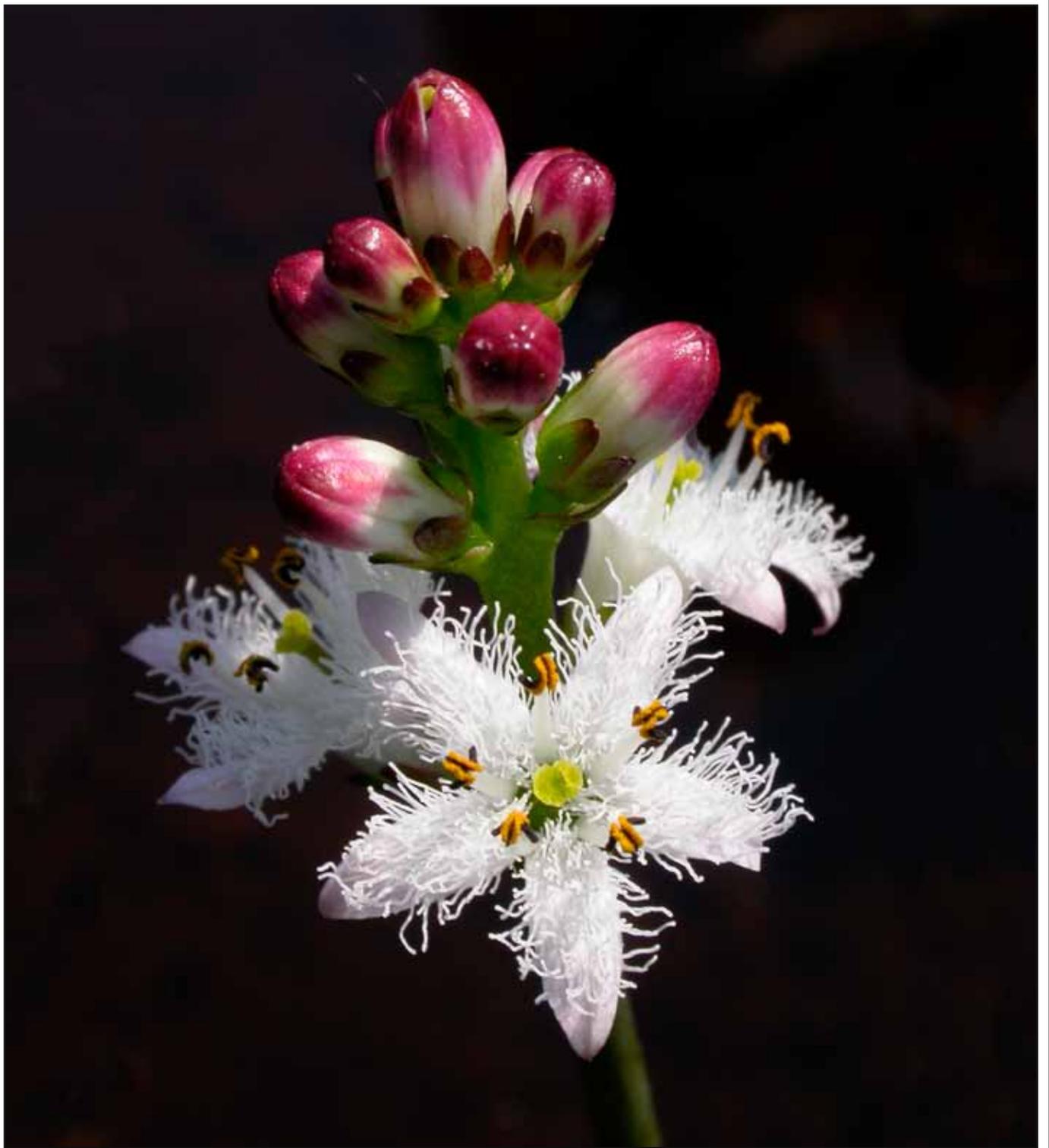




# The Victoria NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





# The Victoria NATURALIST

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COVER PHOTO

Bogbean or Buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata* – Family: Menyanthaceae) seen on a VNHS field trip to the bogs above Jordan River. *Photo: Darren Copley*

I’ve been self-medicating since I was a child.

Deep down I have probably always been aware of it, but I recently heard a CBC radio program that discussed the empirical evidence for the positive effects of greenspaces on mental and physical well-being. People who live in urban areas have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which in turn reduces the immune system’s ability to respond and can result in a variety of health issues. The effects of this can be ameliorated by just a splash of green, even if it is only visible from your office window. And walks in nature can improve your memory, regulate your blood pressure, relax you, and improve your IQ, all thanks to the sights, sounds, and *smells* found in a natural setting. If you are interested you can listen to the story as a podcast: June 7 *In the Field* program: Urban By Nature <<http://www.cbc.ca/inthefield/>>.

When I heard the story I realized that I’m actually an addict, regularly needing a ‘fix’. And then I thought about how there must be others like me, and that we should form some sort of organization that recognizes our addiction. And then I realized we already have. Hello fellow members!

*Claudia*

# President's Message

By Darren Copley

Claudia and I recently represented the VNHS at the Spring Annual General Meeting of our parent organization, BC Nature – The Federation of BC Naturalists. This year it was hosted by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, and it was as inspiring, as usual. For club representatives and the executive, there is one day of meetings, but otherwise we are able to participate in many field trips and excellent presentations. We also use it as an opportunity to spend time with like-minded and committed people. We car-pooled up with active members and good friends from the Lillooet Naturalist Society (Ian Routley and Vivian Birch-Jones), stopping along the way to check out the grasslands. With the weather being as bad as it has been this year, we were very lucky. The only rain was on the drive up, and the day of meetings. Otherwise our explorations of Churn Creek, Farwell Canyon, and Junction were sunny and warm. Our field trip leaders were local experts that volunteered their time – they were a wealth of information. I highly recommend you attend one of these meetings, no matter what your interests are. I guarantee you'll have fun! We had so much fun that we are even talking about hosting an upcoming AGM in Victoria.

