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The Victoria NATURALIST

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COVER PHOTO
Bonaparte’s Gull. *Photo: Marie O’Shaughnessy*

A few words from the Board’s latest recruit: some months ago, when Darren appealed for people to join the society’s board, I stepped forward, not sure of what the experience would be like; I have been on other boards – enough said. So far, the VNHS has been a pleasant surprise: the issues are intriguing; my co-directors affable with an engaging sense of humour, coming from different backgrounds and expertise but united in a love of nature.

The last few days, James Miskelly and I have been going through the submissions to the latest issue of the *Naturalist*, in Claudia’s absence. A chore, you might think, but actually a pleasant experience. To give one example, I read through Jeremy’s article on dragonflies (learning quite a few new words!) with delight, catching the palpable enthusiasm with which he describes his excitement on taking up this latest special interest. And so with the other articles I was privileged to read. I hope you will get the same pleasure from this issue.

So being on the board can be rewarding. (I believe Darren is still looking for a couple of directors...)

Ken Sohm

Our Native Cherry, *Prunus emarginata*: a Seedy Tale

By Kevin Brown

What comes to mind when you think of “native trees” on southern Vancouver Island? Maybe large majestic evergreen conifers like Douglas-fir and western red cedar or distinctive broadleaves like Garry oak, red alder or bigleaf maple, and arbutus. Say “cherry tree” and most of us think of domesticated “flowering” varieties that add colour to city neighbourhoods. Or, of domesticated varieties grown for fruit in the Okanagan. Not the cherry tree species native on Vancouver Island. Many of us probably don’t know one exists.

Bitter cherry (*Prunus emarginata*) (Douglas Ex Hook) is the native cherry tree in coastal BC. It is not large and majestic like Garry oak or our native conifers. It doesn’t

produce the dramatic floral displays of its domesticated relatives. It’s a rather subtle tree (in southern, higher elevation parts of its range, it’s a shrub!) and it certainly is not well studied. However, bitter cherry has important ecological roles and a niche that seems unique among coastal tree species.

Bitter cherry occurs from north-central British Columbia to the coast, south into California and east into Montana, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. On the coast, it occurs to the north on Haida Gwaii, and can be locally abundant at lower elevations on eastern and southern Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and the Lower Mainland. Further south, bitter cherry is found on the Olympic Peninsula and west



Figure 1. Flowers and leaves of bitter cherry. Photo: Jane Shelby Richardson.

slope of the Cascades, throughout the Puget Sound lowland, in the Oregon Coast Range, and southward in higher elevation forests of the Sierra Nevada.

Bitter cherry is early successional. It appears shortly after disturbance has removed the existing forest canopy and then persists until replaced by other species. Disturbance might be fire, logging, or other land clearing such as for agriculture and road construction. If seed are present at the time of disturbance, the ground may erupt in a thicket of small cherry stems, perhaps thousands per hectare. Some foresters feel that such high numbers of bitter cherry will reduce the growth of planted conifers and prefer to reduce its numbers. Cherry can grow rapidly on moist and fertile sites when young, as do many early successional trees. There, it is eventually overtopped by larger, longer-lived species such as red alder, bigleaf maple or evergreen conifers and dies out of the stand. Bitter cherry has a relatively short lifespan; as little as 20-30 years when overtopped by other species, but as much as 75 years in more open conditions. Its ability to survive in low fertility, open sites and improve soil quality over time has made it made it attractive for restoration uses.

Adult trees are best seen in relatively young stands and where not surrounded by larger trees. On southern Vancouver Island, bitter cherry can be seen in various places. Examples near Victoria include: to the west of Sooke along the West Coast Road, in woodlands on the south side of the University of Victoria campus, near Beaver Lake, at Heritage Acres, and on Horth Hill.



Figure 2. Fruits and senescing leaves of bitter cherry.
Photo: Kevin Brown

What makes bitter cherry noticeable in the forest? The bark is a distinctive reddish-brown colour and is smooth with conspicuous whitish-orange lenticels (small horizontal pores).

Bitter cherry is easy to overlook because it's often small. Pojar and MacKinnon (Plants of Coastal British Columbia) state heights range from 2-15 meters, while Farrar (Trees of Canada) states trees may grow to 20 meters in height. Mature trees can be much larger. Mary-Jane Douglas and I have measured trees 38 meters tall and in excess of 35 centimeters diameter on low-elevation, fertile and moist sites on eastern Vancouver Island. Similarly large trees have been noted in Seattle, North Vancouver, and elsewhere in western Oregon and Washington. Large tree sizes are unusual because soils need to be moist and fertile enough to support rapid growth, yet stands have to be sufficiently open to minimize overtopping by surrounding trees. That allows for greater crown retention and longer lifespans. To a certain extent, large trees may not have been noticed more often because no one was looking for them.

What makes bitter cherry noticeable in the forest? The bark is a distinctive reddish-brown colour and is smooth with conspicuous whitish-orange lenticels (small horizontal pores). The bark is similar to that of other cherries and can also be mistaken for that of dark-barked paper birch. It is also flexible, strong and persistent, allowing remains of long-dead, well-decayed cherry logs to be identified on the forest floor. Clusters (corymbs) of 5-12 small white flowers are prominent in mid-late spring (Figure 1) and small, bright-red cherries are visible in late summer and early fall (Figure 2), especially against a background of pale yellow senescing leaves.

Bitter cherry may hybridize with other native or introduced cherry species. This can make identification difficult. In central BC, bitter cherry may hybridize with pin cherry (*Prunus pennsylvanica*). Pin cherry has ecological characteristics similar to bitter cherry, but it occurs mainly east of the Rockies across to eastern Canada and the north-central and northeastern U.S.

On Vancouver Island, bitter cherry may hybridize with "wild" or "sweet" cherry (*Prunus avium*). Sweet cherry was introduced from Europe and has long been bred for fruit production or as an ornamental, with the original species often used as a rootstock for grafting of other cherries. The hybrid, *Prunus x pugetensis* (I like to call it "bittersweet cherry"), has been reported from the Columbia Gorge to the Canadian border and in Victoria. Given the long history of European settlement on eastern Vancouver Island, the hybrid

may occur farther north than Victoria, perhaps to Courtenay or beyond. Distinguishing between *Prunus x pugetensis* and the native bitter cherry requires inspecting flowers, inflorescences and leaf shape and margins. Flowers and leaves can be difficult to see in mature trees in stands, because the live crown recedes upward as trees age, grow taller, and are shaded by surrounding trees. Leaf size is not as reliable for identification because it can vary with moisture, nutrient and light availability. Fallen cherries in late summer may help confirm whether a tree of interest is bitter cherry.

In our conifer-dominated landscape, wildlife diversity may be greater where deciduous broadleaved trees are present. Young bitter cherry is a preferred browse species for black-tailed deer. As with other members of the rose family, flowers and leaves likely support a variety of pollinators, insect larvae and insect-eating birds. Other animals eat the fruits and seeds.

