m., getting into a rickshaw, destination unknown, with guide Babu, also unknown. We were just a little nervous and excited as we headed in the forest.

The area we were in is known for elephants and tigers, and people come from all over the world to go to the Periyar Tiger Reserve hoping to catch a glimpse of either of both. We knew our chances of seeing either animal was pretty remote, and really we were just happy to see any kind of wildlife. I believe our guide thought we were crazy, especially for the first half-hour, because I was excited to see a Southern Hill Myna (*Gracula indica*), which are extremely common there. I think the turning point of our morning was when we saw a Malabar Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros griseus*) about five feet above us in a tree. Really I nearly had kittens I was that excited – I had to explain to Babu that we did not have those birds, or any bird equivalent at home, and it was awesome to see one so close.

I think he realized that yes, we were truly crazy, but good-crazy, and that we were telling the truth when we said we would not be disappointed if we didn't see any tigers or elephants. This was when he really started to talk about the local flora and fauna, and not only did we learn a lot, but we were richly rewarded. Just as we were trekking up a small hill, we spotted a small Indian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) and not only did we see elephant tracks and scat (always a good sign), we heard them trumpeting through the brush and then the crowning moment – Babu saw them and pointed them out to us. It was amazing; there they were: four beautiful and magnificent Indian elephants (*Elephas maximus indicus*) in the wild, camouflaged perfectly by the brush. Babu told us we could get closer, but did not advise it because we had backpacks on and one of the elephants was

known to be aggressive. He didn't think we could run away fast enough if the elephants decided to charge us. I immediately said we were MORE than happy to see the elephants from a distance, with the help of trusty binoculars! He was rather pleased, I am sure he really did not want to spend his morning running away from elephants either, especially with two tourists in tow!

As we were leaving the elephants behind, we came upon a pair of Malabar Trogons (*Harpactes fasciatus*). I guess by this point Babu felt we were alright, because he then told us how he had rescued two Malabar parakeet chicks (*Psittacula columboides*) from a downed tree and he took us home to meet his family and the parakeets, which he said would be returned to the wild when they were old enough. I think because we were genuinely interested to see and learn from him and to learn about the animals, he took a bit more of an interest in us and showed us a bit more of his world than he would a regular tiger-elephant tourist. As you can imagine, we were pretty ecstatic about our day, having seen elephants, mongoose, and several new bird species, and having a personal invitation to tea. There is no way we would have had an equivalent experience had we forgone this opportunity. It was one of my best wildlife-viewing experiences to-date, proving that a day spent with a knowledgeable guide is more than a just day of seeing new species and adding ticks on your list, it's an adventure and a closer look at the place you are visiting. And for those who tend to be sceptical about these kinds of experiences, it is worth it and you will not be disappointed.



Our guide, Babu, and his wife and daughter. Photo: Shona Lawson

Well Knock My Socks Off – It’s a WHAT??

By Bill Merilees

Walking down a park trail in South Western Australia, one of our group, confronted by a rather ordinary looking shrub, asked the naturalist “What is the name of this?” Now a naturalist’s lexicon of common names is truly diverse and colourful, but the response, in this case, will remain forever etched on my memory.

The shrub in question was post-flowering, but its fruits were green and about the size of a large cherry. Our guide grabbed one, gave it a squeeze which popped out a largish seed encapsulated by a copious slimy mucilage, somewhat milky, not unlike cooked tapioca or sago ‘pearls’. The olfactory fragrance of these fruits is not remembered and

plays no part in its name, other than where it might have originated in a human’s body. As the seed and its accoutrements are indeed edible, but definitely not visually appetizing, we now have the clues required that allowed Australians, in the rich, quirky vernacular tradition of this country, to apply it with an appropriate moniker.

What was the name the knocked our socks off? It was **Snottygobble**, so gross, yet entirely descriptive and certainly unforgettable! Upright Snottygobble, *Persoonia longifolia* is a member of the Proteaceae, a primarily southern hemisphere family that includes *Banksia*, *Protea*, and *Macadamia*.



The leaves and fruit of the West Australian Snottygobble (*Persoonia longifolia*) Photo: Bill Merilees

The Healing Power of Birds – Homeopathic Remedies from the Avian Realm

By Anke Zimmermann, ND

Birds have more to offer us than beauty, song and inspiration, they can offer help for illness as well. Remarkably, homeopathic remedies made from a simple feather can have great healing powers. This case study illuminates some of the interesting aspects of bird remedies.

The case of the caged heart

A 48-year old female consulted me regarding angina due to vasospasms for the past two years on November 14, 2008. The symptom picture was one of classic angina, but there was no blockage of the arteries. The patient was rather annoyed by the angina.

"I have no time for it. I resent having to pay attention to my body. I've got things to do. I'm still mad at the doctors who diagnosed it."

How did her heart feel about this?

"I think my heart wants a break. It wants a rest between beats. I was taking on all the responsibility of the world, doing far too much." She was feeling out of breath telling her story. "But I feel I'm not big enough for the job. I feel I don't have the skills. What I really want to do is to be silly and play!"

"The amazing thing is that I do so much. I do the teaching, bookkeeping, the bodywork, I push myself to do more and more. I feel I have to earn my keep to feel secure."

Secure?

"I've never felt secure. I'm always looking at the conflict around me. I grew up with four older sisters. All five of us girls were born in five years. My earliest memories are of all the arguing among themselves. I felt responsible for it. There was conflict and it was my job to fix it."

And if she did not do that?

"They'd tear each other apart!"

She would hide a lot as a child to get away from the conflict. She has had concerns about security and money for most of her life. At the same time she has always had a strong desire for escape and freedom.

"I had horses all of my life, since age four. It was the whole freedom thing, galloping off with a horse. It was my escape and expression."

I gave a homeopathic remedy called stramonium, often used in cases of illness after experiencing much fright and conflict, which improved her condition by about 50% where it stalled. I gave natrum-mur at this time, which did nothing at all.

Finally on June 3, 2009 she gave me the real keys to her case.

"The feeling of the heart being squeezed is very much like a block, a barrier. I'm always pushing it. It feels like a cage. Right when I want to expand, take a deep breath – it fastens around me. It says "No getting big for you! Don't get too big for your boots and no, you can't go and have fun."

What is it like to be big?

"To be free-flowing, easier. I can lift more with the same effort. Breathing is easy. I'm happy and cheerful and content. I'm worry-free and things smell good."

"I grew up on a farm but had allergies, so I would not dare to take a deep breath. It would compress me and make me feel smaller. I like to breathe big, rich, feel fulfilled, happy. The restriction comes from outside, making me smaller, keeping me where I'm supposed to be."

Tell me more about restriction?

"I have a picture of a cage around the ribs in my mind. There is a big cage around my chest and a smaller one around my heart. It is like expanded metal, dull grey in colour."

"It seems pretty rigid and solid and permanent. It is cold. It does not care. It is there to keep the body safe and me in line."

What would happen if it did not do that?

"I'd be unrestrained. I would be ridiculous, silly, extravagant and irresponsible. Everything would fall apart, all order would cease, I'd be late for school and the clothes would not be washed."

By now I was thinking that she might require a remedy made from a bird. So I asked her how she felt about birds.

"I would never own one. The idea of the cage is horrible. I love watching and feeding them. They have a really neat perspective on things, quite elevated and special. Birds can see things from all angles, on the ground, from the air, from trees, close up and far away. They are flexible and motile."