But it's not all fun at the AGM, as the Federation takes on many important tasks, including voting on various resolutions submitted by member clubs. This year your Society submitted two resolutions: one about tax incentives for conserving habitat on private land, and another to begin to deal with the impacts of free-roaming cats. There were many other resolutions from other clubs; read all of them in the next issue of the *BC Naturalist* magazine. I'd like to thank the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, and the volunteers from BC Nature that continue to work so hard for B.C.'s nature. They are an amazing group.

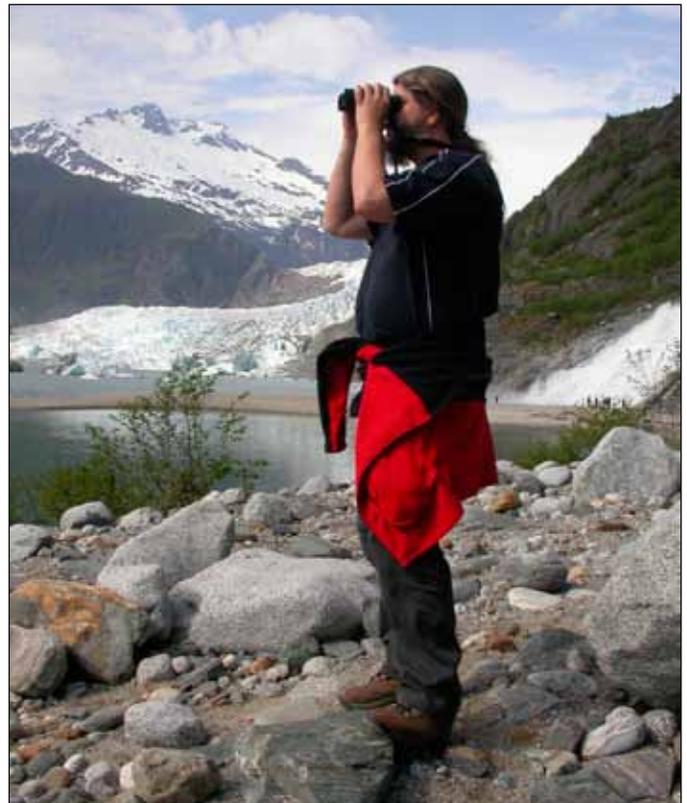
At the same time we were in Williams Lake, the Society co-sponsored, along with CRD Parks and the Rocky Point Bird Observatory, a day celebrating birds: *International Migratory Bird Day*. I hope many of you also participated in this event- the weather cooperated and the venue was more accessible than last year. I appreciate all the efforts of the organizing committee for making the event a success. I'm sure that everyone that witnessed the raptor flights or hummingbird banding, or participated in one of the walks or talks enjoyed themselves. If you missed it this year it will happen again next year – the second Saturday in May!

May and June are the time of year when it really pays to be a 'naturescaper'; all the native wildflowers are in full bloom and attracting insects and birds alike. Hopefully you all know what naturescaping is, but if not, check out this website: <[www.naturescapebc.ca](http://www.naturescapebc.ca)>. Many more gardeners

are now turning to using native plants in their landscape. Even some municipalities like the District of Saanich use it, and promote it where they can. I just did a presentation at the Emily Carr Library and was happy to see people interested in how to do this. Even better was the addition of a landscaper that wanted to incorporate naturescaping into their business. We all do this for different reasons, but some of the most important are wildlife habitat and water conservation. The number one reason for me is to attract wildlife. This year the highlights for us in our yard were two (maybe even three!) Red Squirrels, and, as always, our favourite, the nesting Hooded Mergansers.

You better sit down, because what I'm going to tell you next may come as a shock. It did for us...

We went on a cruise to Alaska. One of the smaller ships of **only** 1500 passengers and 600 crew. This was a family vacation with my parents and my siblings' families. It seemed like the only option that we could all get some enjoyment out of. By the end of it Claudia had decided we were suffering



Your president watching nesting Arctic Terns at the Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau, Alaska. *Photo: Claudia Copley*

from Stockholm Syndrome – our captor (the ship) was also providing us with an incredible opportunity to see scenery and wildlife – we were conflicted! We soon discovered the secret to avoiding the crowds (staying away from the buffet, bars, and casino when on water and the stores when on shore) and actually quite enjoyed ourselves.

The *MS Volendam* does have the highest grade on the *Friends of the Earth's* Cruise Ship Environmental Report Card (B-). I think what keeps their ratings from being any higher is the fact that they incinerate much of their garbage, and burn lower quality fuel, because they have a pretty high score on water quality and sewage treatment.

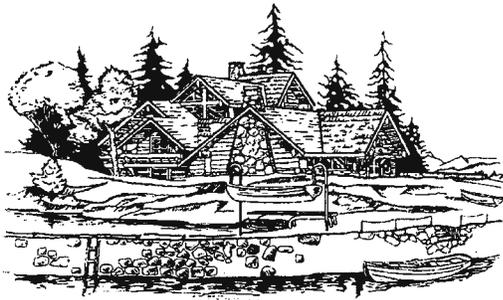
The weather everywhere was exceptional, so most of the daylight hours of the trip were spent on the outer deck below the bridge, where we were best able to view wildlife. Unfortunately this ship didn't have a naturalist, except in Glacier Bay National Park, where federal park rangers came on board. Otherwise we used binoculars and our spotting scope to get some excellent views of wildlife as we travelled from Vancouver to Skagway Alaska. Highlights for me were a Fin Whale on the way home, finally seeing Sea Otter in Canadian waters, breeding Arctic Terns at the Mendenhall Glacier (and an hour-long communion with a foraging Porcupine), Black-legged Kittiwakes and Kittlitz's Murrelets

at a calving glacier in Glacier Bay, and also brief looks at a Horned Puffin and a breeding plumaged Yellow-billed Loon. We also saw thousands of pelagic birds through Queen Charlotte Sound, Hecate Strait, and Dixon Entrance, including Sooty Shearwaters, Sabine's Gulls, Fork-tailed and Leech's Storm-petrels, and many breaching Humpback Whales. Not bad for a trip that I was dreading. This will probably be the only cruise we ever do, but it was an opportunity to spend time with my family while still enjoying nature.