Cherry fruits are inedible to humans, but can be an important seasonal food source for black bears and fruit-eating songbirds like American robins and varied thrushes. The hard seeds are largely resistant to digestion and are then



Figure 3. Black bear scat loaded with bitter cherry fruits and seeds. *Photo:* Kevin Brown

dispersed (Figure 3). Small rodents may eat some seeds and cache others, while many seeds may fall directly from parent trees. If conditions are not suitable for germination, seeds can accumulate over time in the forest floor and soil, especially in stands where some mature trees have been present. In a study of mine on southern Vancouver Island, populations of filled seed in soil averaged 70 per square meter in 50-75 year old conifer-dominated stands. Similar, but lower, seed counts have been reported in Idaho and Oregon. Persistent, buried seeds, combined with those seeds dispersed at the time of disturbance, are the primary means for bitter cherry to re-colonize forest sites after disturbance. The “buried seed” regeneration strategy sets bitter cherry apart from other native tree species, most of which have small wind-dispersed seeds which do not last long in soil.

So, what causes those buried seeds to “erupt” into a thicket of young cherry stems? Seed generally must be present at the time stands are disturbed, and young and vigorous enough to germinate under appropriate conditions. Bitter cherry rarely survives under the low light typical under a forest canopy. Consistent with that, seeds don’t seem to germinate under a closed forest canopy, but do in the open where the canopy has been removed. For bitter cherry seeds to germinate and seedlings to emerge, disturbance has to remove much of the forest canopy and the buried seed has to sense that the canopy is gone. Otherwise, few, if any, seedlings will survive to maturity. If bitter cherry is to persist, disturbance also has to occur within the lifespan of buried seeds. Otherwise, fresh seed has to be dispersed by animals around the time a site is disturbed.

How long do buried bitter cherry seeds live? Seeds are thought to persist for up to several decades, but no one knows if seed that old can germinate. What triggers germination after canopy removal? Possibilities include higher soil temperatures, greater daily variation in soil temperatures, chemical triggers like higher concentrations of nitrate in soil solution, and changes in the light environment. All are environmental changes strongly associated with canopy removal. Ultimately, that is necessary for survival of new cherry seedlings.

In field studies, planted bitter cherry seeds germinated in the early spring in an open clearcut. In controlled environments, seeds germinated best with light and at temperatures similar to those of early spring in the open. At that time, soil temperatures are relatively low, but still greater than under a forest canopy. However, daily variation in soil temperature is also greater in the open and is probably a better indicator to the seed (than is average temperature) that the canopy is missing.

Cherry seeds are often deeply dormant. Extended periods of exposure to warm and cold temperatures may be required to overcome dormancy and prepare the seed to germinate when conditions are suitable. In my field studies, planted seed took 18 months (over two winters) to emerge and many seeds never germinated. Why? Perhaps, dormancy was never overcome in some seeds. Or, maybe, passage through

a fruit-eating bird's digestive tract improves germination. Or, caching of seeds by rodents might increase the probability of germination and survival. Or... Knowing the answers to these and other seed questions would help us understand how bitter cherry persists in a conifer-dominated landscape and how to modify forest practices to influence its abundance.

Once seedlings emerge, subsequent survival may be very low. Our Mediterranean climate is summer-dry. Some sites suitable for emergence may be far too hot and dry for seedling survival later in the growing season. Older seedlings may also be browsed by black-tailed deer. Finally, at some point, young established seedlings may start to reproduce vegetatively from root sprouts. If all goes well, then a thicket of cherry might result and the cycle continues.

Useful references

- Jacobson, Arthur L. and Peter F. Zika. 2007. A new hybrid cherry, *Prunus x Pugetensis* (*P. avium x emarginata*, Rosaceae), from the Pacific Northwest. *Madrono* 54:74-85. Contains a useful key to *Prunus* species found in the region, both native and exotic.
- Klinkenberg, Brian. 2011. A synopsis of E-Flora BC: Electronic atlas of the plants of British Columbia. *Victoria Naturalist* 68.2:14-17. E-Flora BC has very good online information about bitter cherry distribution in B.C from a variety of databases.

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2011 Butterfly Counts Report

By James Miskelly

One peculiarity of butterflies is their inability to handle wet, cold conditions. Butterflies are very diverse and abundant in tropical rain forests. The combination of wet and warm suits them fine. Butterflies are also surprisingly diverse in the arctic, where very cold dry weather seems to pose no problem. But when wet and cold are combined, it just doesn't work. Temperate rain forests are some of the most butterfly-poor habitats on earth and many of the species that we see regularly in Victoria drop off dramatically around Sooke.

For the last few years, the Victoria butterfly counts have been down thanks to wet, cold springs. The spring of 2011 added an exclamation mark to this trend. In my neighbourhood, for example, we had more than a week of frosty nights and icy puddles in the middle of May! As the season

progressed, counters became discouraged and participation declined. The final result was the lowest final tally ever. In last year's report, I expressed optimism that the counts might start to increase; who would have predicted that those counts would be one and a half times higher than in 2011?

Butterfly counters mustn't lose hope. There were still some interesting observations in the 2011 counts. For example, the final count numbers were buoyed by an explosion of Pine Whites in the Goldstream area. A single Green Comma was recorded in the Highlands in April and a few Field Crescents were found off Wallace Drive in June. These oddities can add a lot of satisfaction to a slow day of counting. We are always in need of more counters to ensure a good search effort and to find some of these unusual species. We need regular counters who visit certain areas once a month, but we could also use people who relish the hunt who can seek out some of the less common species. And if you see something unusual while engaged in other field outings, please check your calendar and send me the record. If it's outside of a designated count period, we can always try to find it again in a few weeks. If you would like to participate in the Victoria Butterfly Counts or want more information, please write me at james.miskelly@gmail.com or call 250-544-0455.

2011 Victoria Butterfly Counts Results

Species	April	May	June	July	August	September	Total
Properthus Duskywing	0	2	5	0	0	0	7
Two-banded Checkered Skipper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
European Skipper	0	0	12	53	15	0	80
Woodland Skipper	0	0	0	10	74	16	100
Clodius Apollo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anise Swallowtail	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Western Tiger Swallowtail	0	0	3	2	0	0	5
Pale Swallowtail	0	0	2	4	0	0	6
Pine White	0	0	3	8	532	7	550
Cabbage White	5	16	12	42	29	5	109
Sara's Orangetip	6	5	1	0	0	0	12
Purplish Copper	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Cedar Hairstreak	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Brown Elfin	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Moss' Elfin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Pine Elfin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grey Hairstreak	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Spring Azure	6	15	10	0	0	0	31
Silvery Blue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satyr Anglewing	7	3	0	0	0	0	10
Green Comma	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mourning Cloak	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
California Tortoiseshell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Painted Lady	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Westcoast Lady	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Admiral	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Field Crescent	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Mylitta Crescent	0	0	2	0	2	0	4
Lorquin's Admiral	0	0	9	43	16	0	68
Common Ringlet	0	4	2	7	3	0	16
Common Woodnymph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Arctic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	26	47	70	171	671	30	1015

Discovering Victoria's Dragonflies... Literally!