"They have a very simple existence, very life and death, but very straightforward."

"And virtually no responsibility."

"They build their wing and heart muscles as a side effect of having a great time!" (Emphasis mine)

It was amazing. Those were her exact words, "building their heart muscles as a side effect of having a great time", exactly what she would love to do, but could not as a result of feeling the excessive and impossible responsibility of resolving all conflict. She described her heart as being in a cage and was longing for freedom. In birds she could see the

Some of us may be closely connected to birds in more ways than first expected. A bird remedy may heal you.

ability to see from all angles, which, interestingly, is important in conflict resolution, for being free and for having fun, which is how she wanted to feel herself. She experienced her whole being as small and confined when she wanted to be big and play.

I decided to give a homeopathic remedy made from Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, 200 CH.

Email feedback June 14, 2009:

“After I saw you I had the most incredible flying dream. I was with someone and we were very high in the sky. He was showing me around and I was really surprised at how smooth and beautiful and frictionless everything was at this height. The patterns of the fields and rivers and forests were breathtakingly perfect. I also commented on there being no wind while we were flying, it was so easy and comfortable and effortless... He said “that’s the way it always is – it’s set up that way.”

“On Saturday we went for a hike up that hill we often climb and we know exactly where we have to rest on the steep parts for my angina. I did not have to stop. I had a small amount of tightness, but not enough to make me stop. Last time we went I had to stop for ten minutes half way up!”

“We’ve been for a couple of walks since and I’d say there is a definite improvement. So the eagle remedy is clearly a winner.”

This patient had done very well on a homeopathic prescription of Bald Eagle. The angina is 90% improved and her whole outlook has changed. She no longer feels as if she is responsible for everything and has a lot more fun and freedom in her life.

How is this possible? I don’t know the answer. One theory is that the essence of a substance, whether that is from the plant, animal, or mineral realm, is somehow liberated by the homeopathic process of serial dilution and agitation. What is this essence? Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, described it as a spirit-like force which is able to interact with the spirit-like force of the human being, the life force. The Chinese call it chi, the Indians call it prana. Modern quantum physics is supporting the idea that all matter is energy at its most basic level. We are all connected with the natural world and with each other in innumerable ways. Every society on the planet acknowledges this deep connection and accepts that certain individuals resonate more strongly with some animals or forces of nature. Some of us may be closely connected to birds in more ways than first expected. A bird remedy may heal you.

People who require homeopathic remedies made from birds share some common features. They frequently have a great love for nature and animals, a desire for travel, a

restless, inquiring mind, a compassionate nature with many of them working in the helping professions, and a strong interest in spirituality and personal growth. Physically, they may have problems with their shoulders and hips as well as spine, their eyes, ears, and teeth.

Some of the patients I’ve seen who were helped by bird remedies even dreamt that they *were* birds. One of my patients told me that she often dreamt of flying and even of being a bird. She told me that she also knew what kind of bird she was in her dreams – a blue heron. She benefited from the homeopathic remedy made from Great Blue Heron.

In the end if we listen carefully to ourselves and to each other, the healing remedy may be revealed. It is our basic human nature which brings about illness as well as healing.

If you are interested in learning more about homeopathic remedies made from birds please see the book: *Birds – Homeopathic Remedies from the Avian Realm* by Jonathan Shore, MD, Judy Schriebman and Anneke Hogeland.



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2009 Butterfly Count Report

By James Miskelly

From 2006 to 2008, every spring seemed cooler and wetter than the one before, and butterfly numbers crept steadily down. In 2009, the weather finally seemed a little better and butterfly numbers made a modest step upward. Some species were still less abundant than might be expected, but many were recorded in much greater numbers than 2008. In final tally, there were more than 600 more individuals recorded than in the previous year.

The first butterflies to be recorded in our area are very predictable. The first is almost always Satyr Anglewing, followed closely by Mourning Cloak and Sara's Orangetip. In 2009, I think we were all surprised when we went butterflying on warm March days and found...Painted Ladies. These migrants from the southern deserts aren't supposed

to arrive until late in the spring, but here they were. Down in California, where many of our ladies originate, they were having a boom year. I waited to see our early arrivals multiply themselves into a great horde through the summer, but had to settle instead for just having them around for the year. Maybe next time.

Several species are noticeably absent from our counts. For the second year in a row we've recorded no Silvery Blues, Milbert's Tortoiseshells, or Common Woodnymphs. Some of these oversights should be easy to fix with a few targeted searches in 2010. Also absent in 2009 was Moss' Elfin. This species is on our provincial blue list for rarity, so it's certainly something we should be watching for. However, it flies very early in the spring, is not usually abundant at a given location, and is tiny and brown. In 2010 we'll have to make sure to get a few people to Mount Douglas, Mill Hill, Bear Hill, and parts of the Galloping Goose to get the Moss' Elfins back on the list. While I'm on the topic of rare species, we also need to keep tracking those Common Ringlets. Last year we made some progress determining where they are. In 2010, we need to keep looking! If you want to participate in the Victoria Butterfly Counts, please write me at <james.miskelly@gmail.com>.

2009 Victoria Butterfly Count Results

Species	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Total
Proteritius Duskywing	1	11	2	0	0	0	14
Two-banded Checkered Skipper	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
European Skipper	0	0	690	159	5	0	854
Woodland Skipper	0	0	3	515	474	0	992
Clodius Apollo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anise Swallowtail	4	2	11	22	0	0	39
Western Tiger Swallowtail	6	7	92	40	0	0	145
Pale Swallowtail	2	3	11	0	0	0	16
Pine White	0	0	2	52	8	0	62
Cabbage White	89	67	109	389	121	45	820
Sara's Orangetip	57	16	1	0	0	0	74
Purplish Copper	0	0	4	1	5	0	10
Cedar Hairstreak	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Brown Elfin	4	5	0	0	0	0	9
Moss' Elfin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grey Hairstreak	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Western Spring Azure	39	173	11	0	0	0	223
Silvery Blue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satyr Anglewing	4	1	1	0	0	1	7
Green Comma	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mourning Cloak	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
California Tortoiseshell	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Painted Lady	1	1	4	14	1	2	23
Westcoast Lady	0	0	4	1	1	0	6
Red Admiral	0	1	3	1	0	0	5
Mylitta Crescent	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Lorquin's Admiral	3	0	167	200	6	0	376
Common Ringlet	0	25	66	0	10	0	101
Common Woodnymph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Arctic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	212	314	1187	1395	634	48	3790

Recent Sightings of Terrestrial Invertebrates: A New Addition to the VNHS Website

By Jeremy Tatum and Ann Nightingale

We have added a new web page <<http://vicnhs.bc.ca/invertalert.html>> to the VNHS site for recent sightings of terrestrial invertebrates. It will be quite informal, a page to which members and visiting naturalists are invited to send in reports of any interesting sightings of terrestrial invertebrates that they see in the southern Vancouver Island bird checklist area. This area extends roughly from Sooke to Ladysmith. It was originally conceived as a place to report recent sightings of butterflies, and it is possible that the majority of contributions may yet turn out to be butterflies. But then, we thought, shall we include moths? Then perhaps dragonflies? Then perhaps... oh, heck, let's make it all terrestrial invertebrates, so that if anyone sees or photographs any interesting little creature, such as a slug or a millipede or who knows what, there will be a place to post the observation.