The other trips we are planning this summer are for field work in the Kootenays. We are doing a return trip to determine the extent of several rare spiders (some are even undescribed) that we found last year around Nature Conservancy of Canada's Darkwoods Property. We'll also stop in at the Whistler Bioblitz to stalk terrestrial arthropods living at high elevations. Hopefully it will be as successful as the Metchosin Bioblitz, where we discovered many locally rare spiders.

If you like insects as much as I do, then be sure to come out to our annual dragonfly field trips at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (pages 18 and 19), and bring your kids/grand kids (right Gail?). Let's inspire the next generation, and if their parents are too busy, then let's get the grandparents out there with them. Have a great summer!

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# 2011 VNHS Science Fair Award Winners

As in previous years, VNHSer Harvey Williams served as a judge representing the Society at the Science Fair held at the University of Victoria. He selected a variety of worthwhile projects for the Victoria Natural History Society's annual awards. Below are the titles and the available description of the winning projects. Check out p.16 for the thank-you letters that have already come in.

## \$150 Winners

### *Do They Compost?*

By Amber Rose Jellema (Grade 5)

Testing the claim of compostability of food bags.

### *Attractive Dirt*

By Rowena Zhu (Grade 8)

In this project different soil samples including clay, loam, and sand were tested for capillary rise, porosity, and permeability. It was found that the clay soil held the most water but it took the longest for water to wet from the bottom. The sand had the fastest capillary rise. At time of writing, permeability tests were not yet complete.



The \$150 winners receiving their awards: Rowena Zhu (left) and Amber Rose Jellema (right).  
*Photos provided by Harvey Williams*

## \$100 Winners

### *What Household Items Discourage Deer From Eating Apples?*

By Colleen MacFadgen (Grade 5)

I wanted to find effective, non-toxic, natural deer repellent that would discourage deer from coming in our yard and eating apples from our trees. I also wanted to show people that you can discourage deer without using harmful chemicals. I tried six different household items. Those items were: ginger, chili powder, vinegar, dry mustard and Newfoundland dog hair. The most effective items were ginger and chili powder.

### *Croissances des Plantes*

By Grant Hames-Morgan (Grade 7)

This project was about the growth of plants and how growth is affected by worms.

### *Growing With Crystal Soil*

By Martine Vincent (Grade 9)

My science fair project was about growing plants with Crystal Soil. In my experiment I wanted to see which bean plant would grow the best using Crystal Soil, potting soil, and a combination of both. I did this because I wanted to see if these certain growing procedures worked. Also on a larger scale, if the growing did work, could you grow plants in areas affected by drought?

### *Hummingbird Attraction to Food Colours*

By Veronica Pollock (Grade 7)

Two different experiments were conducted. In the first experiment, two colours of food were placed in two different feeders and observations were made regarding hummingbird preference. In the second experiment, red was used as a control and in the second feeder food colour was varied. The results suggest that hummingbirds prefer red.



The \$100 winners receiving their awards. From left to right: Veronica Pollock, Colleen MacFadgen, Grant Hames-Morgan, and Martine Vincent.

# The Harrowing Dilemma of a Female Pea Crab

By Bill Merilees

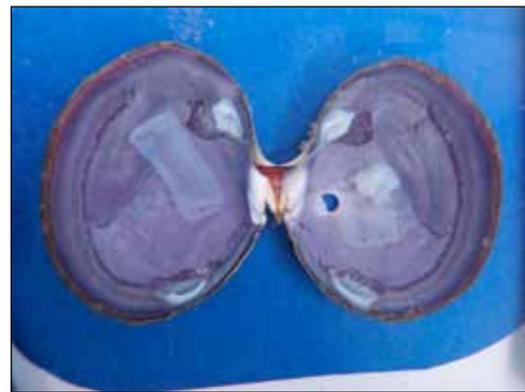
Pea crabs, living within a clam, with food and shelter provided by your host, might be regarded as having a fairly idyllic life style, possibly even better than that of the clam itself. Being “as happy as a clam at high tide” is an old expression with the alleged meaning “free from the attention of predators”. This may be so, but what happens when your host gets into the grips of a moon snail, bent on securing another meal?

On 30 April 2010, at Midden Bay, Newcastle Island, a blemish on the surface of the beach indicated a Lewis’s Moon Snail (*Euspira lewisii*) had been moving underneath. Scooping away 5-cm of sandy gravel revealed the snail’s bulbous shell. A modest pull extracted the extended animal from its lair. As it retracted into its shell, copious amounts of water were expelled from its foot.

Expanding the depression left by the snail revealed a 4-cm Varnish Clam (*Nuttallia obscurata*), with a neatly counter-sunk hole, the characteristic mark indicating moon snail predation (see photo). The hole was not quite completely circular but the clam remained tightly closed. With a Swiss Army Knife, what remained of the clam’s adductor muscles were severed, revealing parts (siphon tips) of the recently living clam, and an energetic female Gaper Pea Crab (*Pinaxxia littoralis*) with a carapace approximately 6-mm in diameter.

Since this clam’s accidental introduction to British Columbia waters in the 1980’s (Merilees and Gillespie, 1995), pea crabs have found this clam to be a most attractive host. At Departure Bay in Nanaimo, it is not unusual for 60 to 70% of the Varnish Clams to have pea crabs living inside them. These crabs settle from their pelagic stage into the clam between late spring and early summer, where they appear to remain for one or two years (personal observations). At this point they are believed to exit the Varnish Clam and seek out Horse Clams (*Tresus* spp.) or Pacific Geoducks (*Panopea abrupta*), where they complete the reproductive stage of their life cycle.

