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The Victoria NATURALIST

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COVER PHOTO

Monarch Butterfly at Glendale Gardens, August 6, 2011. Read more about this rare sighting on p.12.

Photo: Annie Pang

I have come up with a way for the province to save money in these troubled economic times: let’s not renew the contract for the RCMP, or any police force for that matter.

Hear me out before you cry foul. Our current provincial government has been deregulating industry for more than a decade – streamlining and simplifying and moving to a system of self-policing. And they’re not alone. Governments at every level have been adopting a system of corporations managing themselves. And we are repeatedly assured that self-regulation works. That these companies will (of course!) follow the recommendations for environmental standards, and do not require government oversight. We can trust them to do the right thing.

Back to my proposal: Let’s rely on each other to self-regulate. People will always do the right thing when faced with an option – Right? If businesses can be relied on to choose the path of good then why can’t we assume the citizens of this province will do the same? So let’s just not renew the policing contract, and see what happens.

I personally think it is a great idea, and I am SURE it will work. And the bottom line is this: we’ll save a tonne of money, so we’ll all be richer, and ultimately that is all that really matters.

Claudia

President's Message

By Darren Copley

With the change of season, we are seeing some changes on the board. We are losing the talents of Jennifer Ellenton, while gaining a new Birders' Night host and board member with James Clowater. Thanks so much to Jennifer for her help as Secretary and Publicity chair. We appreciate her hard work, and wish her well with her new home on Denman Island. And welcome to James – it's great when people step right into a position.

I'm sure you can tell what I'm going to ask next? Yes – we are looking for people to help fill these positions. If you can spare one night a month for a board meeting, plus time to write up the minutes, have I got an offer for you. For publicity, you don't even have to be on the board, but it's nice if you are. Our events get promoted to the regular media by email. And by chance if you know anything about Twitter or Facebook, you could help us promote ourselves there too. There are always volunteer positions available, so if you would like to contribute more to the Society, please contact me to discuss how you can help. Other places we could use some help with are: coffee and tea at events, fundraising, editing, social events, field trip leaders, staffing VNHS displays, and many more. I look forward to hearing from you.

And speaking of fundraising and social committees, we were just involved with two successful events on that front. We can now officially call our HawkWatch BBQ Social an annual event since it has happened twice and we will do it again next year. This year we were lucky with the weather for us (sunny!) but not as lucky for migrating birds (windy in the wrong direction!). Thanks to CRD Parks, our co-hosted HawkWatch information tents and live birds of prey attracted hundreds of non-members at East Sooke Park that day. At the end of the public event the sunshine held out for our approximately 65 members at the afternoon barbeque. It was a chance to meet other members and socialize. I really appreciate all the members who helped make the occasion

the success it was – from the all-important food to staffing the display – Thank you!!

I hope that the other event we were involved with this year remains annual as well. The Land Conservancy's *Chef Survival Challenge – Quest for the Golden Broccoli* has, until this year, been a fundraiser for Madrona Farm. But Madrona Farm is protected now, so this year The Land Conservancy offered to share a portion of the proceeds with select charities. The VNHS helped sell tickets, and 50% of the proceeds from the tickets we sold will go directly to our own conservation efforts. Hopefully next year we can sell more tickets, and even help more directly with the event. Thanks to members who supported us there. It was a fantastic event as usual, and I hope this is the beginning of more partnerships with TLC! Thanks Nathalie, for making the connection.

A few other things to mention as well:

You may notice that our membership categories have changed slightly. We are removing the "Subscription Only" and "Membership Only" categories. These were only created to make us eligible for a federal postal subsidy that has been discontinued.

Now is also the time to surprise a well-deserving member of our Society with a nomination for a Distinguished Service Award. This is our main instrument for showing our appreciation to members who have been putting in that extra effort for many years. Nominations are due in Feb 28, 2012.

And finally – your Society is hosting the premiere of *Green Fire* – a documentary about Aldo Leopold, the world-renowned conservationist and author of *A Sand County Almanac*. The screening will occur on our regular Natural History Presentation night in January (Tuesday, January 10, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria.) but will start a half hour earlier – check out the article p.10 and the calendar p.23. I really hope to see everyone there – and bring a friend!

Give a gift of Nature Appreciation



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



VNHS Awards

Call for Nominations

VNHS members contribute to the Society in many ways. Some write articles for the *Naturalist*, some lead field trips, others serve on the board or on other committees. There are some who go out of their way just to make sure other members can continue to be a part of Society activities, by visiting shut-ins, or driving others to Society functions.

The Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors established the Distinguished Service Award in 1988. This prestigious award is meant to honour those members who have given freely of their time over a long period, in a variety of ways for the Society. Any member of the Society can nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

The VNHS Distinguished Service Award is given annually to members who have shown such dedication. The Society may also bestow Honorary Life Membership on a member whose involvement with VNHS has been exceptionally long and dedicated. Please consider nominating a member, and send your nomination to the Society's address, or give it to one of the directors. **Nominations should be forwarded by February 28, 2012.**

All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least two members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards.

VNHS Distinguished Service Award Recipients

- 1989 Lyndis Davis, David Stirling, Katherine Sherman
- 1990 Anne Adamson, Charles Trotter, Robb Mackenzie-Grieve
- 1991 Ed Coffin, Mark Nyhof
- 1992 David Fraser, Margaret Mackenzie-Grieve
- 1993 Giff Calvert, Harold Pollock
- 1994 Kaye Suttill
- 1995 Bryan Gates, Bruce Whittington
- 1996 Gordon Devey
- 1997 Michael Carson
- 1998 No recipients
- 1999 Tony Embleton, Dorothy Henderson
- 2000 Tom Gillespie, Marilyn Lambert, David Pearce
- 2001 David Allinson, Beverly Glover, Hank Vander Pol
- 2002 Norm Mogensen
- 2003 Bob Chappell
- 2004 Oluna and Adolf Ceska
- 2005 Rick Schortinghuis
- 2006 Phil Lambert, Tom Burgess
- 2007 No recipients
- 2008 Ann Nightingale
- 2009 No recipients
- 2010 Gordon Hart, Agnes Lynn
- 2011 Claudia and Darren Copley

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Endemics of the Olympics

By Val George

For those of us who live on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, the Olympic Mountains across the water to our south are either obscured in cloud or are a hazy, glaciated mountain range in the distance. For many years the VNHS has organized trips to span this distance and get up close to the many flora and fauna attractions of the area. This year's alpine country excursion happened in early August, shortly after much of the snow had left the higher elevations.

The flowers this year were particularly spectacular due to the very late summer causing many species to be in bloom concurrently. Blazes of colour were everywhere. Purple Arctic Lupine (*Lupinus arcticus*) mixed with white American Bistort (*Polygonum bistortoides*) and several species of yellow arnicas graced the alpine meadows; mats of showy, pink Spreading Phlox (*Phlox diffusa*) and yellow

Martindale's Lomatium (*Lomatium martindalei*) were on the more sparsely-soiled areas; spreads of thousands of white Avalanche Lilies (*Erythronium montanum*), in some places mixed with the other alpine erythronium, the yellow Glacier Lily (*Erythronium grandiflorum*), were a special treat to see. Some of the alpine flowers that are rare or difficult to find on Vancouver Island are easy to see in the Olympics, such as purple Mountain Owl-clover (*Orthocarpus imbricatus*) and the straggly Olympic Onion (*Allium crenulatum*), the latter covering most of the scree slopes; both of these flowers are red-listed in BC; another showy flower we saw was the blue-listed in BC Smooth Douglasia (*Douglasia laevigata*), the deep-pink blossoms of which contrast strikingly with the dark green foliage.

But we weren't only looking for the more familiar flowers. The alpine habitat of the Olympic Mountains has a number



Olympic Marmot (*Marmota olympus*). Photos by author.



Magenta paintbrush (*Castilleja parviflora olympica*)

of endemic flower species, as well as some endemic fauna. It's thought that the Olympic Peninsular emerged from the ocean about 12 million years ago, and glaciation of the Pleistocene Epoch isolated the alpine regions from the other parts of the continent. Furthermore, refugia in the higher elevations allowed several species of fauna and flora to survive and develop their present-day endemic forms.

The iconic endemic animal of the alpine habitat is the Olympic Marmot (*Marmota olympus*). About the same size as the Hoary Marmots (*Marmota caligata*) we have in our province, but browner in colouration, these active animals can often be seen scurrying over the rocky areas and scree slopes. Another small animal often seen is the Olympic chipmunk (*Tamias amoenus caurinus*) – this is an endemic subspecies of the Yellow Pine Chipmunk found in the southern half of mainland BC. We saw both these rodents on our trip. There is another endemic rodent subspecies in the Olympics, the Olympic Pocket-gopher (*Thomomys mazama melanops*), but this is much more difficult to find.