The information on the page is intended to be of recent sightings, so that each contribution will remain "up" for a limited amount of time (which will vary depending on the number of reports received), after which it will be erased. Copyright for any photographs will remain with the photographer, but most of us understand that once a photo

is posted on the Web there is, in practice, little that anyone can do to prevent people from using it.

This forum for posting news of recent sightings is intended to complement, not compete with, the BC Butterflies Yahoo group <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BCbutterflies>>.

A purely imaginary contribution to the Website might look something like this:

April 31

Jeremy Tatum: I saw my first Satyr Anglewing of the year today in Uplands Park, and dozens of Propertius Duskywings on Mill Hill. Also a superb Faithful Snail racing along the Galloping Goose Trail at several millimetres per minute.

Jeremy Tatum will try to maintain the web page until he can persuade someone else to do so. Send your sightings by email to <jtatum@uvic.ca>. Be sure to include your name, the species name (common or scientific) of the invertebrate you saw, location, date, and number of individuals. If you have a photograph you are willing to share, please send it along.



Milbert's Tortoiseshell (*Aglais milberti*). Photo: James Miskelly



Silvery Blue (*Glaucopsyche lygdamus*). Photo: James Miskelly

2009 Christmas Bird Count Results

By Ann Nightingale

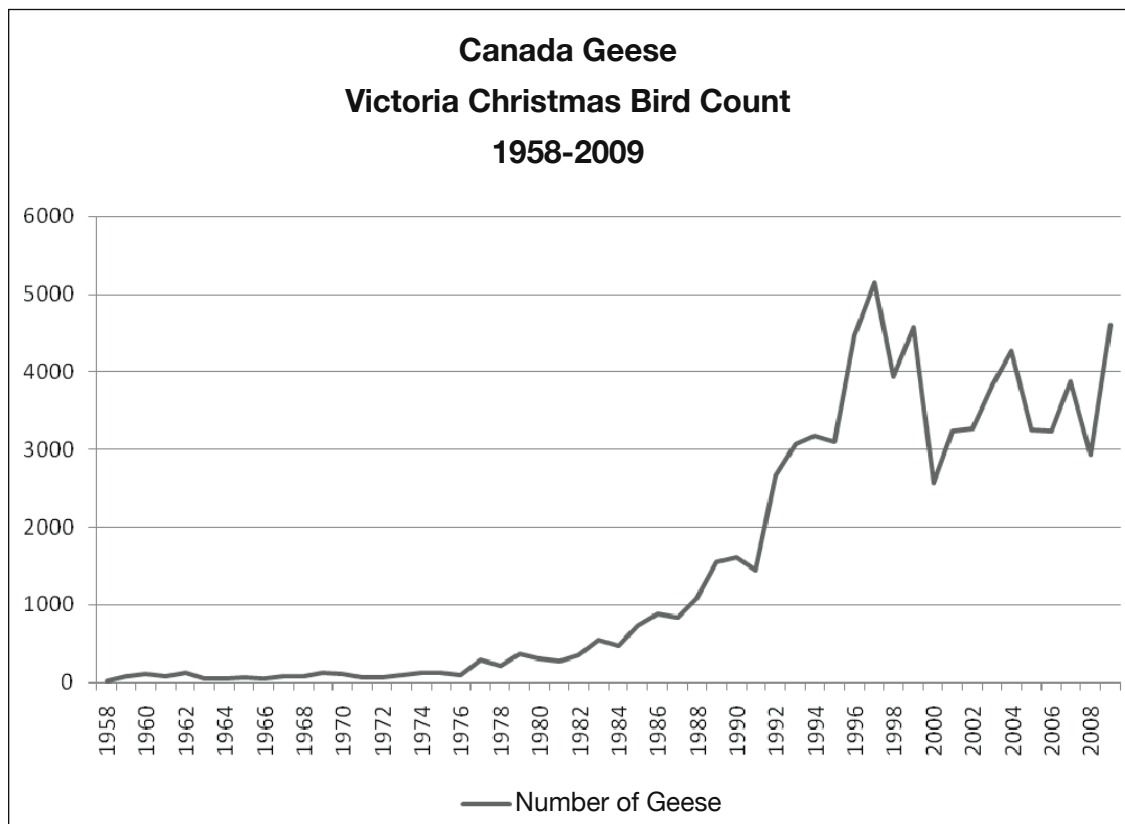
The 2009 Victoria Christmas Bird Count took place under cloudy skies, but was blessed with pretty good weather this year – much warmer than the below freezing temperatures endured in 2008! There seemed to be a strong correlation between the temperatures and the number of people willing to get out into the field to count on December 19. This year, we came close to our record number of participants, with 193 avid bird-counters scouring the neighbourhoods and wild areas within the Victoria count circle. That 200-counter barrier remained firmly entrenched for another year!

A total of 143 species were tabulated in 2009. Despite an average number of individuals (74,102), several species scored records this year. An amazing flock of 14 Greater Yellowlegs on the Oak Bay waterfront blew away the previous record of four. That number was seen again in late January. Northern Pintails, although in serious decline across North America, sought out Victoria, and in particular, Panama Flats in record numbers. Other species breaking records in 2009 included Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Anna's Hummingbird (breaking 500 individuals for the first

time), Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Spotted Towhee.

One of the great values of long-term events like the Christmas Bird Count is that trends can be seen. Canada Geese have become a contentious issue in many places, and Victoria is no exception. The large flocks of geese that we are counting are primarily descendents of semi-domesticated geese released to enhance hunting opportunities in the 1970's. Every year, we receive inquiries about whether the numbers are increasing. They seem to have stabilized at about 4000, but because habitat is decreasing, they have fewer and fewer gathering places so can seem more abundant. However, it's not until you look at the trend that the real effect of the introduction of hunting stock can be seen.

Prior to the release of the hunting stock (which were pinioned so that they would not fly back to their native locations), the number of Canada Geese (which included Cackling Geese) never exceeded 125 on a Victoria Christmas Bird Count. There is quite a difference today. With fewer and fewer wild places for these birds to gather, and because they remain here all year round, they are becoming an



increasing problem for farmers and others. I expect we will be hearing a lot more about this issue in the near future!