By Jeremy Gatten

In fashion, they say “pink is the new black” if pink is the “in” colour. In natural history, odonates, the collective term for dragonflies and damselflies, are the new birds. Don't get me wrong – birdwatching is still the frontrunner in terms of number of hobbyists, but the number of odo-philes is swiftly on the rise. This seemingly exponential interest in odonates has been greatly aided by the produc-tion of several top-notch field guides. Locally, we have been spoiled by entomologist Rob Cannings' early passion in this field resulting in the publication of *Introducing the Drag-onflies of British Columbia and the Yukon* in 2002 through the Royal British Columbia Museum. This comprehensive-yet-compact guide covers all 87 species that have been documented in the province and is a must-have resource for anyone interested in our local odonates.

I had my interest piqued around a decade ago while perus-ing the upcoming events in the *Victoria Naturalist* and saw Darren and Claudia Copley were putting on an identification workshop for dragonflies. Being primarily a birdwatcher for most of my childhood, I was beginning to branch my interests out into new areas of natural history. I showed up to this event not knowing what to expect, but was pleasantly surprised to learn that many species could be readily identi-fied and others were a challenge and required close scrutiny. The parallels to birdwatching were quickly adding up and the scales were tipped to solidify my interest when I learned some species actually migrate and exciting discoveries could be made. I had no idea these fragile creatures with cellophane wings had potential to travel long distances.

I casually attempted to learn the local odonates in follow-ing years, but I still thought the damselflies were a little too tiny and their identification seemed too subtle, and all the darners were too fast and never seemed to land. In 2005, an online group emerged (<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/bcdragonflies/>) for dragonfly enthusiasts across the prov-ince. Here I could share my sightings, learn what others were seeing, and request identification help if I was having trouble. With a readily accessible wealth of knowledge to tap into, I set out to make some local discoveries.

In 2006, beginner's luck was on my side when I visited Viaduct Flats one day in late July. I got to put out the word that I had a rare dragonfly alert! Of course there was no phone number to call where an answering machine record-ing would advise me to leave a detailed message about what I had just found. Instead, I drove home, fired up the com-puter, and went to the online group and advised them I had just seen two Black Saddlebags (*Tramea lacerata*). This species is readily identified by the presence of a large dark patch at the base of each hindwing, giving off the



Paddle-tailed Darners (wheel position). Photo: Jeremy Gatten

impressions of saddlebags as the name implies. Black Sad-dlebags was first documented in B.C. in 1995 and records have been sparse since; no evidence of breeding had been recorded. The shoreline of Viaduct Flats was not lined with a group of rabid odo-philes following up on my report, con-trary to the practice of chasing rarities with birdwatching. The observation was noticed, however, and local photogra-pher extraordinaire Tim Zurowski was able to photograph a pair in the wheel position in early August to provide the first documented breeding record for this species in B.C. This pioneering attempt to establish a population on southern Vancouver Island appears to have subsequently failed as they have not been sighted at Viaduct Flats since 2008.

I wouldn't have that kind of luck again until 2010 and when it happened it was in my own backyard! In late winter, I moved into a place that had a man-made pond and was eagerly awaiting the arrival of spring to see what odonates could be found using it. As the summer progressed, I was continually impressed by the diversity of this relatively small artificial pond. By the end of the summer, I had found

22 species, which represents over a quarter of the province's documented species. Within this diversity, I had two records that shone above the rest.

On August 21, I went outside to walk around the pond and noticed an unusual meadowhawk on the grass. In Victoria, meadowhawks can be readily recognized as the majority of the species are small to mid-sized vivid red dragonflies. This particular individual was small like a White-faced Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum obtrusum*), but rather than having a white "face" it was deep red. I decided to try my luck at catching it by hand and managed to nab it after a couple attempts – there is an art to it! In the hand, I found all the diagnostic field marks of a Cherry-faced Meadowhawk (*S. internum*) and my trusty Cannings guide revealed this species had never been recorded on Vancouver Island! Just to be absolutely certain, I photographed the dragonfly from all angles and sent a few shots off to Rob Cannings and Dennis Paulson (author of "Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West" published through Princeton Press) for confirmation. They agreed. I found several more in the following week, which indicated this was either part of a pioneering population or this species had slipped under the radar on Vancouver Island until now.

I patrolled the pond fairly often after that sighting and, just over a week later, luck would strike yet again. This time, I observed a pinkish-orange dragonfly bigger than a meadowhawk flying low over the pond. I was thoroughly intrigued as I knew of no regularly-occurring species that fit that description. This peculiar dragonfly then engaged in an activity I had never observed before. It flew past the pond, circled back, then darted low over the water and dabbed the tip of its abdomen on the water's surface once. I figured

this had to be a female ovipositing, which is the process of releasing eggs. The pond's small size had given me an opportunity to study several other species of dragonflies and damselflies employing different methods of oviposition over the summer and this was unlike anything I had seen. The intriguing dragonfly made two more passes low over the water, giving the water's surface a single tap each time. It then rose up, circling to gain altitude, and flew off over the trees. I dashed upstairs and consulted my resources. The oviposition behaviour was consistent with a glider and all the field marks I managed to see pointed to a Spot-winged Glider (*Pantala hymenaea*). This represented the fourth record of this species in B.C. and, despite the fact actual copulation may not have occurred locally, it was the first provincial record of a breeding attempt. This may have been another pioneering effort and only time will tell if any gliders emerge in the spring. The chances seem slim, but I'll be watching and hoping to make another exciting discovery.

These discoveries are not just of personal interest. "Citizen science" plays an important role in under-studied fields and the contributions of specimen, photographic, or detailed sight records from naturalists are invaluable. Rob Cannings informed me that some of the most interesting records come from everyday naturalists and these can be used to enhance our understanding of the status, distribution, and life history of species within our diverse province. I've currently got my eye on odonates, but the allure of discovery is already drawing my interests into new taxonomic groups. These discoveries await us all – perhaps it's that moth under your porch light or the spider that comes out of the crack on your driveway? Keep an open, inquisitive mind and a camera at the ready and the possibilities are endless.



Cherry-faced Meadowhawk. Photo: Jeremy Gatten

Bird Death Pipes

Excerpted from Audubon California report

Hollow metal and plastic (PVC) pipes and posts are found throughout the world and serve a variety of purposes. Wildlife (birds, reptiles, small mammals) mortalities, including species of conservation concern, have been documented in mine claim marker posts (Brattstrom 1995, Lahontan and Red Rock Audubon Societies 2009) which resulted in passing a law in Nevada that called for the removal of all PVC mine claim markers across the state (American Bird Conservancy 2011). However, wildlife mortalities in pipes (death pipes) are not limited to uncapped mine claim marker posts.