For a crab imprisoned inside a clam locked in the grip of a moon snail, it would be similar to being trapped in a locked room where a hole was being drilled through the ceiling. Then having a long, flexible, toothed belt inserted through the opening that starts flailing around, rasping away the flesh of your host. No wonder the crab was active! In addition to rasping, the moon snail also appears to secrete a weak solution of pH 8.9 (Barnard, 1967) that assists the drilling process. This chemical possibly also assists the digesting process as the disarticulated siphon tips inside the clam were a different texture and of a transparent colour, quite different from living clams. Also, the usually shiny internal



Pea Crabs (*Pinaxxia* spp.) (top) and a Varnish Clam (*Nuttallia obscurata*) with a Lewis’s Moon Snail (*Euspira lewisii*) hole. Photos: Bill Merrilees)

(nacreous) surface of the clam’s shell appeared chemically etched, loosing its luster.

Upon completing its meal, the moon snail moves on, but the author wonders if the imprisoned crab could escape? Even if the clam’s adductor muscles were completely devoured the pressure of the substrate would keep the valves from opening. As the hole drilled through the shell was too small to afford the crab an exit, the only other escape route would appear blocked. Under these circumstances the crab would likely slowly starve to death. The pea crab found on this occasion was released to seek out a new host.

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- Barnard, F. R. 1967. *Studies on the Biology of the Naticid Clam Drill Polinices lewisii (Gould) (Gastropoda Prosobranchiata)*. Nanaimo, B.C., Canada, Fisheries Research Board of Canada, 41 pp.
- Merilees, B. and G. Gillespie. 1995. Two new exotic clams in Georgia Strait. *Vancouver Natural History Society’s Discovery* 24 (2): 143-145.

# The Final Push for the Spirit Bear Territory: July 15, 2011

## Join the campaign to end commercial trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest

By Brian Falconer, Raincoast Guide Outfitter Coordinator and  
Marine Operations Coordinator

In 2005 many of you made an investment in an innovative initiative to help end commercial trophy hunting in British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest. Your faith in that unprecedented project to protect wildlife from senseless slaughter has delivered results. Raincoast's 1.3 million dollar purchase of the 24,700 square km



Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) with its white-coloured cub. Photo: Brad Hill/www.naturalart.ca

commercial hunting licence and our management of the territory for the past five years has saved the lives of Grizzly Bears, Wolves, Black Bears, Cougars, and other wildlife.

Each year since the 2005 purchase, Raincoast has planned and carried out spring and fall "hunts" with our supporters (and their cameras), meeting the obligations of owning such a tenure. The wildlife has responded too — river valleys that were persecuted by trophy hunting have now become vital for bear viewing, helping create opportunities for eco-tourism operators and First Nations communities that remain committed guardians of our coast. The success of this purchase solidified our commitment to end the commercial trophy hunt in the Great Bear Rainforest through tenure buy-outs.

Recently an opportunity to purchase the commercial hunting tenure directly adjacent to Raincoast's existing guide outfitting territory became available. Knowing that this particular territory is the home of the Kermode Bear, or Spirit Bear, we responded. The Spirit Bear is protected from hunting, but not the Black Bears that carry the recessive gene that produces their magnificent white coats.

We are on the cusp of completing the acquisition of this truly unique guide outfitting territory. But we have a small window of time remaining to meet our fundraising target of \$370,000. The support of our donors has brought us to within \$75,000 of this goal. With your help we can reach the top by **July 15, 2011**.

We are asking you to share in the excitement of this great legacy we have all created. We are asking you to invest in the Spirit Bear guide outfitter territory purchase today. Your involvement in this fundraising campaign will truly make an impact and we hope you will support this purchase.

The Raincoast team is available to answer any of your questions regarding this unique opportunity. Please contact me at [brian@raincoast.org](mailto:brian@raincoast.org) or our Executive Director, Chris Genovali at [chris@raincoast.org](mailto:chris@raincoast.org) or 250-655-1229 ext 225. Raincoast's website is [www.raincoast.org](http://www.raincoast.org).

Thank you for your support!

# The Butterflies Whisper

By Annie Pang, June 1, 2011

“Have you seen a butterfly?”  
I asked while on my way  
up to the summit of the hill  
towards the late of May.  
“No, no!” they said to me that day –  
a friendly, passing pair,  
but in the blankness of their eyes  
I saw it in their stare;  
that they had never noticed them,  
that they were not aware,  
and so embarrassment could not  
conceal they did not care.  
I knew that I must carry on,  
though tired I might be.  
An inner nudge told me to go  
and, for myself, to see.  
Upon a leaf of Ocean Spray  
there landed an Azure.  
The little lady spread her wings  
just so I could be sure.  
I carried on with dizzy feet,  
at times I nearly fell.  
The path seemed like a tight-rope wire  
above a fall to hell  
and not because the hill was high –  
no, no – I was unwell.  
But on I climbed and reached the top –  
my instincts did not fail  
as past my face a vision flew –  
the Anise Swallowtail!  
So new and skittish that it was,  
I stalked it, crouching low,  
until it landed several times,  
its stained-glass wings to show.  
How pleased I was to finally see,  
so beautifully emerged,  
this lovely early butterfly;  
my camera nearly surged.  
Then, suddenly, a flurried orange  
flew up into the sky!  
It seems that nudge had brought to me  
another butterfly!