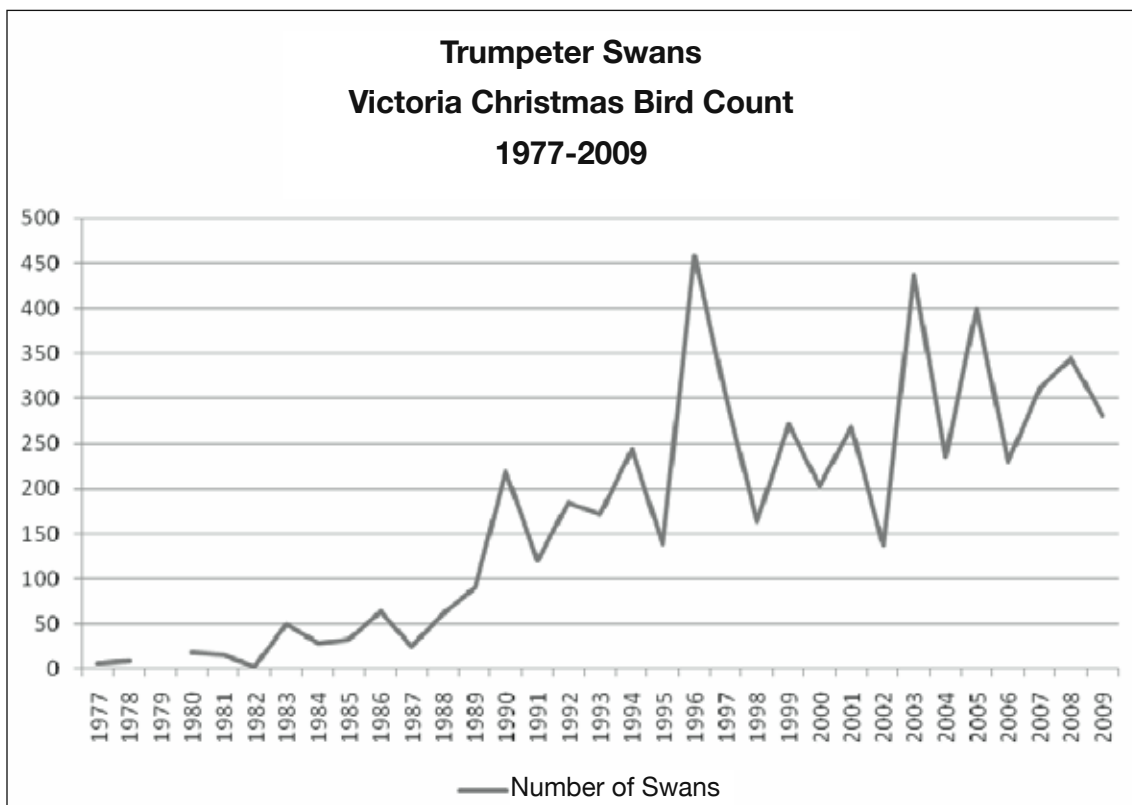
Similarly, the number of Trumpeter Swans has increased over the last 30 years. This is truly a good news story, as this species was nearly extinct in the 1930's. Despite the fact that they often are seen in the same places as the Canada Geese, they are not causing the same level of concerns in the Victoria area because they usually leave for their breeding grounds before the farmers plant their crops.

To see how other species have been doing in the Victoria (BCVI) count circle or any others, visit the Audubon Society's web site <http://audubon2.org/cbchist/count_table.html>. You can get statistics going all the way back to the very first official Christmas Bird Count.

Christmas Bird Counts were also held in Sooke (coordinated by Daniel Bryant), South Salt Spring/Sidney (coordinated by Jean Brouard), and Duncan (coordinated by Derrick Marven). Results for these counts are posted on the VNHS website. Thanks go out to everyone who makes the effort to participate in one or more of the Christmas Bird Counts. By doing so, you are contributing to the longest standing Citizen Science project in North America!

By the time that you see this article, the 2010 Christmas Bird Count will be less than nine months away. Mark your calendars for December 18, 2010. We're going to try again to break through that 200-participant barrier!

Hairy Woodpecker. *Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy*



2009 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Martindale / Bear Hill	Oak Bay Islands (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Total #	Prev High	** indicates new record in 2009
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23					
Greater White Fr. Goose.							5																	5	68		
Snow Goose																			2	1				3	17		
Brant							1														4			5	13		
Cackling Goose																				15				15	106		
Canada Goose	1040	8		124	157	22	138	110	261	4		3	6			52	627	301	148	1608	2			4,611	5156		
Mute Swan						2	20		5															27	77		
Trumpeter Swan	123			28		4	1					2				5	27		35	56				281	458		
Wood Duck		4											12			27	5		1					49	74		
Gadwall	8					12	1	1	2								24		28	4				79	170		
Eurasian Wigeon	3									1	2					2				3				12	28		
American Wigeon	852			20	10	1	6	49	204	33	199	45	29		9	227	179	10	8	335				2,216	14889		
Mallard	1163	12	29	136	26	72	163	83	109	97	525	57	263	154	275	531	341	447	235	1075				5,793	10336		
Northern Shoveler	49				4								3			19	16			68				159	476		
Northern Pintail	1012						1					4				3	1100			570				2,690	**1304		
Green-winged Teal	1325		2				1		2							1	950		1	154				2,436	**685		
Canvasback								50	87									152	7		6			302	**230		
Redhead																			2					2	8		
Ring-necked Duck				8	34		2									32		2	27	22				127	663		
Greater Scaup	104				3	2	1										177			100				387	3100		
Lesser Scaup					2		34		91	20	2		1			7		15	2					174	1012		
Harlequin Duck						13		22	15	11	23	2	2					1		26	10	15		140	410		
Surf Scoter						20	43	26	29	27	5	1			6			8		68	4	12		249	1478		
White-winged Scoter						3				2			1		1			8		2	12	2		31	834		
Black Scoter																				2				2	16		
Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)						3	6	25				1						4		37		1		77	577		
Bufflehead	18	1	17	2	30	95	77	114	176	24	43	108	29	15	80	30	6	339	12	92	18	772		2,098	2863		
Common Goldeneye	9		5			7	26	24	19	51		14			36			64		26		301		582	745		
Barrow's Goldeneye						1																		1	361		
Hooded Merganser	25	7		4	16	12	19	16	52	9	2	25	27	24	7	203	14	34	26	2	2	18		544	662		
Common Merganser	27		2	13	57	16		78	14	2		10	4	3	5	8	5	159	188	2	6	1		600	1600		
Red-breasted Merganser						42	33	65		37		8	3	6				96	1	60	10	12		373	791		
Ruddy Duck																			10					10	429		
California Quail	59	2	20	27		26	28		3									51	8	42			67	333	580		
Red-throated Loon														2				1		1				4	140		
Pacific Loon						4	1			3		1			1					1				11	488		
Common Loon						6	6	1		2	1	1			1			4		1	2			25	109		
Pied-billed Grebe				1	6			1	2									13	2					26	100		
Horned Grebe						14	2			1				3				33	2	6				61	1100		
Red-necked Grebe						4	1	1		6		2		1	1			2						18	671		
Eared Grebe																			2					2	123		
Western Grebe						30	2													3				35	3314		
Brandt's Cormorant						38		43		887	67	213		90								331		1,672	3549		
Double-crested Cormorant	17	1	1	18	33	67	7	12	16	28	6	1	3	19	11	5	8	51	4	18	27	8		361	1004		
Pelagic Cormorant						2	1	24		68	7	30	4	18	7			48			9	4	9	231	2300		
American Bittern																1								1	1		
Great Blue Heron	5		8		2	2	4	22	10	2		3	3	1	3	3	1	6	10	9	2	2		98	162		
Turkey Vulture						10																		10	11		
Bald Eagle (adult)	5	4	30	3	5	4	3	5	4	3	1	5	1	8	6	5	6	11	3	9	2	5	2	130	448		
Bald Eagle (immature)	2		6			1	1	3						3	4			2	4	5				31	incl above		
Northern Harrier																	1			3				4	6		
Sharp-shinned Hawk		2	3			4			2									1	1	4				1	18	30	
Cooper's Hawk	8	4	3	2		1		1	4	1	2		4	1	3	2		4	3	5			2	50	62		
Red-tailed Hawk	7	3	1	4		3	1					2					2	3	4	6				36	79		
Golden Eagle			1																	1				1	4		
American Kestrel	1									1														2	8		
Merlin	1	3			1	3		1				1			2	1		1		4	2			20	25		
Gyrfalcon																								1	2		
Peregrine Falcon	1		1						1	1					1	1	2		1	1				10	15		
Ring-necked Pheasant				1																				1	93		
Sora																				1				1	1		