In March, 2009, an employee of the Audubon California's Kern River Preserve in the Kern River Valley, California discovered a fallen irrigation standpipe 6" in diameter and 10' tall on adjacent California Department of Fish and Game land that contained numerous bird carcasses and remains of other wildlife. Alarming, the fallen pipe contained the remains of over 200 dead birds. Four additional pipes were identified and subsequently cut down. All contained dead bird debris (although we were unable to collect it because it fell down the vertical pipes and collected underground in the horizontal buried pipe).

Death Pipes are everywhere. Any open top vertical pipe can be a death trap to birds and other wildlife.

This is a nearly invisible problem. Unlike birds colliding with buildings, windows or other structures where they remain visible and obvious to people, birds trapped in pipes end up dying a slow death completely unnoticed in sewer systems, septic tanks, or other hidden locations.

This is a widespread problem that kills millions of birds and one that individuals can work to solve with little cost and effort.

- It is not just the occasional bird trapped in certain situations. We have found hundreds of bird carcasses in a single 6" steel pipe.
- Nearly every pipe we have looked in contained bird remains – also reptiles and small mammals.
- Pipes immediately attract curious birds. Twice we have found dead birds in 3" steel pipes that were leaned against a building for only a few days. One pipe trapped two House Finches and one pipe trapped a Rock Wren.
- It is not just cavity nesters. 45 species of birds (and several species of lizards and small mammals) have been documented being trapped in pipes.
- This is not just a problem with certain materials or large sizes of pipes. Reports often suggest that PVC is problematic because it is smooth and birds can't climb out. We've documented birds trapped in all types of pipe including rusty steel and pipes as small as 1.5" in diameter. Birds don't climb out of pipes.



Photo: Jeff King

- Every residential (i.e. your house) and most commercial buildings have multiple vent pipes protruding from the roof.
- Farms, ranches, construction sites, etc. often have open vertical pipes in a variety of situations.

Problems/solutions

- Remove any pipe that can be removed – this is a permanent solution! Cap or fill pipes that can't be removed – Make certain that caps are permanent.
- Residential rooftop plumbing and heating vents – These are steel or PVC pipes protruding from rooftops. They must remain open to allow plumbing & heating systems to vent properly. These can be covered with ½" galvanized hardware cloth held in place by stainless steel pipe clamps (there is some concern that raptors can get their talons caught; in addition, the wire mesh may get clogged with debris). There are also commercially available vented caps that can be installed.
- Steel pipe used for fence posts – Typical chain link fence posts are 1½"-2½" in diameter. These can be capped with off-the-shelf caps available at any hardware store or fencing supplier.
- Underground irrigation system vents. These are tall vertical steel pipes that vent underground irrigation systems. We have seen these 6" diameter pipes 10"-20" tall; one of which held hundreds of bird carcasses. Larger diameter pipes – 8"-10" diameter pipe (often old well casing) is commonly used to make gate posts on ranches and other large properties. Similar sized pipes are used as signposts on federal lands & commercial properties. These can be filled with sand, gravel, or concrete, or capped with a concrete plug or have a fitted steel plate welded on.

The Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America by Donald and Lillian Stokes

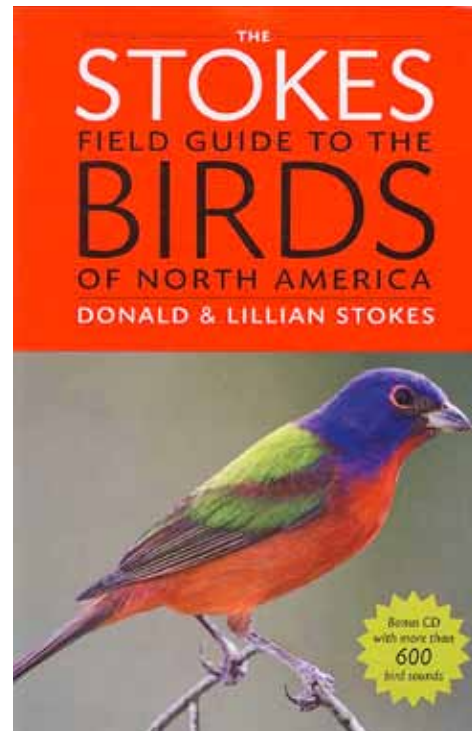
Reviewed by Christina Ball

Published in October 2010, this updated version of the Stokes field guide covers both western and eastern North America. Upon receiving the book I immediately noticed the beautiful Painted Bunting gracing the front cover. I was next struck by the sheer mass of the book. At 1368 grams this is not a field guide for the weak armed: this alone has caused me to reach for other lighter guides when heading into the field. Upon opening the book it soon becomes apparent why it is so weighty.

Roughly 800 pages contain over 3,400 photographs of 854 species. Most species have a single page to themselves and are illustrated with three to six photographs. A few species take up much more room in the book. For example, Red-tailed Hawk takes up four pages and has 23 photographs. One negative consequence of giving each bird its own page, or several pages, is it requires much more flipping through the book to compare species. The book also does not provide the typical comparison pages (e.g. for hawks in-flight from below) that most other field guides provide.

Unlike in many photograph-based guides, the photographs in the book are generally clear and well done. There are exceptions, such as the swifts and some pelagic birds, where the photos are less than helpful for identification purposes. It is these instances where enhanced photographs, such as are found in the Kaufman guides, would be of more use. The photos are laid out tight to the edge of the page, so as to allow them to be as large as possible.

Each species also has a rather small, but detailed range map that shows seasonal occurrence as well as migratory pathways. My biggest complaint with the range maps is the use of bright yellow to indicate migration routes. I found



the colour difficult to pick out against the white background on such small maps. Each species is also accompanied by text that discusses the species' general shape, plumage (by age and sex), preferred habitat and voice. One strength of this book is the information it provides on North American subspecies. Information on the subspecies' name, range and how to differentiate them is provided.

As a bonus a CD is included with the guide with 600 songs and sounds from 150 common birds. However, only about half of those birds are common on the west coast.

While I still prefer illustrated versus photographic guides, and I consider this book too heavy to be a true field guide, I hold a generally favourable opinion of it. There are a few things I would change, such as the quality of some photographs and the lack of species comparison pages. However, the volume of information, especially on migration routes and vagrant species, would make this a good secondary reference to leave in the car or at home.



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2011 Christmas Bird Count Results – a Record Year for Records

By Ann Nightingale

December 2011 was one of those times it was great to be a Christmas Bird Count Circle coordinator. The annual publication listing last year's results arrived, and as suspected, the Victoria count circle (BCVI) had the highest number of field participants anywhere with 217. Way to go, CBC counters!! While other circles had higher overall participant numbers, their totals were bolstered by lots of feederwatchers, something we've never really been able to manage here in Victoria. I'm okay with that – I'm much happier seeing our field counter number at the top. To my surprise, it looks like we are on track for a repeat for this year! The 2011 count drew 220 intrepid counters out to the streets and streams of our circle. I'll be anxiously awaiting the publication next December to confirm our standing.