Two other rarely seen animals found only in the Olympics are the Olympic Snow Mole (*Scapanus townsendii olympicus*) and the Olympic Ermine (*Mustela erminea olympica*) – this latter is a subspecies of the Short-tailed Weasel we have on Vancouver Island and shouldn't really be called an ermine because, like our subspecies, it doesn't normally turn white in winter.

Piper's bellflower (*Campanula piperi*)

About a dozen species and subspecies of flowering plants are endemic to the Olympics, and the majority of them are found in the alpine and sub-alpine habitats. Our group this year only saw the Olympic variety of the Magenta Paintbrush (*Castilleja parviflora olympica*), a showy relative of the more familiar red Common Paintbrush (*Castilleja miniata*) which was also in full bloom. Trips in other years have produced the pretty little blue Piper's Bellflower (*Campanula piperi*), a ground-hugging campanula, and Flett's Violet (*Viola flettii*) which is similar to the Early Blue Violet (*Viola adunca*) we're all familiar with. Also seen have been the yellow Olympic Groundsel (*Senecio neowebsteri*) and endemic varieties of the Bracted Lousewort (*Pedicularis bracteosa atrosanguinea*) and Olympic Cut-leaf Syntheris (*Synthyris pinnatifida lanuginosa*).

The Olympic Mountains produce some of the most spectacular displays of alpine and sub-alpine flowers to be found anywhere in the Pacific Northwest region of the continent. Our group this year saw approximately 90 species in the few hours we were there. The flowers make a hike in the mountains a very special attraction for both the casual visitor and anyone specifically interested in botany, and the endemic species, together with the endemic animals, add a considerable interest for a naturalist.

Special thanks to Agnes Lynn who organized and led the trip, as she has in previous years.

Mouldmen Strike Again

By Bryce Kendrick

I first looked at moulds in a serious way in 1955 when I began my doctoral thesis project, analyzing the slow decay of pine needles in the soil. I saw a number of fungi that were new to science, and proceeded to describe and illustrate them. By 1958, when I graduated and moved to Canada as a Postdoctoral Fellow, I was hooked. I have now spent most of the last 53 years working with these strange beasts. I have had a hand in describing hundreds of new taxa – species and genera, so have a very proprietary attitude toward them.

You are all very familiar with moulds – I am sure you have seen mouldy bread, fruit, or other foodstuffs – and probably regard these organisms as an unmitigated nuisance. However, as I am sure many of you know, it was moulds that gave us Penicillin and Cyclosporine, not to mention blue cheeses and Brie.

Yet to most people they remain essentially invisible, mysterious microorganisms. I wanted to change that, insofar as it was possible for a somewhat obscure, geeky scientist to do so. In 1973, I and a colleague published an initial

Plates taken from Seifert *et al.*, 2011.

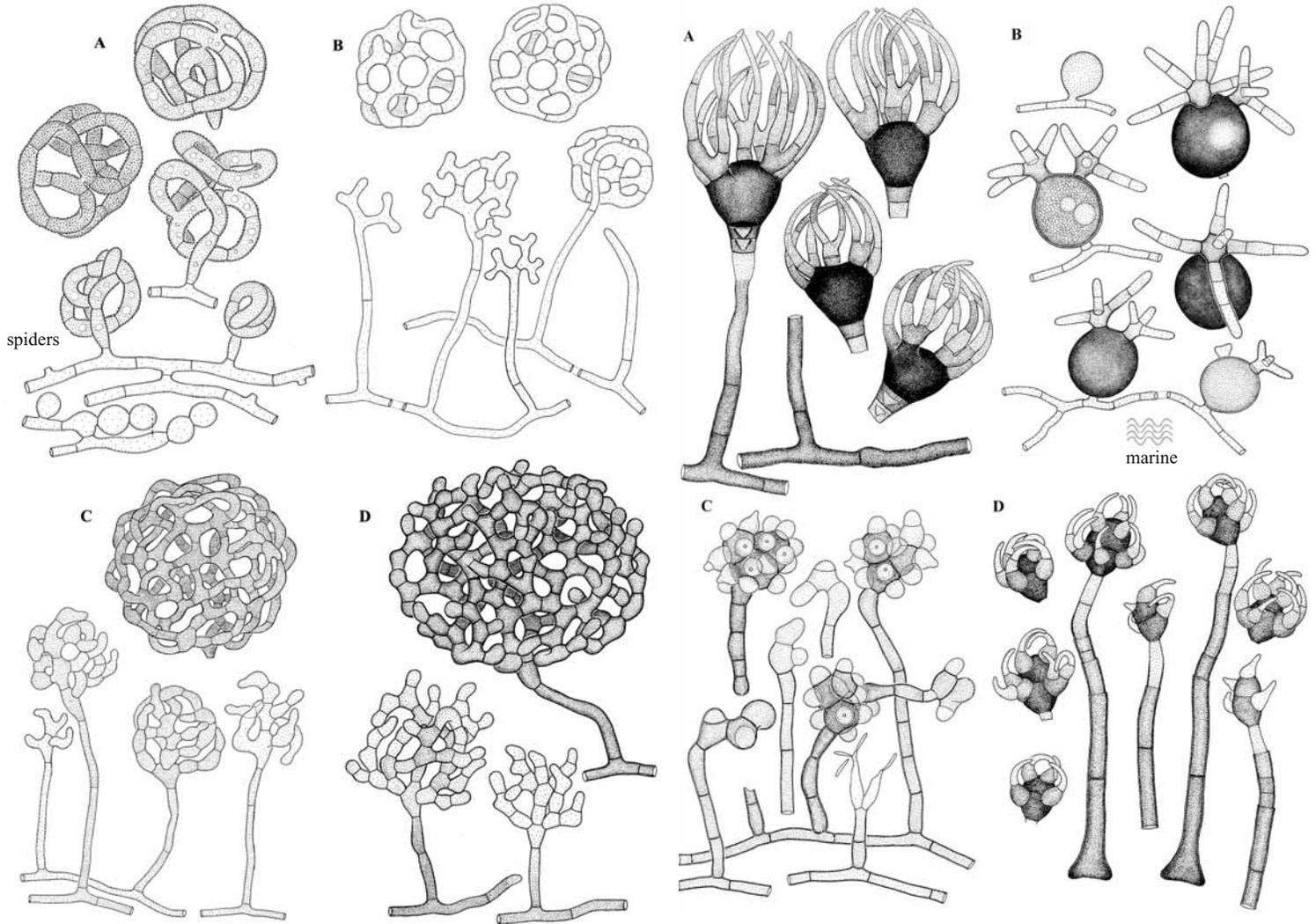


Plate 374. All aeroaquatic (exc. A). A. *Clathroconium arachnicola* (with monilioid resting cells). B. *Calthrosphaerina zalewskii*. C. *Clathrosporium intricatum*. D. *Dendroclathra caeruleofusca*.

Plate 327. A. *Arachnophora insolita*. B. *Orbimyces spectabilis*. C. *Sopagrapha sibika*. D. *Arachnophora fagicola*.

compilation of what we call Hyphomycetes as part of a multi-volume series called *The Fungi*. Our chapter was 186 pages long, and included 67 plates incorporating 635 illustrations.

By 1980 we had co-opted two other authors, and jointly produced a separate book, titled *Genera of Hyphomycetes*. This had 386 pages, 129 plates, and 853 illustrations. This was very 'popular' among the cognoscenti and soon went out of print. For the next 30 years there was (apparently) a hiatus.

However, behind the scenes, four of us had begun to build a worthy successor to the 1980 volume. Over the course of 22 years we gradually accumulated an enormous amount of information, and eventually completed a new book with just over 1,000 pages, 384 plates and just under 1,500 illustrations, which was published in spring of 2011. The Dictionary section gives entries for about 2,900 named genera, compared with 2,032 in 1980, of which 1469 are recognized as applying to distinct, recognizable,

hyphomycete genera. The latest version has a number of features not present in the earlier versions – molecular bar codes (where these are available), hundreds of colour photomicrographs in the much amplified introduction, many keys to particular groups, a phylogenetic classification, an index of known connections between hyphomycetes and their sexual stages, an extensive glossary, and even pictures of the authors with their dogs.