2009 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands		Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Martindale / Bear Hill	Oak Bay Islands (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Total #	Prev High	** indicates new record in 2009
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23						
					1		4									1	4	2	71	9					91	2	14	
											3	15	10		20								14		62	282		
1			1			1	9	2			13	5	36	1	9						1		4		19	370	96	
													13	1											14	**4	70	
						2					68	23	26	2	53							14	7		214	370		
						3	11	7														2		26	70			
											10	9												19	67			
											2	16	50	8	4						10	75		165	1073			
					1	1			2						4		2		39		4			14	37			
						150	16	102		12		27			1				1		2			351	16375			
																			1					1	288			
							5	40	1	2		7				1	47		1		60	12		176	3110			
							16	147	205	203	292	58	84	87	209	142	78	106	33	296	100	113	5	2,926	16794			
						45	3	14							3					9	6	2		82	9388			
						17	1	3		20			6	5	5			115		15				192	260			
						2	2	14		2		2		3							22	18		27	290			
						2	8			15														65	6401			
										1														1	113			
						3	133	41	79	154	83	20	1			38	23			84		12	732	1198				
																									417			
																				25			31	31				
																				1	1			2	6			
																										23		
																			1	14		2	31	44				
						3																		1	5			
						1							1							2	1		1	7	11			
																				1				1	4			
																			48	73	33		51	556	**391	1		
						2		3	1	3				5	1	1			1	2				25	71			
						2						1	1							2	1			10	79			
						2		8	5	7	2	10	4	14	10	19	4	8	15	6			2	151	212			
						2		4												12	3		1	36	**30			
						26	31	16	28	10	20	18	27	25	16	7	58	29	32	104	46		16	599	**447			
						4	2	2	1		1	2		4	4					7	1		5	33	51			
																1	2		1		1			4	11			
																			1					2	8			
																								18	52			
																								7	11			
													8	92	45	119	32	17	79	271	83		2	1,290	4000			
													6	9	4	7	18	11	18	15	18			165	402			
																								1	6			
																								1	37	51		
																								54	6,185	14327		
																								3	333	1200		
																								93	4,768	18183		
																								89	272			
																								299	600			

2009 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	Central Highlands				Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Marindale / Bear Hill	Oak Bay Islands (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Total #	Prev High	** indicates new record in 2009		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23									
Species																															
Orange-crowned Warbler							1								1													6			
Yellow-rumped Warbler															1													9	25		
Townsend's Warbler	1																											2	3		
Spotted Towhee	69	28	22	42	23	47	25	48	52	16	6	28	52	65	78	79	53	67	166	85	10	1	47	1,099	**968	10	112				
Savannah Sparrow																															
Fox Sparrow	28	34	9	10	10	24	26	31	25	7	3	12	32	40	31	46	49	33	132	52		1	32	667	923						
Song Sparrow	43	26	7	24	19	17	36	24	24	18	11	31	39	21	31	35	54	44	59	75		2	17	657	937						
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					3		1	2							1	13	27	4	32				85	89						
White-throated Sparrow						1										1	2	2	1	1				9	13						
White-crowned Sparrow	2			2			21		1	5		7	11	1	31	15	39	1	1	133			1	271	376						
Golden-crowned Sparrow	97	14	18	6	60	54	36	44	60	23	31	40	90	65	170	35	133	163	136	1331		3	28	1,306	1331						
Dark-eyed Junco	588	358	213	85	239	175	158	329	255	53	54	29	130	295	180	168	164	480	482	657				283	5,375	8823					
Snow Bunting											1																				
Rusty Blackbird																															
Red-winged Blackbird	58	25		6	16		15	3	30							89	137	25	224	72				700	2160						
Western Meadowlark																1		3													
Brewer's Blackbird		5				60	67									202		55				262			651	1377					
Brown-headed Cowbird																2															
Purple Finch	1	8	39	2	2	1		11	4			5		12	19	7	21	5	10	6											
House Finch	53		2	16	99	31	26	107	92	35	47	56	67	77	130	123	86	202	62	117				86	1,514	1973					
Red Crossbill	54	249	106	192	11	46	32	56	2			7	12	49	148	21	20	143	446	6					1,600	1830					
Pine Siskin	623	3		5	90	22	184	153	60				219	48	30	40	12	405	475	307				39	2,715	9386					
American Goldfinch	1											3	1	1	4	1					5			22	96	240					
Evening Grosbeak						1																									
House Sparrow	59	21		41	71	50	88	193	374	222	14	7	13	24	81	352	79	119	87	49		99	2,043	2975							
Unidentified Gull			9				48								52				10						119						
Unidentified Accipiter								1																							
Unidentified Cormorant							7									50			9						66						
Count Totals	9,603	2,456	1,450	1,572	1,439	1,867	2,452	2,973	3,598	2,933	1,746	1,370	2,119	2,198	3,269	4,640	5,143	5,083	5,311	9,397	331	1,755	1,397	74,102	125,518						
Species Totals	63	49	48	53	51	85	73	63	57	64	45	65	57	62	61	62	55	72	68	95	23	32	39	143	154						

Participant List, Victoria CBC 2009

Arnold Adlkirchner	Tom Gillespie
David Aldcroft	Heather Glass
Diana Aldcroft	Sharon Excene
Brian Allen	Godkin
Mary Andrews	Rob Gowan
Dave Ashurst	Mitchell Grant
Jacklyn Barrs	Frances Gundry
Lonny Bate	Robert Hadley
Doug Bateman	Poul Hansen
Ron Bates	Andrew P. Harcombe
Brent Beach	Bruce Hardy
Sylvia Beacon	John Harper
Barbara Begg	Chris Harris
Louise Beinbauer	Gordon Hart
Geoff Bennett	Phyllis Henderson
Mike Bentley	John Henigman
Barrie Bolton	Elwood E. Henning
Jan Brown	Jo Henning
Daniel Bryant	Geoff Huber
Martha Burd	Edith Hunsberger
Cynthia Callahan	Gaileen Irwin
Carol A. Callahan-	Lynda Jamison
Maureen	Colin Jennings
Kathy Calvert	Jeremy Kimm
Ian Cameron	Barb Kirby
David Campbell	Jim Kirby
Bob Carroll	Adrian Koolman
Jan Carroll	Rhonda Korol
Robert W Chappell	Audrey Kyle
Jenny Clarke	Barbara E. Lake
Aziza Cooper	Robert Lake
Claudia Copley	Marilyn Lambert
Darren Copley	Tom Lane
Jeannie Cosgrove	Shona Lawson
Jim Cosgrove	Warren Lee
Elizabeth Cross	Eric LoFroth
Ian Cruickshank	Agnes Lynn
Helen Currie	David Lynn
Jim Currie	Alan MacLeod
Bill Dancer	Pat MacLeod
Neal Donegani	Betsy Mackenzie
Daniel Donneci	Bob Mackie
Warren Drinnan	Cheryl Mackie
Don Eastman	Mark Malleson
Mike Edgell	Morwyn Marshall
Ros Eldridge	Jeanne Martin
Christian Engelstoft	Susan Martin
Sue M Ennis	Margie Mayfield
Jessie Fanucchi	Barbara McDavid
A. Joy Finlay	Barb McGrenere
J. Cam Finlay	Mike McGrenere
Maija Finvers	Dana McKee
Ron Fownes	Barb McLintock
Dave Fraser	Bill McMillan
Moretta Frederick	Amy McDev
Marilyn Fuchs	Ron Melcer
Rachel Gardiner	Kevin Meldrum
Shelley Garland	Marilyn R.H. Miller
Jeff Gaskin	Kirsten Mills
Val George	James Miskelly