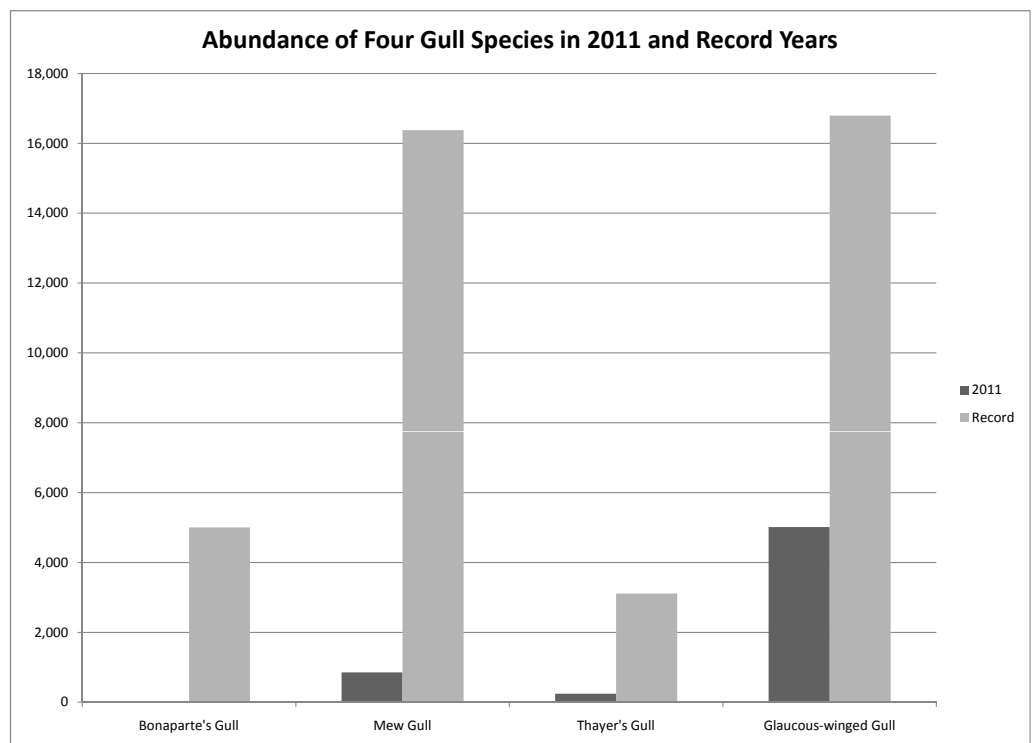
A total of 140 bird species were observed on the Victoria count in 2011, exactly the same number as last year. There were a couple of potential other species, but unfortunately the rarity of the species, and our inability to get confirmation by resighting the birds forced me to take the prudent route and exclude them from our total. Our number of individual birds was 82,503, much higher than last year's 58,180, but well short of our record of 125,518. One new species made it to our list this year: a Red-naped Sapsucker, seen and photographed in the Highlands on count day. For those who attended the post-count gathering, you might be thinking that this didn't get mentioned. You're right! At the time, the bird was thought to be a Red-breasted Sapsucker. It wasn't until the photographer reviewed his photos that he realized that it was a Red-naped, an excellent record for our count. The sapsucker was gracious enough to stick around for a few days and was confirmed by others.

As if a new species and a high number of field counters wasn't enough, this year's count was rife with other records as well. Sixteen species also broke their previous records. These were Wood Duck (for the second consecutive year), Merlin, Pigeon Guillemot, Eurasian Collared-dove (also second consecutive year), Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated

Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Townsend's Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Purple Finch. The greatest increase was in Anna's Hummingbirds, which doubled in almost every zone. A total of 1063 Anna's Hummingbirds were counted, obliterating the previous record of 556.

Despite all the good news, there were also some misses. Birds that were regularly seen on the Christmas Bird Counts a decade or more ago are now seen less frequently. These include Eared Grebe (seen every year from 1958 to 1995—and shortly before New Year's at the Mt. Doug waterfront) and Band-tailed Pigeon (seen every year but three between 1958 and 2004, but not since). Another bird that we rarely see in any number is the Bonaparte's Gull. The record for this species was 5004 birds in 1977. It's puzzling that a species that was so abundant in one year is non-existent in others.

The gulls as a whole don't seem to be faring particularly well. You may know that there was a lot of concern in Victoria last summer about the apparent increase in numbers of this loud and somewhat messy group of birds. There were even calls for a cull. When a few gulls are whitewashing your car or your sidewalk, it's easy to think that there are more than in other years, but it certainly doesn't appear to be that way during our counts. The chart below compares this year's



results with the record numbers for our four most common species.

Eurasian Collared-dove numbers went up in 2011, but they were still detected in only two zones. I'm expecting that to change in the next count.

Count week birds included a Vesper Sparrow (another great bird for our count), American Bittern and Greater Yellowlegs. All species were seen both before and after the count, but eluded detection on the count day.

To see how species have been doing in the Victoria (BCVI) count circle or any others, visit the Audubon Society's web site <birds.audubon.org>. You can review statistics going all the way back to the very first official Christmas Bird Count, graphs, maps and find all sorts of other cool information.

Christmas Bird Counts were also held in Sooke (coordinated by Daniel Bryant), South Salt Spring/Sidney (coordinated by Karen Ferguson), and Duncan (coordinated by Derrick Marven). Results for these counts can also be found on the Audubon Society's site.

Thanks go out to the zone leaders and everyone who makes the effort to participate in one or more of the Christmas Bird Counts. By doing so, you are contributing to the longest standing Citizen Science project in North America, and putting a very bright light on the birding community on southern Vancouver Island!

Mark your calendar for next year's Victoria Count – December 15, 2012. Watch for updates on the VNHS web-site: vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/