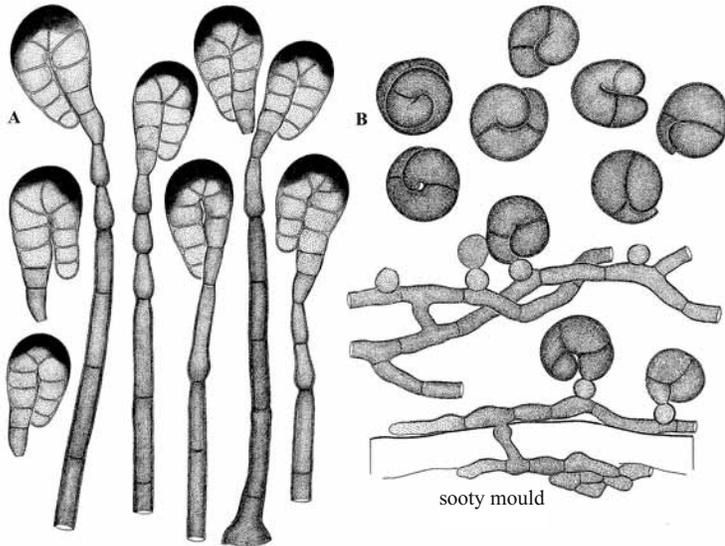
I must tell you that none of the four of us will ever contemplate such an undertaking again. But to show you why these organisms fascinate us, I reproduce a couple of the plates from the new book, which is called *The Genera of Hyphomycetes*. Apparently, the direct object is enough to differentiate the new book from the old.

It would be foolish for me to try to communicate my enthusiasm for this strange group, but I hope to stimulate a little interest by showing you some of the stranger reproductive structures they produce.

By the way, *Slimacomycetes*, shown in one of the plates, was the first new fungus I ever described, back in 1958.

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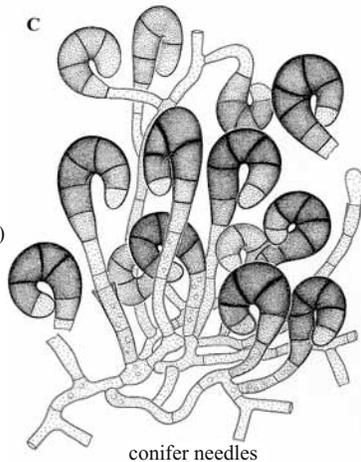


Helicoconidia

Conidia coiled in two or three dimensions.

- Conidia with <1 complete coil, conidiomata (pl. 301)
- Conidia with 1–2 coils (pl. 302–303)
- Conidia with narrow filaments (pl. 304)
- Conidia with 1–several coils and slightly constricted cells (pl. 305)
- Misc. loosely coiled conidia (pl. 306–307)
 - Conidia coiled in 3 dimensions (pl. 308–309)
- Chlamydospore-like conidia (pl. 310)

Other genera with similar conidia can be found in the sections on ameroconidia (pl. 12C) dictyoconidia (pl. 284) and bulbils (pl. 370, 376)



Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 11 new members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our "welcome" column:

Bruce and Terry Crawford
St. Francis Wood

Marjie Welchframe
Humboldt Street
Everything nature!

John Neilson
East Sooke Road
Marine, birds, nature hikes

Adam Ungstad
Michigan Street

Frank Spellacy
Munn Road

Marjorie Gardiner
Sooke Road
Birding, wild flowers, nature walks

Judy Muir
Scott Street
Birding, conservation, walking, photography

Plate 302. A. *Troposporopsis atroapicis*. B. *Helicosingula leucadendri*. C. *Slimacomycetes monosporus*.

Aldo Leopold Film Premieres in January

Join us: 10 January, 2012 at 7 p.m.

By Kem Luther

Tens of thousands of North American zoologists, botanists, and ecologists have made outstanding contributions to our understanding of the natural world. Only a few of these, however, find themselves on the *Who's Who* list for ethical ecology. Ethical ecologists go beyond the simple collection and presentation of scientific information. They venture into a murkier social and personal realm in order to convey to their readers not just what they see, but what they *feel* about what they see. These writers and thinkers are to the study of the natural world what Rembrandt was to painting, Gandhi to politics, Beethoven to music.

Three North Americans stand at the head of the tribe of ethical naturalists. Interestingly, they represent three different half centuries of history, three different regions of the continent. Henry David Thoreau, writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, embraced the wild remnants along the Atlantic littoral. John Muir, active during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, became the apostle of the western North American wilderness. In the first half of the twentieth century, Aldo Leopold took up the mantle of Muir and Thoreau to prophesy about the continent's interior wildness.

Those of us who lived through the second half of the twentieth century watched with fascination the waxing fame of Aldo Leopold. By the time he died, his reputation in the ecological community was secure, but he was not well known to the general public. Leopold consigned his most far-reaching thoughts about the place of humans in the natural world to a series of essays that he assembled into a volume called *Great Possessions*. When he tried to find a publisher for the book, two American companies rejected it. Discouraged, Leopold refused to invest more of his declining energies into the essays. He handed the manuscript over to his son Luna, who opened negotiations with Oxford University Press. In mid-April of 1948, Oxford called to tell Leopold that they wanted to publish the book. A week later Aldo Leopold was dead, felled by a heart attack at age of sixty-one while helping a neighbor fight a fire. Luna Leopold shepherded the book through the publishing process, editing it with notes left behind by his father.

When the book that would become Leopold's ecological testament appeared in 1949, re-titled as *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, it was well received. The book sold steadily for twenty years, propelled by word-of-mouth buzz. By 1970 some 20,000 copies were in print. When the countercultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s anointed Leopold as an early prophet of environmentalism,



Photo courtesy of The Aldo Leopold Foundation

The most recent addition to the Aldo Leopold corpus is *Green Fire*, a seventy-minute documentary on Leopold, the land ethic, and *A Sand County Almanac*. The 2011 film is now premiering at various locations around the world. The world premier of the film in Western Canada is being sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society. It will take place on Tuesday, January 10, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria.

sales of the book took off. Millions of copies of the book have now been printed in nearly a dozen languages. Today, six decades after the book was first published, 40,000 copies are sold each year.

The initial section of *A Sand County Almanac* is a lyrical recounting of seasons that Aldo Leopold and his family spent restoring a ruined farm in central Wisconsin and camping in the Shack, an enlarged chicken shed. Essays in the rest of the book take up a topic that would become synonymous with Leopold's name, the issue of the *land ethic*. A land ethic, he writes, "enlarges the boundaries of

A Sand County ALMANAC

AND SKETCHES HERE AND THERE

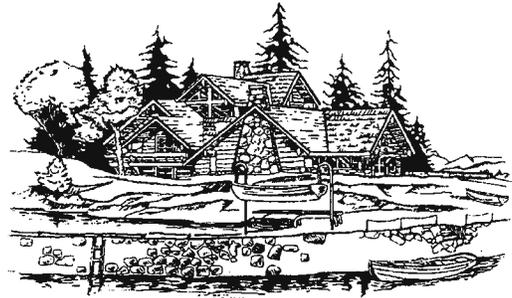
By ALDO LEOPOLD



the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." There is little evidence, Leopold points out, that we acknowledge our membership in this larger community of the land. We say that we love nature, but "just what and whom do we love?" he asks. "Certainly not the soil, which we are sending helter-skelter downriver. Certainly not the waters, which we assume have no function except to turn turbines, float barges, and carry off sewage. Certainly not the plants, of which we exterminate whole communities without batting an eye. Certainly not the animals, of which we have already extirpated many of the largest and most beautiful species. A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these 'resources,' but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state."

As Leopold's influence has grown, a substantial body of secondary literature has built up around the man and his book. There are now several biographies and collections of critical essays on the market. The Leopold Foundation maintains a nature center near the famous Shack and works to maintain the Wisconsin farm that the Leopold and his family restored. The Leopold Educational Foundation holds regular conferences in the American Southwest, near where Leopold spent his early years as a forester (Leopold was responsible for establishing the Gila Wilderness Area in 1924, the first national park to be set aside as an American wilderness preserve). Leopold's five children, all of whom became scientists and naturalists, have become objects of public interest in their own turn.

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A Monarch in Victoria?

By Annie Pang

Where do I begin? If you noticed the front cover you might well be asking yourself, what is a Monarch Butterfly doing on the cover page of *The Victoria Naturalist*? Many butterfly folk have explained repeatedly that we do not get the Monarch Butterfly here in Victoria or anywhere on Vancouver Island. Sightings have turned out to include the Painted Lady, Satyr Anglewing, or even some kind of fritillary from up island. Even the Western Tiger Swallowtail, has been misidentified as a Monarch Butterfly. Each butterfly species is a work of art as it lands with

gossamer wings at a nectar source or suns on a broad leaf, its wings spread wide. Considering the Monarch however, there is no denying, it is a real beauty and this one has a story to be told.