I asked that it come back to me  
so I could get a shot  
and when it did I found a Painted  
Lady’s what I’d got.  
My legs were strong and steady now  
and followed it around  
for pictures as it landed  
on the rocks or grassy ground.  
So long it’d been since I had seen  
these butterflies so fair,  
I felt no pain, my spirit soared,  
my feet were light as air.  
As I came down the rocky steps,  
my heart was filled with awe  
and I told everyone I met  
of the butterflies I saw,  
so they could go with opened eyes  
and have a look about  
and notice Nature’s wonderment  
of butterflies coming out.  
That nudge I felt when filled with doubts,  
that urge to carry on  
were butterflies whispering in my ear  
“It’s you we count upon  
to take our likeness while we’re here  
and show it to your kind  
so they might see our beauty and  
keep us more in mind  
before we’re gone for good this time  
with no more left to find.”  
Well, let me have my fancies  
for it’s all I’ve come to know.  
The language of the butterflies  
is difficult to show  
especially in pictures that  
are not the real thing  
so come with me and watch my world  
from high on a  
butterfly’s  
wing –



Anise Swallowtail. *Photo: Annie Pang*



Painted Lady. *Photo: Annie Pang*



Female Spring Azure. *Photo: Annie Pang*

# Environmental Groups Applaud NDP Motion for 'Long Overdue' B.C. Endangered Species Protection

Several prominent environmental groups welcomed a Private Member's Bill that was reintroduced into the British Columbia Legislature today by New Democrat MLA Rob Fleming. The Bill seeks to establish long overdue legislation protecting the Province's endangered species.

B.C. has more than 1,900 species at risk, including Grizzly Bears, American Badgers, Wolverines and Burrowing Owls. B.C. and Alberta hold the dubious distinction of being the only two provinces in Canada without stand-alone endangered species legislation.

"British Columbia is known around the world for its breathtaking wilderness and diverse wildlife – that's why it's so shocking that this province is still without an endangered species law," said Gwen Barlee, policy director for the Wilderness Committee. "If we don't act now to protect endangered species here they will start to wink out one by one."

The NDP's proposed *Species at Risk Protection Act*, if passed, would require by law a series of measures including: scientific assessment of which species are at risk, legal listing, protections against killing individuals of the species and protection of their habitat, and the development of recovery strategies to determine what actions are needed for a species' survival and recovery. The law would also encourage voluntary stewardship activities and allow for socioeconomic considerations to be taken into account when government decides what elements of a recovery strategy to implement.

"We know that British Columbians treasure the outdoors and the range of wildlife in this province," said Susan Howatt, managing director of Sierra Club B.C. "This legislation is a necessary step, because it protects our high standard

of living and something that people both in B.C. and abroad treasure about our unique corner of the world."

Public polling has shown that almost 90 percent of British Columbians care deeply about endangered wildlife and believe that the province needs to enact a strong law to recover species at risk, and to prevent species from becoming at risk in the first place. The B.C. government has repeatedly balked at introducing an endangered species law in the province.

"Climate change is placing increasing pressure on species and their habitats," said Susan Pinkus, staff scientist for Ecojustice. "We need a strong law to ensure protection of British Columbia's richness of wildlife."

In addition to this new Bill, pressure is building for the B.C. government to take action to protect species at risk. Last week more than 200 scientists signed an open letter to B.C. Premier Christy Clark, urging her to move ahead with approving a national park in south Okanagan-Similkameen region, home to one third of B.C.'s endangered species.

"Protecting and recovering at-risk wildlife is an insurance policy for human communities because their habitat is our habitat, their waters are our waters, and their forests are our forests," said Joe Scott, international conservation director of Conservation Northwest.

## For more information, please contact:

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Susan Howatt, Sierra Club BC, 250-888-6267  
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[www.patriceplankfineart.com](http://www.patriceplankfineart.com)



Shyanne Smith and Tom Gillespie putting up nestboxes at Rocky Point.



## Will you help the *Bring Back the Bluebirds Project?*

To support the recovery of Western Bluebird populations in the region, the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) is looking for:

1. **Confirmed sightings** – **When** and **where** did you last see a Western Bluebird on the Islands?
2. **Suitable habitat for nest box installations:**
  - Large, open, grassy areas (meadow or agricultural).
  - Low hunting perches (fence posts, downed trees, scrub oak).
  - Warm/sheltered microclimate for early nesting.
  - High volume forage (natural insect prey).
  - Safe from House Sparrows and cats.
3. **Woodworkers and carpenters to build nest boxes** for installation by GOERT.
4. **Stewards to monitor** and report occupant information and keep boxes safe.

Please e-mail [bluebird@goert.ca](mailto:bluebird@goert.ca) or call 250-383-3427 to report your sightings, potential nesting habitat, and for more information about the *Bring Back the Bluebirds Project*. Visit the new bluebird page at the GOERT website for descriptions of habitat and project updates: [www.goert.ca/bluebird](http://www.goert.ca/bluebird)

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# HAT Tricks

## HAT Helping Tsartlip Save Sacred Senanus Island

By Todd Carnahan, Habitat Acquisition Trust's Land Care Coordinator

Ray Sam visited SENINES (Senanus) Island for the last time in 2009 to support the restoration efforts of Tsartlip youth maintaining the threatened Garry Oak meadows of this sacred place in the Saanich Inlet. Sam passed away in 2010, leaving a very small group of SENCOTEN language speakers to maintain their cultural heritage. Tsartlip Elder Anne Sam and language apprentice MENEŦIYE (Munuthia Elliott) welcomed HAT to the Island along with members of Peninsula Streams and the KENNES (Hagan Creek) Watershed Project. For several years we have been clearing invasive plants like Scotch Broom and Spurge Laurel, while seeding in native food plants like camas and Chocolate Lily.

Maintaining the language and the land go hand in hand. SENCOTEN is also now taught for one hour a day to students at Lauwelnew Tribal School in an effort to revive the



# HAT

Creating Conservation Legacies

language. Munuthia is one of six Sencoten language apprentices hoping to become fluent while the eight remaining fluent speakers, most of whom are in their 80's, are still alive.

"The language is like a poem and a song. Everything has a deeper meaning than just the words," Munuthia said. An example are the words for different types of clams which reflect the traditional story that humans who ran away from the Creator were turned into clams and forced to hide in holes. The word for butter clam translates into "why-are-you-there", Munuthia said.

Munuthia volunteers at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre in Sidney, where amazing displays of ocean life feature native names alongside English ones.