Participant List, Victoria CBC 2011

Arnold Adlkirchner	Daniel Donnecke	Jason Kimm	Mary Morris	Joan Sommers
Dave Aldcroft	Leo Donnecke	Adrian Koolman	Jo Motek	Judy Spearing
Mary Andrews	Rodney Drabkin	Rhonda Korol	Mike Motek	Don Spencer
Ralph Archibald	Warren Drinnan	Don Kramer	Trev Neufeld	Evelyn Spencer
Tom Austin	Don Eastman	Vanessa Kramer	David Newell	Finn Steiner
Laura Baker	Rick Ellis	Benjamin Kukolji	Geoffrey Newell	Margaret Stevens
Jacklyn Barrs	Willow English	Boris Kukolji	Jean Newell	Tom Stevens
Lonny Bate	Sue Ennis	Danat Kukolji	Jeff Newman	Andy Stewart
Doug Bateman	Jessie Fanucci	Audrey Kyle	Rae Ann Newman	Ann Stewart
Ron Bates	Ulana Farmer	Barbara Lake	Eleanor Nichol	Irene Stewart
Sylvia Beacom	Jenny Feick	Bob Lake	Sarah Nichol	David Stirling
Barb Begg	Cam Finlay	Marilyn Lambert	Ann Nightingale	Jack Sutherland
Fred Beinhauer	Joy Finlay	Warren Lee	Sheila Norton	Jeremy Tatum
Louise Beinhauer	Ron Fownes	Gordon Liebscher	Brian Nyberg	Kim Taylor
Mike Bentley	Dave Fraser	Eric Lofroth	Hennie Nyhof	Mark Taylor
Marjon Blouw	Melissa Frey	Agnes Lynn	Mark Nyhof	Mitchell Temkin
Natalie Bows	Terry Gagne	David Lynn	Colleen O'Brien	Andy Teucher
Cathy Brown	Jeff Gaskin	Linda Maasch	Morrough O'Brien	Jules Thomson
Janice Brown	Jeremy Gatten	Valerie MacDevitt	Marie O'Shaughnessy	Michael Tripp
Daniel Bryant	Val George	Bob Mackie	Ed Pellizzon	Ed Tupper
Heather Bunner	Sharon Godkin	Cheryl Mackie	Tom Plath	Gail Tupper
Martha Burd	Purnima Govindarajulu	Alan MacLeod	Elaine Preston	Doug Turner
Barb Burnside	Rob Gowan	Pat MacLeod	Lee Priftakis	Liz Turner
Carol Callahan-Maureen	Kyla Graham-Kordich	Jane Marsh	Leah Ramsay	Joyce Vezina
Cynthia Callahan-Maureen	Millie Grant	Morwyn Marshall	Kurtus Ramsey	Leo Vezina
Bob Carroll	Mitchell Grant	Jeanne S. Martin	Bob Reese	Fern Walker
Jan Carroll	Frances Gundry	Michaela Martin	Mindy Richter	Ted Walker
Dannie Carsen	Anne Hansen	Susan Martin	Wayne Robertson	Lea Walsh
Corey Cartwright	Poul Hansen	Donna Matthews	Dave Robichaud	Sarah Weber
Chris Chutter	Andrew Harcombe	Trevor Matthews	Mary Robichaud	Stephanie Weinstein
Myke Chutter	Gail Harcombe	Margie Mayfield	Robin Robinson	Bruce Whittington
Jenny Clarke	Bruce Hardy	Barb McClintock	Donna Ross	Ann Widdowson
Rhiannon Cockayne	John Harper	Barb McGrenere	Katherine Rowe	Tom Widdowson
Rosalind Coleman	Chris Harris	Mike McGrenere	Mary Sanseverino	Jean-Anne
Claudia Copley	Kristen Harrison	Andy McKinnon	Chris Saunders	Wightman
Darren Copley	Gordon Hart	Bill McMillan	Ann Scarfe	Neville Winchester
Elizabeth Cross	Ian Hatter	Amy Medve	Rick Schortinghuis	Lorrie Wood
Ian Cruickshank	Phyllis Henderson	Marie Metcalf	Karen Schrey	Derrick Woodcock
Paul Cumberland	John Henigman	Kirsten Mills	Donna Scott	Maureen Woodward
Helen Currie	Ron Hoppe	James Miskelly	Michael Simmons	Lars Yunker
Jim Currie	Gaileen Irwin	Marilyn Misner	Juliet Simon	Mark Yunker
Bill Dancer	Lynda Jamison	Rod Mitchell	Camilla Smith	
Mike Davis	Colin Jennings	Marion Moore	Doug Smith	
Meredith Dickman	Leslie Johnston	Judy Moores	Norma Smith	
Neal Donegani	Bill Katz	Ken Morgan	Ken Sohm	

2011 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Prev High	** Indicates a new record in 2011
Greater White Fr. Goose.																							37	68	
Snow Goose																							1	17	
Cackling Goose							2	1															8	381	
Canada Goose	502		17	58	134	92	224	79	210	111	1	55	10	18	44	100	687	158	223	1300	15	20	4,058	5156	
Mute Swan						2	17		3														22	77	
Trumpeter Swan	99		1				1						28		60	12	9	4	30	23			167	458	
Wood Duck						6	7		20								2	8	59	4			156	** 128	
Gadwall																							106	170	
Eurasian Wigeon	4		1			4	2				4												16	28	
American Wigeon	114		23			457	384	7	56	67	241	34	15	29	12	363	16	12	23	252			2,105	14889	
Mallard	533	42	46	195	45	94	327	62	54	34	562	39	127	98	179	359	345	208	172	680	2		4,203	10336	
Northern Shoveler	24										1					29	29	19	47	1			150	476	
Northern Pintail	185			5		30	108		49							1	69		1	30			478	2690	
Green-winged Teal	360				11	20			20			2				1	490	2	12	164			1,082	2436	
Canvasback																		3	1				4	302	
Ring-necked Duck	6	10		14	12	4	6		5		4					8	48	20	128				265	663	
Greater Scaup			1		9		25		9		7					1			1				53	3100	
Lesser Scaup					2		43		70		1												117	1012	
Harequin Duck					10			2		19	28	20		2							9	49	165	410	
Surf Scoter		9				1	44	38		42	56	59		8				34		88	10	40	429	1478	
White-winged Scoter						57	1			1	2	1	6	8				17	4	4	12	45	154	834	
Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)						3	7			3	11	5	5	5				134		15			183	577	
Bufflehead	24	12	18		5	74	315	81	146	195	84	148	30	75	46	6		198	17	87	21	20	1,802	2863	
Common Goldeneye	5		5			7	57	33	5	47	3	32	6	4				31		21			256	745	
Barrow's Goldeneye		9																					9	361	
Hooded Merganser	43	19	3		9	8	38	23	6	33		21	11	33	8	89	17	18	29	12	2	10	432	662	
Common Merganser	11	8	12	9	13	4	16	1	105	57	5	14	3	6	8	21	22	85	16	8	13	20	457	1600	
Red-breasted Merganser						28	41	48		47	23	27	3	2	4			141		68		12	444	791	
Ruddy Duck																1							1	429	
California Quail	31	18		12	1	13	29		15						20	4	6	67	41	26		9	292	580	
Red-throated Loon						3	11	3	3	7	11	15		3	4			4		4			20	140	
Pacific Loon						3	11	3	3	7	11	15		10	1			30		7		1	99	488	
Common Loon						4	4	5		9	9	2		4	4			7		4	4		52	109	
Red-billed Grebe							3											3					22	100	
Horned Grebe						33	16	23		2	11	4	2	25	9			103		24	1		253	1100	
Red-necked Grebe						5	16	20		12	5	13	4	2	1							30	108	671	
Western Grebe							91			10				4						2	1	15	124	3314	
Brandt's Cormorant						3	15	2		12	2	2		15				7		3	2		63	3549	
Double-crested Cormorant	13	1	10	5	23	19	19	21	12	101	6	29	50	16	6	6	1	48	27	17	6	40	470	1004	
Pelagic Cormorant						4	11	10		6	8	38	5	22	2			62		28	3	30	229	2300	
Great Blue Heron	5	2	1		2	7	3	9	5	6	3	5	1	6	1	2	4	5	6	8	1	6	88	162	
Turkey Vulture						6	1													1			8	17	
Bald Eagle (adult)	9	6	20	4	3	3	5	4		7	3	8	1	5	7	2	3	5	8	11	4		118	448	
Bald Eagle (immature)						1	1							2									14	incl above	
Northern Harrier																				1	1		2	6	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		2														2		2					8	30	
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	1			1	3		2	3	2	1	2	1	4	4	5	1	4	1			3	38	
Red-tailed Hawk	11	4	5	2	1	3	1								3	4	3	4	8	9			55	79	
Golden Eagle																							1	4	
American Kestrel																				1	1		2	8	
Merlin	4	1	2	1		1	1	2	2					1	1	2	3		4	5		2	30	** 25	
Peregrine Falcon		1	1			1	1					1	1	1						2	2		10	15	
Ring-necked Pheasant																							1	93	
Virginia Rail																3	1	2	3				9	1	
Sora																1		1					1	1	