Spring of 2011 was late in arrival and, more times than not, a cold and dismal season for butterflies here in Victoria. My search for them, though moderately fruitful considering the inclement weather, was a long and frustrating one. Even summer was unseasonably damp, with cold winds and low temperatures that hardly encouraged butterflies to take wing.



Monarch Butterfly at Glendale Gardens, August 6, 2011. Photos: Annie Pang

However, I was determined to find these fragile creatures somewhere and somehow at any opportunity that presented itself and temperatures were right for flight.

As August warmed up substantially, my adventure took me on a search for the first Pine Whites. Arriving at Glendale Gardens, where their annual art show was in progress, August 6, I soon found myself engrossed in the displays presented. This event allows visitors to connect and support local artists, musicians, and photographers. The venue at Glendale Gardens provides for a relaxed and picturesque setting, as well as prime habitat for the pickiest of local butterflies. This particular visit saw few butterflies, as I wandered the stalls of artwork, despite the showy, abundant blooms that nodded in the gentle breeze. I have noticed, as each year passes, the sightings of butterflies are fewer and fewer, and this afternoon was no exception. I could cross Pine Whites off my list as they were not in evidence yet. I did manage to capture a few photos of a lone Western Tiger Swallowtail (rather late in the season for them) on a Butterfly Bush and a few Cabbage Whites that are always evident, flitting busily from one bush to another. What happened next, I really wasn't prepared for...

As it had become increasingly hot, I removed my yellow silk scarf from my neck and wrapped it loosely over my hat for protection from the sun. I had just bought a stained-glass butterfly ornament for our garden from one of the artisans when, suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere, a large orange, fragile-winged creature, flew over my head, near the Lily Garden and headed toward another part of the main garden area! There was no mistaking that it was a butterfly and I was determined to find out what it might be. It appeared large even to be a fritillary. I had sighted and photographed a Hydaspe Fritillary at Glendale Gardens a few years ago and was convinced this could be the same species. It was too large to be a Painted Lady or a Satyr Anglewing, both of which I had seen in happy numbers this summer. Whatever fatigue I may have experienced at that moment, simply vanished and so, with my camera faithfully hung around my neck, I was determined to chase this colourful and unexpected visitor all around the gardens if need be, just to get a really good look at it and, hopefully, a few decent pictures.

I left my husband John scrambling after me while I dodged exhibits, artists, booths, plants, gardens, the young, the elderly, and any other life forms, including dogs, in pursuit of this butterfly. I was on a mission and felt compelled to follow.

Initially it landed in some foliage in one of the upper gardens. It was here that I managed to catch my breath, and blink in awe and surprise. This was one very special butterfly, a Monarch, a species that typically is never found on the Island although there had been reports over the years or a few sightings. My knee-jerk reaction was, of course, to shoot first and question it later!! My camera was in overdrive taking pictures from every angle I could manage. This Monarch had brightened my day with its magical presence and what a chance meeting for both of us! Me, a woman with a passion for butterflies, and he, the Monarch, way off course...or was he? We shall never know. How serendipitous! How amazing

I had just bought a stained-glass butterfly ornament for our garden from one of the artisans when, suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere, a large orange, fragile-winged creature, flew over my head, near the Lily Garden and headed toward another part of the main garden area!

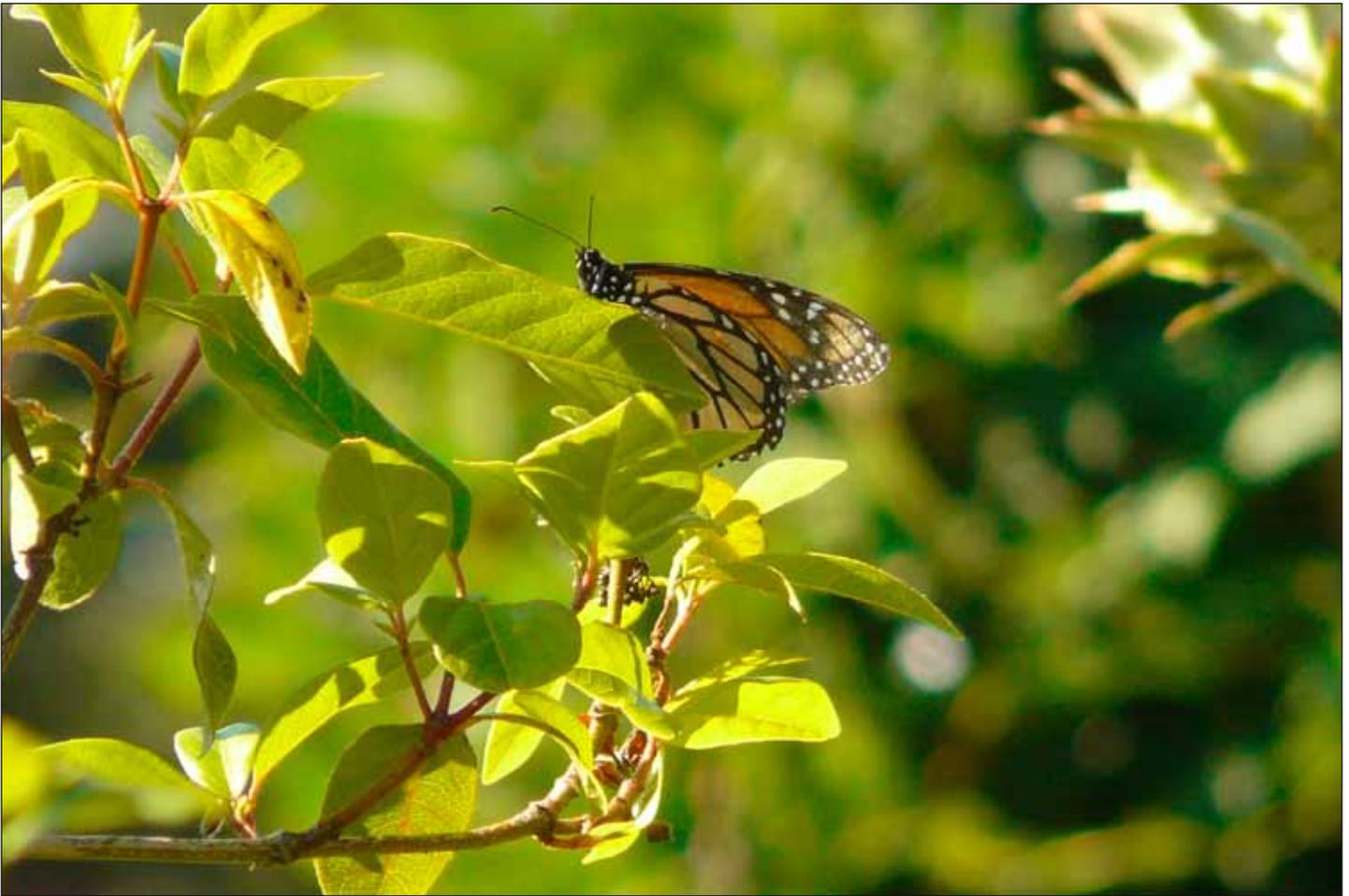
was this, that here on this particular day, I should be watching for butterflies. This particular specimen was hell-bent on giving me a good workout. Just as I thought it had left, it would taunt me, by returning to my side. This game seemed to go on for some time. Eventually, the colourful creature alighted on a sedum in bud but not yet flowering. With wings spread open wide, practically under my nose it stayed quite still for a while. What was interesting to note, sometime later I was told, was that this specimen was a male Monarch Butterfly and that my silk scarf was virtually covered in designs of female Monarch butterflies. Could this have been the lure and attraction? Who would wonder at such a coincidence? I was so intent and possessed by my amazing find, that my frantic activity was creating some unusual stares from passers by, but I remained oblivious. After a short rest, the Monarch flew to a Joe Pye Weed bush, and then to one of many Butterfly Bush. I eventually lost track of time. The heat, the excitement of it all, and the burst of energy that had seen me chasing around the garden finally exhausted me and I, too, had to rest. It was at that very moment the butterfly simply vanished. What could I say, but "Thank you, thank you!"