Glen Moores
 Judy Moores
 Ken Morgan
 Mary Morris
 Sheila Mosher
 Chris Motherwell
 Judy Muir
 Donna Murray
 Trev Neufeld
 David Newell
 Geoffrey Newell
 Jean Newell
 Jeff Newman
 Rae Ann Newman
 Eleanor Nichol
 Sarah Nichol
 Ann Nightingale
 Hennie Nyhof
 Mark Nyhof
 Colleen O'Brien
 Morough O'Brien
 Marie O'Shaughnessy
 Cheryl Oattes
 Rick Page
 Dorothy Parker
 Tom Plath
 Lee Priftakis
 Clive Prior
 Leah Ramsay
 Bob Reader
 Cathy Reader
 Emma Reader
 Rebecca Reader-Lee
 Mindy Richter
 Dave Robichaud
 Mary Robichaud
 Robin D Robinson

Meherzad Romer
 Donna M. Ross
 Mary E Sanseverino
 Chris Saunders
 Ann Scarfe
 Rick Schortinghuis
 Margie Shepherd
 Michael Simmons
 Rosalind Coleman
 George Sirk
 Dave Smallshire
 Doug Smith
 Joan Sommers
 Margaret Stevens
 Tom Stevens
 Andrew Stewart
 Ann Stewart
 Irene Stewart
 David Stirling
 Jack Sutherland
 Ken Sutill
 Jeremy Tatum
 Andy Teucher
 Jules Thomson
 Michael Tripp
 Ed Tupper
 Gail Tupper
 Fern Walker
 Rebecca Walker
 Ted Walker
 Lea Walsh
 Bruce Whittington
 Ann Widdowson
 Tom Widdowson
 Neville Winchester
 Lars Yunker
 Mark Yunker

Letters

Dear Victoria Natural History Society,

Thank you for your generous contribution to my educational investment. As a Royal Roads B.Sc. Environmental Science candidate, I am honoured to have been chosen as a recipient for the Victoria Natural History Society bursary. Your donation will ease the financial investment of my educational journey at Royal Roads, and make my goal all the more rewarding. For 10 years my goal has been to complete this program, and to be supported so generously in this endeavour is truly amazing.

I chose to continue my studies in the Royal Roads Environmental program because I believe it has and will continue to challenge me to grow, while broadening my ideals and knowledge; allowing me to benefit my community. I value education because it empowers the individual to affect positive change in their society.

I am truly grateful and feel privileged to have received this bursary. Thank you again for your generous donation.

Sincerely,
 Jessica Rutherford

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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., University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House; **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria. Locations are given in the calendar listings. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>>, and is updated regularly.

Codes for Field Trip Difficulty Levels: LEVEL 1 — Easy walking, mostly level paths. LEVEL 2 — Paths can be narrow with uneven terrain. LEVEL 3 — Obstacles in paths requiring agility or steeper grades. LEVEL 4 — Very steep, insecure footing or longer hikes requiring good physical condition.

MARCH

Saturday, March 6

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Birding in Parksville

Come to see the spectacle of the annual Pacific Herring spawn. Massive numbers of sea ducks and gulls are close to where we can observe them feeding on the herring roe. We can also enjoy the beginning of the congregation of the Brant Geese in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area and vicinity. Meet at Helmcken Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. This will be an all-day trip so bring lunch. Carpool expenses will be about \$15.00 per person. Contact **Rick Schortinghuis**, 250-885-2454, for more information.

Sunday, March 7

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Royal Roads Native Tree Walk

Hans Roemer will share his knowledge of the big trees on the Royal Roads University and neighbouring Department of National Defense (DND) properties. Hans has been researching these trees for several years and it is delightful to enjoy a walk through the woods with him, admiring these giants that include Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*) and other natives. Several of these trees are considered exceptional due to their size. Hans will explain how they have reached these huge proportions, as well as talk about other interesting natural features in the area. Although we will be walking at a slow pace, this will be an outing for those who are comfortable clambering up and down hills on uneven ground. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended. Dress for the weather. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. Starts from the tennis courts near the entrance to Royal Roads at 9:30 a.m. There is a fee for parking at Royal Roads. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynnns@shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, March 9

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION AND AGM

Polar Bears: Outstanding Survivors of Climate Change

Polar bears are remarkably resilient to changing climate, attested to by their survival through a multitude of past climate shifts, some of inconceivable magnitude. Join **Dr. Susan Crockford** of the University of Victoria Anthropology department for this talk that incorporates little-known biological and historical facts commonly omitted from popular polar bear accounts into a balanced overview of life and adaptation on Arctic sea ice.

We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Sunday, March 14

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Enjoying Native Trees and Shrubs Before Spring Flowers Burst Forth

It should be feeling a lot like spring by this time with buds bursting open and most leaves starting to form but still challenging to identify the native shrubs and trees. We will wander around Ten Mile Point, visiting Konukson and Phyllis Parks, and walking along the cliffs near the water to check for early flowers. We'll also visit the Bald Eagle nests, and maybe even find an early Rufous Hummingbird. Start at the Lynns (3913 Woodhaven Terrace, off Tudor Avenue) at 10:00 a.m. Although we will be walking at a slow pace, this will be an outing for those who are comfortable clambering up and down hills on uneven ground. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended. Dress for the weather and bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynnns@shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, March 14

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Nature Walk at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Join **Darren** and **Claudia Copley** for a walk in the park – who knows what we'll find! Meet at the group shelter near the "Filter Beds" parking lot at the south end of Beaver Lake at 9:30 a.m. For those taking public transit, the #72 from downtown will drop you off outside the park entrance around 9 a.m. ***This trip will also be promoted outside the Society.

Tuesday, March 16

BOTANY NIGHT

Alpine Plants in Northern BC.

In connection with Botany BC 2009, **Hans Roemer** and **Ryan Batten** used as many opportunities as they could to access alpine habitats and brought back plenty of photographs, specimens, and observations. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Bring a friend.

Wednesday, March 24

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Birds Oiled at Sea

Oil, even in very small amounts (chronic oiling), can kill marine birds. The Birds Oiled at Sea (BOAS) Program aims to estimate the number of marine birds that come into contact with oil

at-sea and seeks ways to reduce the likelihood of interactions with oil. The problem is a tricky one because the source of oil on the ocean is very hard to track and, further, if a bird is oiled at sea it may never be found because of variable winds, currents, and eventual sinking of dead birds. BOAS works closely with Bird Studies Canada, who monitor many beaches for dead birds, and, with Transport Canada to gauge ocean traffic by aerial surveys and monitoring of the ocean surface using radar based on satellites. **Dr. Pat O'Hara** will outline the BOAS program with emphasis on our work on the British Columbian coast. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, March 27 and Sunday, March 28

EVENT

Fossil Fair

Who lived here millions of years ago? Fossils are our window to the past. Palaeontologists from the **Victoria Palaeontology Society** will share their personal fossil discoveries including many from this past year. Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission by donation.