2011 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23	Feeder Count (Field & Feeder)	** Indicates a new record in 2011		
American Coot	2																							13	1712	
Black-bellied Plover																									46	282
Killdeer	16		1			1				1	8	14													44	370
Black Oystercatcher						1				1		31													81	96
Spotted Sandpiper						2																			2	70
Black Turnstone							5	11		40	33	24	6	8	20										190	370
Surf Scoter								8		8	2														35	70
Sanderling											2														2	67
Western Sandpiper											3	41	20												64	1073
Dunlin							8		3	39	36	32	4	19	4	6	19	9							853	16375
Wilson's Snipe	2		4			231	216	33	3											99	32	65			17	37
California Gull								1																	2	130
Herring Gull	2		3																						12	288
Trayer's Gull						1	2	5		2	2	6													245	3110
Western Gull								2																	3	18
Glaucous-winged Gull	924	89	312	26	80	54	177	213	205	298	154	75	122	214	121	260	251	434	364	428	14	200			5,015	16794
Common Murre						21	7	1		7	7		1	26						6	2	40			121	9938
Pigeon Guillemot						2	3	13		28	11	9		186	12					21	7				323	** 260
Marbled Murrelet								4		1										4	1				12	290
Ancient Murrelet								1																	7	6401
Rhinoceros Auklet																									2	113
Rock Pigeon	15		6	28		1	57	38	8	123	83	25		10	2	12	23	60		89	2	2			570	1198
Eurasian Collared-dove							14													15					29	** 17
Mourning Dove	10			9																					55	** 31
Barn Owl																									2	6
Western Screech-owl	1																			1	1				2	6
Great Horned Owl	2		1			3		1												2	2				3	23
Northern Pygmy Owl	2		1																	3	2				19	44
Barred Owl	1																								3	5
Northern Saw-whet Owl																				1	1				4	4
Anna's Hummingbird	54	17	10	9	4	18	48	47	51	65	43	46	46	94	53	70	133	74	103	36	1			41	1,063	** 556
Belted Kingfisher	5	1	1			3	2	1	2	4		1		2				3	2						27	71
Red-naped Sapsucker	1																								1	** 0
Red-breasted Sapsucker	1																								1	** 0
Downy Woodpecker	12	4	7	8	1	3	8	3	7	8	11	7	4	12	11	21	25	8	16	11				18	205	212
Hairy Woodpecker	1	7	6	1			2							1	1					2	10				6	37
Northern Flicker	34	36	13	29	10	19	48	13	20	18	8	6	25	27	37	23	48	41	82	51					19	607
Pileated Woodpecker	9	4	4	4	2		2		2			2	5						14	3					3	56
Northern Shrike																				1	1				2	11
Hutton's Vireo																				1	1				3	8
Stellar's Jay	6	4	13			10	2	1							4				10						8	58
Northwestern Crow	51	1	9	9	16	4	39	81	174	219	129	48	108	122	509	550	540	134	68	42				9	2,862	10002
Common Raven	67	55	24	21	12	2	14	10	1		1	6	10	11	6	4	4	13	56	36				3	356	420
Sky Lark																									25	125
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	166	139	76	64	31	37	130	20	63	51	51	81	80	130	146	118	144	135	351	162				119	2,294	2312
Bush Tit	44	19	8	12	12	2	64	18	101	122	38	85	18	98	65	197	262	198	82	103					155	1,703
Red-breasted Nuthatch	26	47	2	14	8	4	22	7	13	5	22	11	33	24	33	15	21	30	87	8					35	467
Brown Creeper	6	11	17	2	3	3	6	8	4	2	6	2	4	14	2	4	10	5	13	11					7	137
Bewick's Wren	27	7	9	9	3	1	21	29	16	13	5	21	20	25	17	19	47	17	26	23					19	365
Pacific Wren	30	65	42	22	5	13	28	16	14	16	11	20	11	21	21	6	51	19	37	12				6	445	
Marsh Wren						3	2										8	3	28	3					47	52
American Dipper																									6	11
Golden-crowned Kinglet	186	221	202	130	2	41	112	148	47	47	87	22	59	80	24	27	56	33	406	69					5	2,004
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	24	16	32	19	1	2	23	8	14	8	15	1	33	9	16	23	33	17	22	28					5	349
Hermit Thrush	1	4	1			3	3	2	1		2	1	1	5		1				1					5	30