With a smile on my face, 168 pictures later, and a great sense of satisfaction, I headed to our vehicle with John, euphoric with my encounter with a Monarch. It was then I realized I had taken in little of the art show, but it was all worth the effort. Before I left the gardens, I recalled as I passed by Jane Tice (Retail Director at Glendale Gardens) on our way out, yelling, "I got a Monarch here", to which she responded, "We don't GET Monarchs here!" A few days later, I e-mailed her a picture and, being a woman of few words, and she too from places back east, wrote back, "Now that is ONE butterfly I really DO know."

To the seasoned photographer, 168 pictures doesn't sound like too many pictures, but my camera is not an SLR. It is slow but works well for me on most occasions and this was one of those special moments.

The following day, I called Butterfly Gardens, here in Victoria, to see if they had any escapees recently, in particular, Monarch butterflies. Although admitting that some butterflies do get loose on occasion, they told me they had not had any Monarchs recently or for some time.

Since this sighting was such an unusual experience, I have



dedicated this article specifically to the Monarch Butterfly. Even though I was fortunate to identify and encounter 22 of our butterfly species over the spring and summer months, I felt this sighting was worth sharing, more so than others. I am aware that individual numbers of butterflies are way down here in Victoria again, and hope that in the next few years we will see some species rebound. This chance meeting with the Monarch will remain with me as something very special. No matter where it came from or where it was going, it has sent me searching for more information as to the uniqueness of this incredible creature. Its migration is one like no other, for a butterfly species, and their wintering habitat in Mexico (for Eastern Monarchs) and California (Western Monarchs) needs urgent protection.

During my research on the subject of the Monarch I have included some websites about butterfly “farms” that raise butterflies, including Monarchs for release at weddings and special occasions, but at least they appear to be responsible as to whom they sell live butterflies to. I don’t like the idea, but if it is going to be done, best that it be done in areas where the butterflies have a chance at a full life of freedom (once they are released) and breeding. Here are two:

<www.thebutterflysite.com/livesuppliers.shtml#FAQ>

And <<http://www.themauibutterflyfarm.com/>>.

There is a Canadian company, “Butterflies and Roses”, that I found on the internet that sells butterflies “coast-to-

coast”, also for release at weddings and/or corporate functions and this was not a happy thought at all in Canada until I contacted them and they assured me they only raise eastern Monarchs and will not ship them west of the Rockies, only the Painted Ladies which do thrive here. They know that Monarchs released on this part of the west coast will not be able to breed and they also know a lot about the migratory routes of western Monarchs which are completely different than the eastern ones that migrate by the “10’s of millions” as opposed to the “10’s of thousands” of the western ones. I was most relieved to hear back from them. If you want more information on this: <<http://www.butterfliesandroses.com/about.htm>>

Western Monarchs live west of the Rockies (but only where there is Milkweed indigenously) and are fewer in numbers. They migrate from Canada through to central coastal California which is where they over-winter. For the western Monarch there are only eight to 10 remaining such sites, with approximately 50,000 Western Monarchs over-wintering in each. Still, it appears that for Monarchs on both sides of the Rockies, numbers are diminishing due to destruction of over-wintering sites.

The World Wildlife Fund, however, is doing some excellent conservation work with eastern Monarchs in cooperation with the Mexican government, and that is very encouraging. You can check this out at the website below which describes

some crucial over-wintering sites in the hills of Mexico that are being set aside to protect this delicate ecosystem that sustains the longest-living generation of Monarchs: <<http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/finder/monarchbutterflies/monarchbutterflies.html>>

The most frequently asked questions were:

1) *Do we get Monarchs here?* Only by accident or an ignorant attempt at raising them here. *Why not?* No Milkweed. People don't seem to realize that baby butterflies (caterpillars) need to eat too and that the Monarch is quite specific about eating only Milkweed and although Milkweed grows in abundance in many places, this area, too far west of the Rockies even for Western Monarchs, is not one of them.

2) *What can I plant in my garden to attract this lovely butterfly? What if I plant Milkweed?* It won't make any difference because we don't get Monarchs here and our habitat does not include or support Milkweed in the abundance needed by a population of Monarchs. Every time an attempt has been made to raise Monarchs here by planting Milkweed and bringing in Monarchs, they have not returned.

3) *I was biking down the road and I saw that exact butterfly in between two houses as I was going by!* You must have better vision than I do!! (This came from someone who knows nothing at all about butterflies).

4) *Don't we have lots and lots of butterflies?* How many did you see this summer that weren't white?

5) *How long do they (Monarchs) live?* The first three generations live for four to six weeks as adults and the fourth generation, which is the migrating generation, apparently travels from southern Canada down to their more tropical destinations to hibernate through the winter and then begin the journey back north. They mate once they reach where they're going and the subsequent generations start over from there. So the fourth generation can live up to eight months, or so I've read.

But this article was to be mostly about my own incredible experience of seeing an old friend (I'm from Toronto and saw lots of Monarchs as a child) in a place it shouldn't have

been. I judge that it would have been the third generation as the fourth doesn't usually emerge until September/October, and so it would not have found a mate and probably had a very short life and is probably long gone by now. I have no idea if it was an eastern or western Monarch, only that if it had not already mated before ending up this far west, it wouldn't.

I just hate to think this lovely creature's life was in vain. My encounter with the Monarch was a wondrous experience at the time, but finding out that it might be due to animal cruelty made me feel worse. Perhaps the other possibility of its being blown off course by the brisk easterly winds we had for a lot of the season helped me feel a bit better.

By the way, on Sunday we returned to Glendale Gardens to take in the show. The Monarch was nowhere to be found, and even the day before, nobody recalls seeing it. If it weren't for those pictures, I might have to wonder if it had been there myself!

However it found its way there, no pictures can do justice to the experience of seeing a living Monarch flying wild. A friend suggested I explain how it felt, but the best I could do was this poem:

*Oh lovely creature, landing in the green,
how coyly did you hide yourself from me;
yet close enough that you could still be seen
so I could dream your possibility.
Would you come out to fly once more my way
or vanish like a wish on silky wings?
I asked "Dear Fairy, come a while to stay
as Time stops for the magic that you bring."
You came! You floated by my head to land
and I was spellbound, drinking in my fill
as Royalty extended me this hand,
you opened up your wings, so close and still.
I'll look back on this day that I was blessed,
as Nature's displaced beauty here undressed...*



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The 2011 Christmas Bird Counts

By Ann Nightingale

With Christmas falling on a Sunday this year, the available weekends for bird counts has been reduced a little, so you'll notice we have a full Christmas Bird Count weekend this year.

We finally broke our record for field participants this year, with 217 "bush-beaters". I'm hoping we can continue the trend and bolster some of our smaller teams at the same time. Despite the terrific participation, last year's number of birds was the lowest in ten years with 58,180 birds of 140 species recorded. The weather was less than wonderful, so perhaps we'll see a rebound this year. Those who have followed migration in 2011 know that many species arrived and left late. Perhaps we'll have some stragglers hanging around into December.

The Christmas Bird Counts

Victoria Saturday, December 17, 2011

South Saltspring Island/Sidney
Sunday, December 18, 2011

North Saltspring Island/Gabriola
Sunday, December 18, 2011

Duncan Sunday, January 1, 2012

Sooke Monday, December 26, 2011

2011 Bird Count Areas

	Area Name	Leader	Phone	Email
1	Butchart Gardens - N. Highlands	Warren Drinnan	250-652-9618	drinnan99@telus.net
2	Central Highlands	Warren Lee	250-478-7317	wglee@telus.net
3	Goldstream - Finlayson Arm	Robin Robinson	250-391-5995	robinsnestridge@msn.com
4	Thetis Lake - Hastings Flat	Ann Stewart	250-595-3938	ann-stewart@shaw.ca
5	Langford Lake	Glen Moores	250-652-7072	gmoores@islandnet.com
6	Albert Head - Triangle Mountain	David Allinson	250-391-1786	passerine@shaw.ca
7	Esquimalt Lagoon - Mill Hill	Val George	250-748-6120	valgeorge2006@hotmail.com
8	Esquimalt Harbour	Ann Nightingale	250-652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
9	Portage Inlet - The Gorge	Daniel Bryant	250-361-9049	jingming@uvic.ca
10	Victoria Harbour	Mitchell Grant	250-384-4949	mdgrant@telus.net
11	Beacon Hill Park	Mary Robichaud	250-652-6450	maryrobichaud@shaw.ca
12	Oak Bay	Mike Edgell	250-656-5998	medgell@uvic.ca
13	University - Cadboro Bay	Val George	250-748-6120	valgeorge2006@hotmail.com
14	Ten Mile Point - Arbutus Rd	Agnes Lynn	250-721-0634	thelynns@shaw.ca
15	Gordon Head - Mt. Douglas	Margie Shepherd	250-477-5280	mshepherd@cw.bc.ca
16	Swan Lake - Cedar Hill	Bill Dancer	250-721-5273	w.dancer@telus.net
17	Blenkinsop Lake - Panama Flats	Ian Cruickshank	250-382-1652	ian.cruickshank@telus.net
18	Elk Lake - Cordova Bay	Mike McGrenere	250-658-8624	mmcgrener@shaw.ca
19	Prospect Lake - Quick's Bottom	Dave Fraser	250-479-0016	Dave.Fraser@gov.bc.ca
20	Martindale - Bear Hill	Mike Bentley	250-479-7024	mbentley@lgl.com
21	Zero Rock (ocean)	TBA	250-652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
22	Chain Islets (ocean)	Marilyn Lambert	250-477-5922	lambert@pacificcoast.net.
23	Juan de Fuca (ocean)	Ron Bates	250-386-1264	rbates@bc1.com