Sunday, March 28

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Satin Flowers and Birds at Juan de Fuca

For those of you who are not up to the strenuous walk up Mount Wells, this outing is another chance to see the satin flowers (*Olsynium douglasii*) as well as other early spring flowers without the effort. Plus it is an excellent place to check out the birds, so this trip will have some of each. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. Meet at Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre (Westshore Parks and Recreation), 1767 Old Island Highway, at 10:00 a.m. We will start from the end of the parking lot nearest to town. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Monday, March 29

MARINE NIGHT

Using Seabird Diets to Track How Climate Change is Affecting Arctic Ecosystems

University of Victoria Masters student, **Jennifer Provencher**, studied the effects of climate change on seabirds in the Eastern Canadian Arctic. Using historical and current data, she examined changes in the diet of Thick-billed Murres in the low, mid, and high Arctic. She collected samples in the summer and spent winters in the lab sorting and identifying fish bones, zooplankton, squid beaks, and some unnatural objects such as plastic and bird shot. By comparing her results with similar studies done in the 70's and 80's, she has tracked how their diets have changed through the years as the ice cover has moved. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building. Everyone is welcome.

APRIL

Friday, April 2

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

Satin Flowers on Mount Wells on Good Friday

This trip is planned to see one of the best display of satin flowers (*Olsynium douglasii*) in the whole area. As well as an extensive display of early spring wild flowers, this location also offers a good chance to see a Golden Eagle soaring above us. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely

pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and you might wish to bring a walking stick. Take the Trans-Canada highway towards Goldstream Park. Turn left at the new Westshore Parkway shortly before you get to Goldstream. Turn right at the roundabout and carry on left when you reach Sooke Lake Road. Turn left on to Humpback Road at Ma Miller's pub. At the intersection with Irwin Road, stay right. Follow Humpback Road to the park entrance. Meet at the parking lot on the right at 10:00 a.m. Don't be late as we will be ferrying people to the start point. Bring a lunch and drinks for the all day outing. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday, April 4

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Enjoy Early Spring Beauty at Gore and Oak Haven Parks

What better way to spend an Easter Sunday morning than in these two delightful Saanich Peninsula parks with their exquisite spring wildflowers. To allow more people to partake in the more level section in Gore Park, we will do this park first. Oak Haven Park has a climb to the summit but we even take that slowly. Meet at 10:00 a.m at the entrance to Gore Park. To reach Gore Park, proceed along Benvenuto Drive towards Butchart Gardens. Turn right on Amwell Drive. Follow Amwell Drive to reach Greig Road. Turn right to the park entrance on the right. To reach Oak Haven Park from Gore Park, reverse the route back to cross Benvenuto where Amwell Drive changes names to Garden Gate Drive. Proceed a short distance to the entrance of Oak Haven Park on the left. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended for the Oak Haven section. Bring a snack and drink if you wish. No pets please. Call Rick at 250-885-2454 if you need more information.

Monday, April 5

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Magnificent Wildflowers at Mill Hill

Enjoy Easter Monday with a visit to magnificent Mill Hill for a spectacular spring show of wildflowers. Since 2000, CRD Parks staff and volunteers have been battling invasive Scotch broom in the park's Garry Oak ecosystem. Soak up the glorious colours of spring and admire the results of this restoration. Join us for a guided flower walk. It's a steady climb to the top. We are also hoping to see some good birds as well, perhaps a Townsend's Solitaire at the top. Please note the route is steep and rough on the way down but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and you might wish to bring a walking stick. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. Meet at the Mill Hill Regional Park information kiosk at 10:00 a.m. To get to the park, take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right at the traffic light at Six Mile Road just before the bridge, then left on Atkins Road. Turn left at the four-way intersection to continue on Atkins Avenue that leads to the park entrance on the right. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday, April 11

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Leisurely Walk up Lone Tree Hill

This little knoll is another treasure trove of spring wildflowers. Diversity of species on this hill is amazing but don't forget to take in the fantastic views from this high viewpoint as well as listen for birds such as the Orange-crowned Warbler singing his

heart out. Please note the trail is steep but not as challenging as some of the other areas. The walks are at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and you might wish to bring a walking stick. Start at 10:00 a.m. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Road. Continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Keep left to continue on Millstream Road to the park entrance on the right. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, April 13

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION *****PLEASE NOTE ROOM CHANGE*****

Amphibian Declines: From the Global to the Local

The Global Amphibian Assessment, released in 2004, is a comprehensive status assessment of the world's 5,918 known amphibian species, against the International Union for the Conservation of Nature red-list criteria. This assessment classified amphibians as the most threatened vertebrate group on earth. **Dr. Purnima Govindarajulu's** talk examines this phenomenon of global amphibian declines in the context of amphibians in BC, assessing status, threats, and potential conservation measures. Are amphibians in BC doing better or worse than the global average? We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room C103 of the David Strong Building **PLEASE NOTE ROOM CHANGE!** Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Sunday, April 18

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

Enjoy All that Jocelyn Hill Has to Offer

Join us to enjoy the wildflowers and the birds as well. Our goal is to see the Gold Stars (*Crocodylus multicaule*) in bloom but we will not be disappointed if we miss them as there is an amazing array of other delights and great panoramic views from the ridge. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and you might wish to bring a walking stick. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Road. Continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Keep left to continue on Millstream Road. Go past Lone Tree Hill Park on your right and watch for Emma Dixon Road on the left. The trail head is on Millstream Rd just past that intersection. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Meet there at 9:00 a.m. Bring a lunch and drinks for this all-day outing. No pets please. Call Rick at 250-885-2454 if you need more information.

Tuesday, April 20

BOTANY NIGHT

Lichen and Moss Communities Found on Garry Oak (Quercus garryana) Bark

Camosun College students **Anne Anderson, Angela Lougheed,** and **Andrea Panich** will present results of their Camosun thesis project, the study of epiphyte distributions on Garry oak trunks at two sites: the Lansdowne campus of Camosun College in Victoria, and the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve in Maple Bay. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Bring a friend.

Friday, April 23

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Two for One Bargain – Horth Hill and Bear Hill Wildflowers

Take the day off and join us. It is hard to fit all the good wildflower areas into the short period when they are at their peak so we'll give you two treats in one day. Despite the close proximity of these two areas, the flora is quite different. Horth Hill is sunnier and drier. The Chocolate Lilies (*Fritillaria affinis*) should be great there. Bear Hill is more woodsy and doesn't get as much sun. If we are lucky, we'll see some Pink Fairy Slippers (*Calypso bulbosa*) there. Please note the trails are steep but not as challenging as some of the other areas. The walks are at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and you might wish to bring a walking stick. Meet at the parking lot at Horth Hill at 10:00 a.m. To get to Horth Hill, take the Pat Bay Highway north to the Wain Road exit. Follow Wain Road west to cross the highway, then turn right on Tatlow Road to the park entrance on the right. To get to Bear Hill from Horth Hill, return to the highway and go south. Turn right at Island View Road, left on Saanich Cross Road to Central Saanich Road. Continue south on Central Saanich Road to right on Keating Cross Road, left on Oldfield Road and left on Bear Hill Road to the parking lot. Bring a lunch and drinks as the two outings will take up most of the day. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday, April 25

EVENT

Wonderful Wildflowers

A celebration of spring for the whole family. Walks, crafts, music and more, Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, 12 to 3 p.m. Admission by donation.