To learn more about HAT volunteer opportunities and projects, please email [hatmail@hat.bc.ca](mailto:hatmail@hat.bc.ca) or call 250-995-2428.



Ray Sam with a clam from Senanus Island. *Photo: Todd Carnahan*

# Chatter

## Activities of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory

By Shona L. Lawson

Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) has had a busy spring with our annual *Introductory Bird Monitoring and Banding Workshop* and *Beginning Birding* and *Beyond Beginning Birding* courses, these last a collaboration with the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS). VNHS generously donated proceeds of the birding courses to RPBO. In partnership with VNHS and Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks, we hosted the second annual *International Migratory Bird Day* at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park on May 14th. RPBO looks forward to more events, public education, and collaborations with VNHS in the coming year.

In May RPBO held our first Avian Colloquium: *Wild Birds Under Different Lights*. The colloquium had a wide variety of presentations on birds, from falconry to scientific research.

Our field season is well underway. For 2011, RPBO is conducting the *Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship* (MAPS) Program at Witty's Lagoon CRD Regional Park and at a new location, Madrona Farm, a Land Conservancy of BC property in Saanich. MAPS is managed by the Institute for Bird Populations in California. The MAPS Program was established to assess and monitor the vital rates and population dynamics of North American land-birds. So far we have had good success despite the late and cool spring weather. RPBO will be starting fall migration and monitoring of landbirds mid-July at the Rocky Point banding station in Metchosin. We always have room for new members and volunteers, so if you are interested in or want to learn more about RPBO visit our website at <[rpbo.org](http://rpbo.org)>.



Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). Photo: Jason Caswell



### Feature Bird:

Long-tailed Duck  
(*Clangula hyemalis*)

The Long-tailed Duck (LTDU) is a small-bodied sea duck. Sea ducks spend nine to 12 months of the year at sea. The LTDU's distribution is circumpolar, and in North America LTDU's breed in arctic regions of Canada in both marine and terrestrial environments and winter on both west and east coasts of Canada and the Great Lakes. LTDU are female-only incubators, they have an average clutch size of six eggs and incubate for approximately 26 days (Alison, 1975, Robertson and Savard, 2002, Lawson, 2006). LTDU are the only waterfowl species in North America that moult three times a year and are considered by some to be in a constant state of moult (Robertson and Savard, 2002). LTDU's are carnivorous and have several food sources, including small fish, clams, and mussels. This species, like many other sea ducks, has been experiencing population declines over the last four decades. Many factors throughout their range such as hunting, development, and oil spills (small and large) are thought to be contributing to their decline. LTDU's can be seen around Vancouver Island in the Strait of Georgia, off Island View Beach and around Rocky Point in the fall and winter months. If you are interested in learning more about this species, other sea duck species, and ongoing research, visit the Sea Duck Joint Venture Organization <[seaduckjv.org/](http://seaduckjv.org/)>

### Literature Cited

- Alison, R. M. 1975. Breeding biology and behavior of the Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis* L.). Ornithological Monographs. no. 18.
- Lawson, S. L. 2006. *Comparative Reproductive Strategies Between Long-tailed Ducks (Clangula hyemalis) And King Eiders (Somateria spectabilis)*. Master of Science Thesis. Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Canada.
- Robertson, G. J. and J. L. Savard. 2002. Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). *The Birds of North America Online* (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <<http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/651>>

## BULLETIN BOARD/CLASSIFIEDS

### Public Comment Requested On Residences in the Agricultural Land Reserve

The Ministry of Agriculture is inviting British Columbians to comment on possible guidelines for residence size and location on properties in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The call for public comments follows the distribution of the ministry's discussion paper on the same topic to local governments and stakeholders and is part of the process to help develop standards that could be applied by local governments across the province. The consultation includes a survey seeking opinions on: Whether size and location limits should be applied to residences and their amenities in the ALR. The process in which the standards could be introduced.

The ALR is a provincial zone in which agriculture is the priority use. Although local governments regulate residence size and location limits within their boundaries, not many have specified size and placement requirements for residences specifically within the ALR. As a result of local governments concerns over differences in regulations among municipalities, Metro Vancouver (formerly the GVRD) asked the Minister of Agriculture to develop a provincial standard that local governments could use. The survey is open to all British Columbians. Respondents are advised to familiarize themselves with the discussion paper prior to participating in the survey. To read the discussion paper and participate in the survey, visit: <[www.agf.gov.bc.ca](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca)>. The survey will be open until **July 14, 2011**. All comments will be included in the ministry's consideration of a request for a provincial standard.

### Do you like eagles??

The Wildlife Tree Stewardship Program (WiTS) needs a few volunteers to monitor eagle nests and one volunteer to collect the data. Observations only need to be made twice a year: early in the breeding season for activity and later for productivity. This is a great citizen-science project and the results of the last 10 years in the CRD area can be seen at <[www.wildlifetree.org](http://www.wildlifetree.org)>. Please contact Gwen Greenwood: [tggreenwood@telus.net](mailto:tggreenwood@telus.net)/250-652-2876

### Volunteer for the Goldstream artshow

We would like to extend a special invitation to the Victoria Natural History Society to attend the 12th biennial "The Nature of Island Artists" Art Show: an exhibition of nature-inspired art. Come out to the Goldstream Provincial Park Nature House from **September 17th to October 10th, 2011** to enjoy a showcase of a variety of Island artists who are inspired by the natural

environment. The goal of the show is to increase the public's awareness of the need to protect the natural world, and the role that parks play in that protection. As in previous years, proceeds from this art show will be used to provide environmental education programs for school children at Goldstream Nature House. VNHS' involvement continues to be pivotal in the success of this art show, and we would like to further extend this invitation to members of VNHS to participate in the show as volunteer support. This rewarding volunteer experience begins with your attendance at our Wine and Cheese opening night with an opportunity to meet the artists. Duties in the days following include answering visitor questions about the art show, providing a welcoming presence at the nature house, monitoring the art exhibits and offering assistance to demonstrating artists. The 2011 Art Show runs everyday from Saturday, September 17 to Monday October 10. There are two 'shifts' each day: 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. There will be two volunteers 'on duty' during each shift as well as staff and regular volunteers who are familiar with the operation of the Nature House – lots of help at hand. To inquire further about this opportunity or to volunteer for a specific day and time, please contact the Goldstream Nature House at 250-478-9414. This is a fun and rewarding volunteer experience and we thank you in advance.