Birds of note in 2010 were four species with new Christmas Bird Count records: Cackling Goose (381), Wood Duck (128), Turkey Vulture (17) and Eurasian Collared Dove (17), and an Iceland Gull discovered at Esquimalt Lagoon that stayed around long enough for all those who were interested to see it.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Counters under 18 years of age and Bird Studies Canada members are invited to participate at no charge. Other counters are asked for a \$5 tax-deductible contribution to offset the costs of the count and follow-up publications. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. Anyone can help out by acting as a tally person or as a spotter. Most teams spend all of the daylight hours out in the field, but there is room for people who can only spend part of the day too. Come out for as long as you can! There are a few "keeners" who go out looking and listening for owls in the pre-dawn hours, and a few teams of boating birders who check out the offshore waters, weather permitting and suitable boats available. And if you really can't come out, feeder counts can be reported via the VNHS website.

If you are curious, interested, would like to see lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, or just need more information, please check out the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/> and the Christmas Bird Count site <www.birdsource.org> or contact Ann Nightingale at 250-652-6450 or by email at motmot@shaw.ca for the Victoria count; Karen Ferguson at 250-537-2831; siskin59@shaw.ca for the South Salt Spring/Sidney counts (Tim Marchant at tim@villagecobbler.ca if you are on North Salt Spring – also on December 18); and Derrick Marven (marven@shaw.ca; 250-748-8504) for the Duncan

count. If you have a preference to count in a specific area, you may contact the team leader for the area directly.

Post Count Gathering

After several years of trying a full potluck for the post-count gathering, we're going back to a drop-in/finger food style get-together. I think the cost and effort of putting items together for the meal was a bit much for people who were spending the day in the field. Please bring what you can share. We'll try to have a few pots of something warm and delicious (stew, chili, soup, or something similar) for those coming in directly from the cold. If you'd be willing to bring a crock pot of something warm, please let me know. We're working on a couple of other surprises for this year's post-count, so stay tuned! The post-count gathering will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the lower hall at **Gordon Head United Church, 4201 Tyndall**. We can always use a few people on the day of the event to set things up, make tea and coffee, etc., so if you'd like to help, we'd love to have you join us. You don't even have to be a birder—anyone can help.

A noticeable change in this year's list of leaders is the absence of Andy Stewart. Andy has been leading the Ten Mile Point zone for many years and has become a mainstay of our count. However, a change in residence means a change in other things, too! Thank you, Andy, for all of your help on previous counts!

If you'd like to be a bird counter this year, please contact the leader for the zone you'd like or register on the VNHS website. And don't forget to invite a friend!



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Chatter

Activities of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory

By Shona Lawson



Another successful passerine migration monitoring season is complete out at Rocky Point and a big THANK YOU to all the volunteers and supporters that made this season possible and successful. Our fall passerine migration wound down activities by mid-October and in mid-September nocturnal activities started up and continued until the end of October. The Northern Saw-whet Owl Project is part of Project OwlNet <www.projectowl.net>, a continental wide project monitoring and gaining knowledge of this species. Rocky Point Bird Observatory

monitors these charming little owls on their fall migration and several of our banded Northern Saw-whet Owls have been captured on Bainbridge Island in Washington State, and one was recaptured in Saskatchewan!

Many once common North America bird species are experiencing declines across all or portions of their ranges, including the Northern Saw-whet Owl. Partners-In-Flight, an international organization comprised of Canada, the US, Mexico, and Latin American countries considers the Northern Saw-whet Owl a species of concern and a priority



Northern Saw-whet Owl. *Photo: Ann Nightingale*

species for population monitoring and improving our knowledge of their migration ecology. Little is currently known about the western population of Northern Saw-whet Owls, particularly the coastal population, and Rocky Point Bird Observatory is the only observatory conducting population monitoring for Northern Saw-whet Owls west of the Canadian Rockies.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory banded 525 Northern Saw-whet Owls during the 2010 banding season and are anticipating possibly 700 birds for the 2011 season. As of September 25, 2011, 43 Northern Saw-whet Owls had been newly banded at Rocky Point. Rocky Point Bird Observatory's contribution to the continental population monitoring of the species plays an important role in gathering long-term data and filling knowledge gaps about the migration and ecology of this little owl. To learn more the Northern Saw-whet Owl Project and Rocky Point Bird Observatory visit us at our website <www.rpbo.org>.

Feature Bird: Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*)

The Northern Saw-whet Owl is a small owl that inhabits coastal and interior forested habitats and breeds across many provinces, territories, and states in North America. These owls have no ear tufts, their face is white outlined in brown and white, their breast is streaked with brown, and they have a black bill and yellow eyes. Its breeding season runs from February to July. In southern BC clutches are initiated from late February to early April, with a mean clutch size of 12 and a mean incubation period of 27-29 days (Cannings *et al.* 1987).

Across most of its range this small owl preys on small mammals such as deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) and white-footed mice (*P. leucopus*). However, a diet study using stable isotope analysis (Hobson and Sealy 1991) found marine invertebrates such as intertidal amphipods contributed substantially to the diet of non-breeding Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus brooksi*) on Haida Gwaii (formerly Queen Charlotte Islands). This may also be true for Northern Saw-whet Owls that occupy shoreline and adjacent coastline habitats in North America.

A sub-species, *Aegolius acadicus brooksi*, inhabits Haida Gwaii, and is considered Threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada and is listed as Threatened under Schedule 1 of the federal Species At Risk Act.

Since 2002, Rocky Point Bird Observatory has banded 2800 Northern Saw-whet Owls, but there are still knowledge gaps regarding the populations, distribution, movements, behaviour, and breeding biology. For example, a fairly recent arrival to British Columbia, the Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) is a known predator of these small owls and may be contributing to their decline.

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Where the Mountains Meet the Sea

By Harry Barwin

Where the mountains meet the sea
Is Victoria and home to me
It is there I want to be
With happy expectancy
Here I greet each new day
And enjoy it, I can say
Victoria's charm day by day
In every dream and play

Let me walk in Beacon Hill Park
See Victoria light and dark
Sit by Clover Point and mark
My course in Sailor's Ark
All 'round where is the land
Placed in beauty by Nature's hand
Victoria's ocean and sand
Love and magic me command

O! When you see the dogwood flower
That's Victoria's finest hour
Guarded by high snowy tower
Pure delight and mighty power
It beckons me, and now
I know that it is how
Victoria's multi glory rivalry
Keeps my home by the sea.

HAT Tricks

Motion Supporting Extending Property Tax Reductions to Owners of Conservation Covenants Strongly Supported at the Union Of BC Municipalities Conference

By Adam Taylor, Executive Director,
Habitat Acquisition Trust

That has to be the least exciting title for an article in *The Victoria Naturalist* ever, yet it is an exciting development. HAT and the Land Trust Alliance of BC (LTABC) have been working to extend property tax reductions for land owners with ecologically significant land for some time, in fact I have written about it before. There is still plenty of work to be done, but I'm happy that this first step is not just finished, but received such incredible support from municipalities and regional districts.