Sunday, April 25

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Birding Rithet's Bog

Join **Darren** and **Claudia Copley** for a birding walk along the loop trail around the bog. Rails and resident Anna's Hummingbirds, migrating teal, wetland-loving warblers, and swallows are all possibilities. Meet at 9 a.m. near the corner of Chatterton Way and Dalewood Lane, south of the Broadmead shopping centre. For those taking public transit, the #6 from downtown drops you off opposite the Royal Oak Shopping Centre and there is a pedestrian tunnel that goes under the highway. ***This trip will also be promoted outside the Society.

Monday, April 26

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Enjoy the Wonders of Thetis Lake Park

This park is overflowing with wild flowers, common and uncommon. Pause to enjoy the ferns, lichens, mosses, and other supporting cast as well. Our walk will only cover a small fraction of this fantastic park. We hope this visit encourages you to come again on your own. Meet at the main parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Please note the trail is a gentle climb, not as challenging as some of the other areas. The walk is at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and you might wish to bring a walking stick. To reach the park, take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right at the traffic light at Six Mile Road just before the bridge. Continue on this road when it goes under the highway and you will come to the Thetis Lake Park parking lot. Bring a snack and drink if you wish. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Monday, April 26

MARINE NIGHT ***PLEASE NOTE ROOM CHANGE***

A "You Are There" Description of the 1700 Earthquake and Tsunami in Nootka Sound.

While researching for a novel he is writing, **Stephen Holland**, a retired science teacher, reconstructed the events of a mid-winter night, when a mega-earthquake and tsunami turned thriving villages into barren beaches, and the survivors were mostly men. This catastrophe caused major social, economic and political changes, observed by Captain Cook 78 years later. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in the David Strong Building Room C103 (Mathews/McQueen Theater) at the University of Victoria – **PLEASE NOTE ROOM CHANGE!** Everyone is welcome. Admission is free.

Wednesday, April 28

BIRDERS' NIGHT ***PLEASE NOTE ROOM CHANGE***

Birds of Peru

Join **Joe Crichton** of Wildbird Tours Canada for a birding expedition across Peru. We journey from the Pacific shores to the High Andes then down into the Amazon Basin by the Manu Biosphere. Argued to be "the richest of all rainforests in the

world for birds" by Steven Hilty. Peru's more than 1600 species of birds are our main focus but we cannot ignore the huge diversity of plants, insects, and mammals. We finish our journey exploring the ancient cultures in the Sacred Valley of the Inca. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in room C103 of the David Strong building – **PLEASE NOTE ROOM CHANGE!** Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Friday, April 30

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Plants of Cattle Point and Uplands Park

This is an area of rare and endangered plants in an urban setting. Conservationist **Matt Fairbairns** will show you many reasons why it is special. We will be walking on some rocky bits but this is basically a level trail so is an opportunity for those who can't handle the usual Southern Vancouver Island rocky terrain where the wildflowers typically grow. Cattle Point/Uplands Park is on Beach Drive between Oak Bay and Cadboro Bay. Meet at the nature sign by the Cattle Point waterfront parking area at 10:00 a.m. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Contact Agnes at <thelynns at shaw.ca> or 250-721-0634.

BULLETIN BOARD

Introductory Bird Monitoring and Banding Workshop

The Rocky Point Bird Observatory is offering a bird monitoring and banding workshop at Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC, on March 19-21, 2010. The three-day workshop will focus on bird identification, monitoring procedures and techniques, sexing and ageing. Components this year will include owl monitoring and banding demo and an optional session on study skin preparation. The program has been developed for people with little or no bird handling and/or banding experience, but those with intermediate skills will also find the workshop a good way to build knowledge.

This is an excellent opportunity for undergraduates, graduate students, bird observatory volunteers and naturalists to explore aspects of the operation of an avian monitoring project, including bird safety, mistnetting, data collection, bird banding, identification, sexing and ageing. This is an introductory course and participants should not expect to emerge from this short workshop as qualified banders. Much of the work will be with frozen and dried bird specimens although there will be some opportunities to work with live birds to learn safe bird handling and basic banding techniques. Skills practiced in this workshop will be beneficial for a variety of projects including productivity, survivorship and migration monitoring field work. For more information, please visit <RPBO.org> or contact Ann Nightingale at 250-652-6450.

Tuesday Morning Birding Group

The Tuesday Birding Group meets every Tuesday at 9 a.m. at the foot of Bowker Avenue on the waterfront in Oak Bay and decides where it will go birding that morning. The Tuesday Birding group has been around for more than 50 years. Call Bill Dancer at 250-721-5273 for more information.

Saturday Birding Group

We send out the time and location on the Rare Bird Alert (250-704-2555) on the Thursday and Friday before that week's walk.

For more information, call Rick Schortinghuis at 250-885-2454.

Every Wednesday and Sunday Bird Walk

Meet at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary parking lot: 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. For everyone!

Olympic BirdFest – April 9-11, 2010

Grab your binoculars and join the Olympic BirdFest 2010 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center in Sequim, Washington. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours; and a traditional salmon bake at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center. Check out the offerings by going online <<http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>>, phone 360-681-4076, email: info@olympicbirdfest.org.

Invitation

Cherise Sawin, the Landscape Manager at the English Inn (429 Lampson Street), wants our members to know that the Inn has breath-taking gardens and she invites you to visit. The 4.75 acre estate has a wide variety of plant and bird life and welcomes garden groups, bird-watchers, and artists to come enjoy the property and view Anne Hathaway's thatched cottage. The grounds are always open to the public.

Capital Regional District Parks

CRD Parks offers programs for nature lovers of all ages. See <www.crd.bc.ca/parks> for more information. Programs are 1 to 1½ hours long and free unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is not required for free programs unless otherwise noted.

Upcoming at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

Native plant workshops, an introduction to stargazing, and spring break fun for all ages. <www.swanlake.bc.ca>

19th Annual CAMAS DAY

WHEN: Saturday May 1, 2010, 7:00 am – 2:00 pm
WHERE: Beacon Hill Park (walks begin at flagpole on top of Beacon Hill)

Guided Walks (each 1-2 hours long)

Rick Schortinghuis, Victoria Natural History Society **7:00 am, Early Birding Walk**

TBA, Victoria Natural History Society **9:00 am, Birding Walk**

Adolf Ceska, Ecosystems Scientist (Botany) **11:00 am, Wildflower Walk**

Fred Hook, Environmental Technician, City of Victoria Parks **11:00 am, Wildflower Walk**

Greg Smith, Entomologist, Canadian Forest Service **11:00 am, Bark Beetle Walk**

Grant Keddie, Curator of Archaeology, Royal BC Museum

11:00 am, Native History of Beacon Hill Park

Adolf Ceska, Ecosystems Scientist (Botany) **11:00 am, Wildflower Walk**

Fred Hook, Environmental Technician, City of Victoria Parks **1:00 pm, Wildflower Walk**

Grant Keddie, Curator of Archaeology, Royal BC Museum **1:00 pm, Native History of Beacon Hill Park**

Michelle Gorman, Integrated Pest Management Coordinator, City of Victoria Parks **1:00 pm, Insect Walk**

There may be additions to the schedule.

Please check the website at www.friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca

Sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and Friends of Beacon Hill Park

For more information, call Helen Oldershaw (592-6659)