**Flycatcher Photos?** I have a friend who is putting together a book on flycatchers, kingbirds, pewees, etc. He is interested in receiving high definition digital images of suitable species. The images may be used in the book and/or be used to aid plumage description, range etc. Images can be e-mailed to: [Fabrschmitt@yahoo.com](mailto:Fabrschmitt@yahoo.com) or sent to me and I will forward them: Philip Critchlow ([pmcritchlow@shaw.ca](mailto:pmcritchlow@shaw.ca)).

**Year-round Tuesday Morning Birding Group.** The Tuesday Birding Group meets every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. at the foot of Bowker Avenue on the waterfront in Oak Bay. They then decide where they 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.

**Every Wednesday and Sunday Bird Walk.** Meet at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary parking lot: 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. For everyone!

**Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary courses and events:** For more information <[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)> or call 250-479-0211.

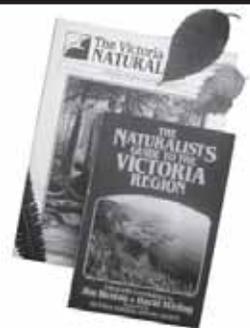
## Give a gift of Nature Appreciation

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- VNHS membership
- VNHS Field guide covers
- VNHS Beginning Birding Course
- VNHS Beyond Beginning Birding Course
- VNHS *Naturalists' Guide to the Victoria Region*

Ask at a meeting, or contact Darren at 250 479-6622



# Letters

These letters are from winners of VNHS-sponsored Science Fair awards. See p.6 and 7 for more information.

Thank you!

It was very generous to give out a prize at the University of Victoria Science Fair. I will enjoy the prize very much!  
Colleen MacFadgen

Thank you so much for blessing me with the gift of \$150. I've learned a lot from this experience and am glad that I took part in the University of Victoria Science Fair. I plan to donate a portion of this to the Mustard Seed Foundation. Thank you for your generosity  
Amber Rose Jellema

# 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:

**Roger and Maria Hird**  
Calgary, AB  
*Botany, ornithology, geology*

**Alex Richardson**  
Millstream Lake Road  
*Marine biology and birds of prey*

**Lynn Kavanagh**  
Meredith Crescent  
*Outdoor activities*

**Maureen Tynan**  
Richmond Avenue  
*Nature, music, fitness, friends*

**Jason Straka**  
Vancouver Street  
*Ecology, birding, botany, entomology, photography*

**David Abbott**  
Vancouver, BC

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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 Night:** 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.

### JULY

#### **Saturday, July 9**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

#### **Sunday, July 10**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

##### ***Ethnobotany Walk in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park***

Join with **John-Bradley Williams** of the Tsawout Nation in a walkabout at Tod Inlet. The Gowlland Range is a particularly rich area of biodiversity, with many species of animal and plants identified. The area has been and continues to be important to

First Nation peoples, who utilize areas of the park for medicinal, ceremonial, and spiritual purposes. We will also find reminders of the area's early pioneer activity. Meet at 10 a.m. at the main entrance to Tod Inlet on the west side of Wallace Drive. Parking at Tod Inlet trailhead is limited to a small amount of roadside parking. Bring lunch and we might be treated to some First Nations stories. No pets please. Call Gwen Walter at 250-727-7376 for more information.

#### **Friday, July 15**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

##### ***Wild Seaweed Workshop***

Come take a tour of an exotic underwater garden. British Columbia's outer coast has more than 700 species of seaweeds, many of which can be found at beautiful Whiffen Spit in Sooke. Prepare for a 2-hour hands-on intertidal workshop where our guide will take you into the low tide and show you the different varieties of seaweeds, their nutritional benefits, and different methods of preparing them. Rubber boots are essential as well

as a walking stick since it can be slippery. Boots and sticks will be provided if you advise us ahead of time of your approximate shoe size, xs,s,m,l,xl. As this tour is scheduled according to the tides, arriving on time is essential for our guide to start on time – the tides do not wait! Please: no dogs. \$10.00 each will be collected at the start and a donation will be given to the David Suzuki Foundation. Meet at 8:15 a.m. sharp at the Whiffin Spit Parking Lot. From Sooke follow the West Coast Road about 1.7 km west then turn left on Whiffen Spit Road. To carpool meet at the Helmcken Park & Ride at 7 a.m. and leave on time. Pre-registration is required for this workshop. Call Gwen Walter at 250-727-7376 to register.

### **Saturday, July 16 and Sunday, July 17**

#### **VICTORIA BUTTERFLY COUNT**

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers, so get out your field guides. Call James Miskelly (count coordinator) at 250-544-0455 if you would like to help out.

### **Saturday, July 16**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)**

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, July 17**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)**

##### ***Dragonflies for Beginners***

As Dennis Paulson says in his book, *Dragonflies of Washington*, "Perhaps even more than butterflies, dragonflies are birdwatchers' insects." Meet Darren and Claudia Copley at the Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds at 1:00 p.m. (an advantage over birding) and we'll see what we can find. We'll look at what field guides are available, some tricks to catching dragonflies, and even how to key out the difficult ones. Bring binoculars, an insect net (if you don't have one – we can provide), and hope for sunny weather.