In case you missed it the first time, or have forgotten (and I can't blame you – when the proper names of levels of government become more important than the proper names of flora and fauna, my reading interest wanes too), a local landowner with a natural state covenant on her land approached the provincial government with a question: why is she paying high property taxes on land that is being protected for nature and future generations? Other provinces and the Islands Trust area recognize the value of protecting natural habitats by reducing the amount of property tax owners pay on the parts of their land covered by a natural area covenant. But in most of BC covenant holders pay, and sometimes pay a lot, for land that is under covenant. A conservation covenant is a legal agreement signed with a conservation organization such as HAT that stays with the property in perpetuity and mandates that a portion or all of the property remain in its natural state. These covenants do not benefit the land owner, who loses the ability to do whatever they please with their land, and often lose large amount of property value. They benefit nature, and through that, all of us.

The answer from the province was that BC municipalities did not support extending this kind of “benefit” to owners of protected land. Years ago, municipalities had been very concerned that an Islands Trust or Nova Scotia style natural area protection tax exemption program would cost them a lot of money. But municipalities have gained a lot of experience since then, especially in the Islands Trust area. In this one part of BC, there is a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program, created by the province through the Islands



HAT

Creating Conservation Legacies

Trust Act. The fears that land owners would flock to sign covenants on every backyard ended up being unwarranted.

So we asked local municipalities if they would consider it again, by bringing the following motion to be voted on at the annual Union of BC Municipalities Conference:

WHEREAS the Islands Trust currently offers a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program which provides property tax relief of up to 65% for owners who wish to enter into a conservation covenant to protect important natural features of their property;

AND WHEREAS regional districts may wish to support and encourage property owners to preserve natural areas for the benefit of future generations:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development be requested to grant local governments the authority to implement natural area protection tax exemption programs.*

The response was nothing short of enthusiastic. Everyone we spoke to in local government in the region was supportive. The resolution was forwarded by the Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast municipalities to the UBCM Resolutions Committee, who also endorsed it. Ultimately, UBCM passed the motion at their most recent annual conference in September. The level of support was amazing.

So what's next? Well, municipalities cannot do this by themselves. The province of BC needs to change the Local Government Act so that regional and local governments can actually begin to implement natural area protection tax exemption programs. The result would be a small incentive for landowners to protect natural areas instead of developing them.

We know that local governments support it, and it won't cost the province anything (local governments are the ones who would lose a tiny amount of revenue, not the province), so convincing the province and sorting out all details of how such a program would work will be easy right?

Right?

* Actually our original resolution was worded a little differently, and, well, wrong. But the UBCM Resolutions Committee was kind enough to reword it slightly for us – this is their wording, and the resolution that passed.

BULLETIN BOARD/CLASSIFIEDS

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.

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 one to one and a half hours long and free unless otherwise noted.

Every Wednesday and Sunday Bird Walk. Meet at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary parking lot: 9:00 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.

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

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.

NOVEMBER

Thursday, November 3

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Mushrooms of Southern Vancouver Island

Kem Luther, a writer and retired university professor and administrator, lives in Metchosin, BC. He is the author of *Cottonwood Roots* and *The Next Generation Gap* and is working on a new book about natural systems in British Columbia. The chapter in the new book on mycorrhizal mushrooms will be appearing in a forthcoming issue of *Fungi* magazine. The South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (SVIMS) is a small society interested in all aspects of mycology and mushroom appreciation. Its members include professional mycologists, mushroom growers, mushroom pickers, cooks, photographers, and other enthusiasts. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of Feb.-June and Sept.-Nov., at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 Burnside Road West, Victoria, BC. Meetings consist of a short business meeting in which news, upcoming events, and mushroom forays are discussed, followed by refreshments and a presentation by a guest speaker or one of our outstanding members. SVIMS also produces a newsletter, *Fungifama*, available online or by mail. The cost of joining SVIMS is \$20 per family per year and includes the newsletter.

Saturday, November 5

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 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca.

Sunday, November 6

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Mushrooms at Royal Roads

This area has a diverse selection of mushrooms so it is always a great place to wander at this time of year. **Kem Luther** will gently lead us around but this outing is intended for us to discover our own specimens to try to identify. Bring your favourite field guide and we will have some other material also to assist you at learning more about these mysterious fungi of the forest. Please note this is an observation trip, not intended for collecting. However a few selected specimens will be chosen by the leader for closer examination. Dress for the weather as it may be cold or wet. Bring a snack and a drink. Meet at Royal Roads University (2005 Sooke Road) by the Tennis Courts near the university entrance at 10:00 a.m. Parking fees in effect. No pets please. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, November 8

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Capturing Nature with Compact Cameras

Join **Mikhail Belikov**, a professional photographer, as he shares his techniques for getting the best images of nature with simple compact cameras. Join this hands-on presentation and bring your own camera if you wish to, but don't forget to read and bring the manual. If you are still thinking about buying a camera, Mikhail will also discuss how to select a compact camera that fulfills your needs. Although the presentation will primarily focus on 'point & shoot' cameras, users of more advanced camera systems may also find it useful, or at least entertaining. Mikhail will stay after the presentation to answer your questions. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, November 12

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 8:00 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, November 13

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Mike McGrenere will lead this trip on the *M.V. Coho* on its usual sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. The crossing takes 1½ hours and this is the best opportunity to see bird species that are usually found further out to sea, including shearwaters, fulmars, and phalaropes. We will be birding from the bow of the boat, so dress warmly. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10:00 a.m. for the 10:30 a.m. sailing. We will return on the 2:00 p.m. sailing. Allow plenty of time for parking; street parking is free on Sundays. Ferry cost is \$33.00 Cdn. return. **Important!! You will require a Passport or enhanced driver's licence to go through Customs.**

Tuesday, November 15

BOTANY NIGHT ***NOTE LOCATION CHANGE!!***

New Caledonia – Glimpses of a Biodiversity Hotspot

Wynne Miles will explore some of the most interesting and puzzling flora of the southwest Pacific island of New Caledonia. This flora includes many endemics such as those that adapted to the ultramafic/serpentine substrates deposited after the island drifted away from Australia about 65 million years ago. Two other plants of note are *Parasitaxus ustus*, the only known parasitic gymnosperm, and *Amborella trichopoda*, which is considered to be the most ancient flowering plant. **Please note location change:** University of Victoria, Elliott 167, 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Bring a friend.

Friday, November 18

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Royal British Columbia Museum Paleontology Collections Tour

Join us for a Special Curatorial Tour of the Fossil Collection in the Fannin Building by Paleontologist, **Marji Johns**. The Fossil Collection area is very small, limiting the tour to 10 people. Cost for the group rate is \$8.25, taxes included. Cost includes the Private Tour. The tour will start at 10:30 a.m. sharp, so please leave enough time to find parking. Please note: Our last tour lasted two hours. We will meet at the 3-dimensional BC Map in the museum lobby. No backpacks, large bags, food, or drinks are allowed, and can be left in the Cloak Room (by donation). The Fannin Building is not wheelchair accessible. You must pre-register by phoning **Gwen Walter** before November 16 at 250-727-7376 or 250-744-3313

Saturday, November 19

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Snow Geese at Reifel Bird Sanctuary

Come and see the annual Snow Goose spectacle at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Every November thousands of Snow Geese stop over in this part of the Fraser River delta. There is normally time to visit Boundary Bay or another site as well. Past trips have produced close to 100 species of birds for the day. Participants will carpool from in front of the Elk-Beaver Lake Regional Park Sign on Elk Lake Drive at 5:45 am for the 7:00 am ferry sailing.

We will return on the 5:00 p.m. sailing. Cost should be about \$55.00 per person with car-pooling. Bring a lunch and a drink. Call Rick at (250) 885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca to confirm.

Wednesday, November 23

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Hoo-hoo's in Your Backyard? – Owls of Southern Vancouver Island

Our forests, fields, beaches and backyards offer food and shelter to a wide variety of owls, some of which are here in surprising numbers. **Ann Nightingale**, past president of VNHS and Rocky Point Bird Observatory will present the sights and sounds of these usually stealthy local predators, with special emphasis on the Northern Saw-whet Owl, the subject of a monitoring study by RPBO. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, November 26

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 8:00 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, November 27

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Common Mosses of the Victoria Area

Our trip leader **Kem Luther** has stated that if we learn just 20 of the common mosses in the area that we will have covered about 95% of the moss regularly seen in the Victoria area. Kem will show us most of the 20 at Thetis Lake Park to get us started. Meet at the main parking lot at 10:00 a.m. 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. Parking is free in November. Dress for the weather as it may be cold or wet. Bring a snack and a drink. No pets please. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or 721-0634 for more information.

Monday, November 28

MARINE NIGHT

Sea Level Rise in British Columbia: a New Challenge to Protected Areas Management

Almost one-third of the BC coastline is protected in parks and other types of protected areas. Now these protected areas face a new challenge – climate change. A new approach is needed that adapts to: rising sea level, increasing storm intensity and frequency, changing wind, rainfall, humidity, air temperature, and water temperature patterns. Knowledge of the relative sensitivity of shorelines to climate change will help BC Parks and its partners anticipate where changes will be most dramatic. **Doug Biffard**, Aquatic Ecologist with the BC Ministry of Environment, will describe the shoreline information that the province has mapped, then, using examples from local parks and ecological reserves, demonstrate how the information is used to help shorelines and people adapt. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 3

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up – New Location

Meet at Juan de Fuca (Westshore) Recreation Centre Park and Ride (Ocean Blvd and Sooke Rd) at 8:30 a.m. for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the recreation center property, parts of Esquimalt Harbour and the roadsides in between, so bring your walking shoes, field guide, and note-pad. Special interest for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters. For more info, call **Ann Nightingale** at 250-652-6450.

Wednesday, December 7

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Royal British Columbia Museum Entomology Collections Tour

Join us for a Special Curatorial Tour of the Entomology Collection in the Fannin Building by entomologist and well-known BC naturalist, **Dr. Robert Cannings**. The Royal BC Museum's entomology collection contains a quarter of a million specimens of insects and their relatives – everything from spectacular butterflies to a tick just removed from a Fox Sparrow! Because of space limitations, the tour will be for a maximum of 10 people and the group rate for the private tour is \$8.25, taxes included. We will start at 10:30 a.m. sharp, so please leave enough time to find parking. Meet at the 3-dimensional BC Map in the museum lobby. No backpacks, large bags, food, or drinks are allowed – everything can be left in the Cloak Room (by donation). The Fannin Building is not wheelchair accessible. You must pre-register by phoning **Gwen Walter** before December 5 at 250-727-7376 or 250-744-3313. At noon there is a free presentation in the Newcombe Conference Hall: *Feeding the Family*. Join **Dr. Bob Griffin**, Human History Manager, Royal BC Museum, as he takes us on a grocery shopping trip back in time.

Saturday, December 10

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 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

Tuesday, December 13

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

The Flathead River Valley

The Flathead River Valley teems with many species that are threatened elsewhere, including Grizzlies, Lynx, Badgers, Fishers, Wolverines, and Bull Trout. It holds the greatest diversity of plants in Canada and is comparable to Africa's Serengeti for its richness of plant species. Water in the Flathead River is so pure that scientists use it as a benchmark by which to measure water quality in rivers around the world. Last year, the BC government announced that mining and oil and gas development would no longer be permitted in the Flathead, but much work remains to be done to protect this wild valley permanently. **Sarah Cox** from Sierra Club BC will speak about the campaign to protect this ecological jewel by connecting it to Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, which adjoins the Flathead on its Alberta and Montana borders. Hear about some of the recent milestones in the campaign and what's next to secure permanent protection for the Flathead. Sarah's talk will be accompanied by images by members of the International League of Conservation Photographers during a 2009 expedition to the Flathead River Valley. We meet at

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

Saturday, December 17

EVENT

Victoria Christmas Bird Count

See the article (p.16) or visit <www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/>

Sunday, December 18

EVENT

South Saltspring Island/Sidney Christmas Bird Count

See the article in this issue (p.16) or visit <www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/>

Sunday, December 18

EVENT

North Saltspring Island/Gabriola Christmas Bird Count

See the article (p.16) or visit <www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/>

Saturday, December 24

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 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

Monday, December 26

EVENT

Sooke Christmas Bird Count

See the article (p.16) or visit <www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/>

Saturday, December 31

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 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

JANUARY

Sunday, January 1

EVENT

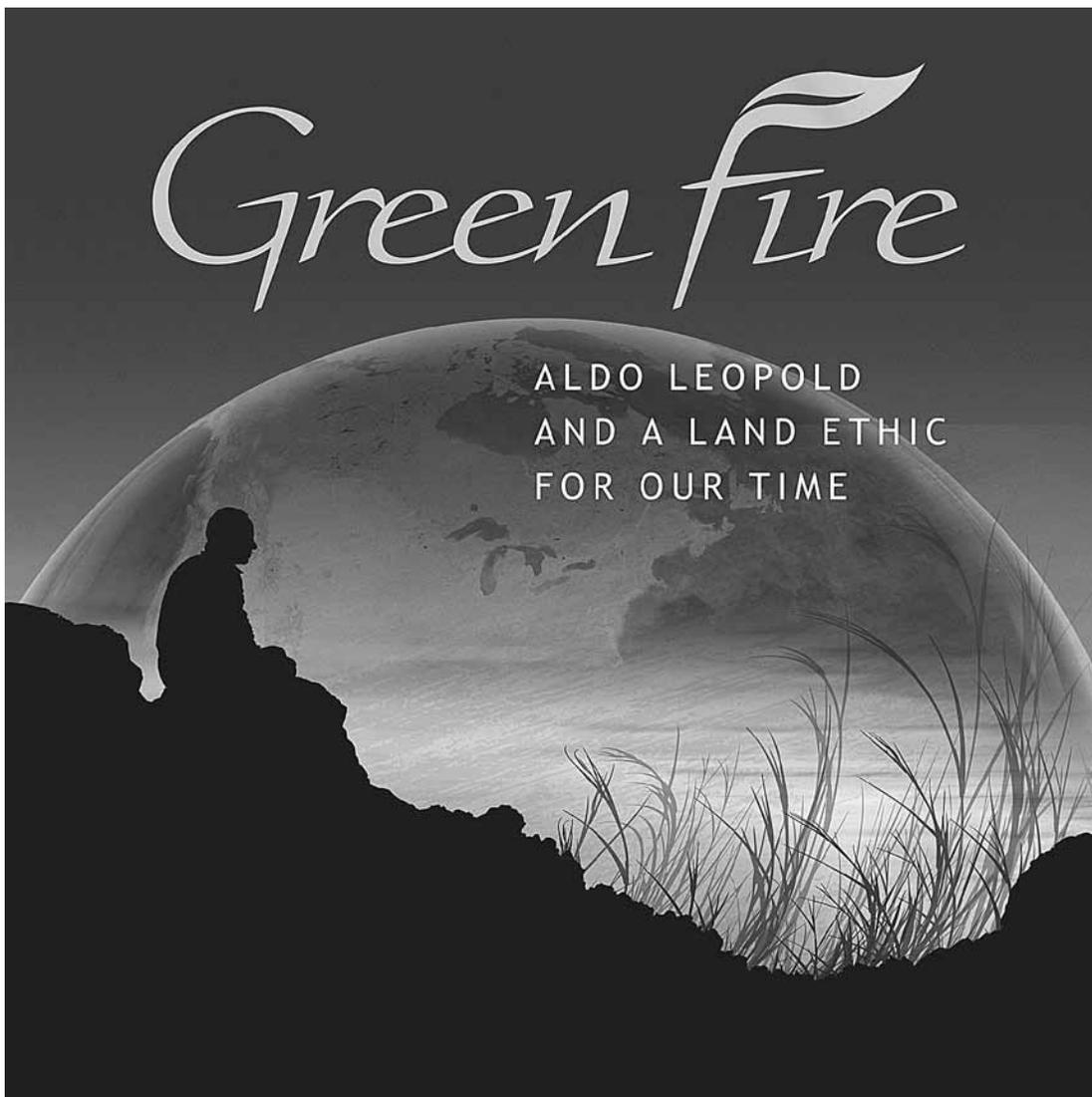
Duncan Christmas Bird Count

See the article (p.16) or visit <www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/>

Tuesday, January 10

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Premiere of Aldo Leopold Documentary **Note Time Change
VNHS is sponsoring the Victoria (and Western Canada) premiere of *Green Fire*, the new **Aldo Leopold** documentary. Leopold, an American wildlife and forest ecologist, founded environmental ethics in the 1940s with the publication of his famous book, *A Sand County Almanac*. The *Almanac*, one of the most popular environmental books ever published (sales in the millions), makes a lyrical plea for the preservation of intact ecosystems. Leopold's life, the film argues, is no less interesting than his book. Once an active foe of every keystone predator, Leopold risked his reputation in the 1940s to make a place for bears, cougars, and wolves in conserved landscapes. VNHS member **Kem Luther** will provide a short introduction to Leopold, his book, and the documentary. We meet at 7:00 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug. (Note that, due to the 70 minute length of the film, we will start at 7:00 p.m.)



VNHS is sponsoring the Western Canadian premiere of *Green Fire*, the new Aldo Leopold documentary: 10 January, 2012 – Join us!