### **Saturday, July 23**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)**

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, July 24**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)**

##### ***Discovery Island & Chain Islands Ecological Reserve Bird-watchers Kayak Tour***

Once home to First Nations people and lighthouse keepers, Discovery Island is now a Provincial Marine Park. A Mecca for sea kayakers and nature enthusiasts, the area presents many opportunities for viewing wildlife. The tour will also explore the nearby Chain Islands which are protected bird sanctuaries and seal rookeries. You may see Bald Eagles, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, various sandpipers, and other shorebirds. By

kayak, we are able to see the numerous sea birds that nest and feed in and around these shores including Pigeon Guillemots, Black Oystercatchers, and cormorants. Baby Harbour Seals remain undisturbed as we quietly glide past. You do not need to be an experienced kayaker as enough instruction will be given for you to enjoy a safe day on the water. Cost: \$95.00. A 5-hour guided tour starting at 9:30 a.m. from Oak Bay Marina parking lot. Minimum required: eight people/tour. Sign up as soon as possible but at least a week in advance. We will be out on the water for five hours so please pack a lunch and some snacks. We normally pull up on a beach to have our lunch and do a bit of exploring on the island. Depending on the weather, be prepared to layer up or down while on the water. Suggested gear: sunglasses, sun hat, sunscreen, footwear you can get wet, windbreaker, toque, binoculars, lunch, snacks, and lots of liquid to drink. For more information or to register, phone Pacifica Paddle at 250-665-7411.

### **Saturday, July 30**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)**

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, July 31**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)**

##### ***Exploring the Tide Pools at Botanical Beach***

Join Dr. Sandra Lindstrom, UBC Professor of Botany, for another algae foray and an exploration of intertidal life in the tide pools of beautiful Botanical Beach. In the pools you will find algae and congregations of seastars, chitons, anemones, crabs, fish, and purple urchins. These are just some of the thousands of species of marine invertebrates and algae that can be found at low tide. We will be starting early to catch the low tide at 10 a.m. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Helmcken Park and Ride or meet us at the Botanical Beach pay-parking lot. Bring lunch, water, good hiking shoes, and dress for all weather situations. Call Gwen Walter at 250-727-7376 for further information.

## **AUGUST**

### **Saturday, August 6**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)**

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, August 7**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)**

##### ***Hurricane Ridge High-Elevation Wildflowers***

For several years, VNHS has arranged for a bus in Port Angeles to take us up the hill to Hurricane Ridge in Washington's Olympic National Park to enjoy the sub-alpine flowers at their peak. Most wildflowers at sea level have finished flowering

for the season by then. We plan to walk up the Hurricane Hill Trail. Due to the heavy snow pack, the route may vary if conditions dictate. Although the weather is generally sunny and clear, due to the high elevation, it could possibly be quite cool or it might rain, so be prepared. Also wear sturdy hiking boots and hiking poles would be an asset. Bring a lunch, snacks, and lots to drink as we will not be near any facilities. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the M.V. *Coho*. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$31.00 CDN return. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will return on the 5:15 p.m. sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing). Also there is usually good birding on the ferry. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$55.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 4 or after July 31. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay through PayPal on the VNHS website (<vicnhs.bc.ca>) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220 Station B, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Spaces remaining on PayPal do NOT indicate that spaces still remain on the bus. Contact Agnes at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

### **Saturday, August 13 and Sunday, August 14**

#### VICTORIA BUTTERFLY COUNT

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers, so get out your field guides. Call James Miskelly (count coordinator) at 250-544-0455 if you would like to help out.

### **Saturday, August 13**

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, August 14**

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

##### ***Discovery Island & Chain Islands Ecological Reserve Bird-watchers Kayak Tour***

See Sunday, July 24 description. For more information or to register, phone Pacifica Paddle at 250-665-7411.

### **Saturday, August 20**

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, August 21**

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

***Olympic Peninsula Tufted Puffins, Brown Pelicans, and More***  
Last year we merged two trips on Washington's Olympic

Peninsula that we have done before with our trusted tour bus leader. It worked very well and we hope to enjoy seeing some good birds again but there will be lots for all nature lovers to enjoy along the way at a leisurely pace. We will start with the tour to Cape Flattery, the most northern point on the west coast of the continental United States and one of the closest locations to Victoria where you can readily see Tufted Puffins. Islands off the point are home to thousands of sea birds throughout the year. The birds can be observed from platforms which are located about a half hour's walk through the forest. Instead of stopping at the excellent museum on this trip, we will continue south to La Push and other beaches where we hope to see Brown Pelicans and other sea birds that might not venture as far north as Victoria. We will make intermittent stops along the way to enjoy the beaches where we can enjoy the dune plants as well as the birds. Also remember that the entire Olympic Peninsula is covered with the lush growth of giant trees and luxuriant vegetation which makes for a very scenic trip. Tour leader Willie also is full of fascinating facts about the area. This will be a long day so bring a lunch, snacks, and drinks as we will not stop near any facilities. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the M.V. *Coho*. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$31.00 CDN return. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** You'll have to get your birding in on the way over because we will return to Victoria on the 9:30 p.m. sailing (90 minute crossing time). After the bus drops us off, there will be time for dinner in Port Angeles. Cost of the charter bus is \$60.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 4 or after August 14. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay through PayPal on the VNHS website (<vicnhs.bc.ca>) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220 Station B, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Spaces remaining on PayPal do NOT indicate that spaces still remain on the bus. Contact Agnes at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

### **Saturday, August 27**

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

##### ***Saturday Morning Birding***

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click 'Rare Bird Alert' on the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 7:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### **Sunday, August 28**

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

##### ***Dragonflies for Beginners***

As Dennis Paulson says in his book, *Dragonflies of Washington*, "Perhaps even more than butterflies, dragonflies are birdwatchers' insects." Meet Darren and Claudia Copley at the Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds at 1:00 p.m. (an advantage over birding) and we'll see what we can find. We'll look at what field guides are available, some tricks to catching dragonflies, and even how to key out the difficult ones. Bring binoculars, an insect net (if you don't have one – we can provide), and hope for sunny weather.



VNHS field trip (21 May 2011) to Whiffin Spit. Check out the calendar for more intertidal explorations.  
*Photo: Vanessa Kramer*