2011 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23	Feeder Count	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	** indicates a new record in 2011
Species																									
American Robin	418	510	172	1729	68	79	337	77	250	19	94	160	245	1834	480	353	1096	2856	1748	525		18	13,068	14327	
Vaned Thrush	22	142	63	215	7	120	54	2	6	8	8	12	47	152	2	8	27	8	27	113	17		1	1,018	1200
European Starling	280	1	25	52	14	67	129	72	256	182	66	69	45	1239	620	109	897	990	200	2535		25	7,853	18183	
American Pipit								1												10			11	272	
Cedar Waxwing	61	50		5	1	4				3		70		47				30	79	22			372	600	
Orange-crowned Warbler	1								1							1				1			4	6	
Yellow-rumped Warbler								1	1			13				1							16	25	
Townsend's Warbler			2	1								1											4	** 3	
Spotted Towhee	83	65	21	65	8	21	43	36	39	27	44	43	34	45	75	80	124	100	142	84	3		65	1,247	** 1099
American Tree Sparrow			15													1							1	1	3
Savannah Sparrow																	1						26	26	112
Fox Sparrow	53	26	28	43	7	6	70	22	43	25	25	31	41	45	55	47	97	67	70	60		38	899	923	
Song Sparrow	61	29		10	6	8	94	48	26	43	9	27	25	43	18	37	157	57	83	82	19	23	905	937	
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	1					1			1		4				6	77		30	15			137	** 89	
Swamp Sparrow																	2		2				4	6	
White-throated Sparrow						1									1		1			1			1	6	13
White-crowned Sparrow	5						21	1	1	7	2	8	24	25	19	2	73	2	8	62	3		3	239	376
Golden-crowned Sparrow	112	19	36	48	9	27	98	27	105	39	29	54	25	53	53	174	186	89	86	173	9		41	1,492	** 1331
Dark-eyed Junco	522	198	125	163	106	81	206	83	178	80	126	89		408	214	124	380	368	561	535		209	4,756	8823	
Red-winged Blackbird	17	8					38					1				75	43	159	77	261			694	2160	
Western Meadowlark																	3			22			25	126	
Rusty Blackbird																				1			1	1	1
Brewer's Blackbird	7	161					38									25	245			520			996	1377	
Brown-headed Cowbird	20															1	2			6	2		31	** 22	
Purple Finch	33	220	4	13	4	10	2	7				13	12	17	1	15	108	3	21	6	3		13	505	** 293
House Finch	115	10	12	14	2	19	119	22	127	70	59	120	15	86	94	139	263	109	102	132	7		84	1,720	1973
Red Crossbill	7	37	19	22			7	3				10	3					10	108				226	1830	
Pine Siskin	531	191	170	11	58		277	253				45	51			25	346	691	363				13	3,025	9386
American Goldfinch												10	4	4	1					1			17	240	
House Sparrow	64	15		35	35	18	181	124	368	467	12	21	7	29	110	245	353	111	136	103		88	2,522	2975	
Unidentified Gull	2					43				153	205				34				18				455	1	
Unidentified Raptor		1																							
Count Totals	6,104	2,568	1,686	3,151	816	1,977	4,693	2,003	2,951	3,094	2,586	1,905	1,381	5,546	3,468	3,815	7,588	8,109	6,943	9,857	289	874	1,099	82,503	125,518
Species Totals	67	58	58	47	45	71	86	70	53	64	62	64	52	67	56	58	64	77	76	93	32	25	34	140	154

Protecting the Point: Brooks Point Regional Park

By Jill Patterson

In 1999, the Friends of Brooks Point, along with the Brooks family, the CRD, and other conservation partners joined forces to acquire 10 acres along Brooks Point to create a regional park reserve on Pender island. In 2000, The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) partnered with the CRD to purchase an additional portion along Gowlland Point, which was added to this regional park.

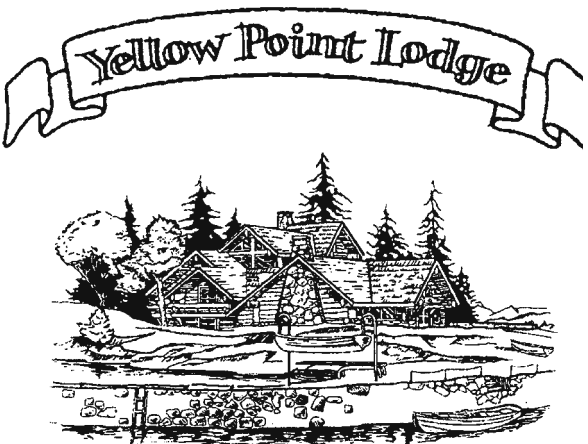
In 2010, the privately owned property dividing the two points came on the market. The CRD once again partnered with TLC in a bid to save the remaining three acres wedged between the two protected areas. A \$1.65 million dollar loan was secured for the land linking acquisition, however, the CRD board retained an option to subdivide to cover loan costs, if need be.

Between the two points sits 1,000 feet of pristine shoreline readily accessible to the public, thick stands of interspersed chocolate lilies and camas, a rich environment for

exploring nature's marvels and mysteries, endless opportunities for recreation and education, and one of the best vantage points for viewing orcas, as they regularly pass unusually close to the point. Boasting rare grasslands and unique coastal woodlands, this new connection will increase the ecological diversity along the three portions. In addition to its high conservation values, it will unite areas that also hold many recreational advantages.



Brooks Point. Photo: Bill Turner



R.R. 3, Ladysmith, B.C. V0R 2E0
(250) 245-7422

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

The Pender Island Community supported the CRD's option to borrow to save this land from development, but with the understanding that if the CRD needs to recover or reduce its costs, the right has been retained to sell all or part of the property. For this reason, the Pender Island Conservancy Association (PICA) has initiated a fundraising campaign to assist TLC in raising the dollars needed to safeguard this community treasure.

Many members of the community have rallied together to realize this target. Local artists created colourful t-shirts and chocolate lily fridge magnets. The community hosted a bocce tournament, which raised \$5,000 and a gala dinner and auction that brought in over \$11,000. Even the Pender Island youth have contributed through the sale of hand drawn nature cards.

Thanks to a generous, yet mysterious donor dubbed the Pender Angel, all donations up to \$50,000 were matched – bringing the total amount raised so far up to \$130,000. By donating today, you make a lasting difference in your community. Help protect the point forever, for everyone!

A Likin' for Lichens

A species named after Henry Kock, horticulturist extraordinaire (1952–2005)

Victoria, BC artist Anne Hansen, who is well-known for her paintings (<http://oystercatchergirl.blogspot.com>) of the Black Oystercatcher, has

just purchased the scientific-naming rights of a newly-discovered lichen, in a fundraising initiative of the Ancient Forest Alliance (<http://www.ancientforestalliance.com>).

She will name the lichen after her deceased husband, Henry Kock, horticulturist and author of *Growing Trees from Seed* (Firefly Books, 2008). The book was completed by his botanical colleagues after his death. Kock (pronounced “Coke”) was the public face of the Arboretum at the University of Guelph for 20 years. He died of brain cancer on December 25, 2005. Hansen moved from Ontario to BC in 2007.

Anne says, “Henry was a tireless champion of biodiversity and inconspicuous species like toads, lichens and sedges. Organic gardening became his life’s work after an unfortunate early vocational exposure to pesticides. Many native gardens throughout Ontario owe their existence to Henry’s classes at the Arboretum and his travelling presentations to nature clubs. His own garden, which he transformed from lawn to forest, was dubbed the *Hotel of the Trees*. In his legendary slide shows, he referred to his suburban yard as a bed and breakfast for migrating songbirds.”

Henry Kock established the Elm Recovery Project at the Arboretum, which now bears his name, as does a new



greenhouse on the University of Guelph campus.

“I feel like I got a bargain!” says Hansen. “Many people go into debt in December, for toys and gadgets that will soon be obsolete. Lichens have been around since ancient biological times. If we do something fast about climate change, lichens will be here far into the future. Naming a species after a beloved forest defender is my idea of a fabulous solstice celebration. I’m not the only one who’s noticed that the lichen looks like Henry’s beard!”

ANNE HANSEN

Struggling to keep pace with worldwide demand for oystercatcher art since 2007.



See a new bird species from Oystercatchergirl's paintbrush!

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Welcome to New VNHS Members

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

Sandra Bitz
Sherwood Road
*The natural world, art/
illustration, photography*

Corinne Lowrey
Quadra Street
BC wildlife as a focus of my poetry

Kim Taylor
*Birding, botany, photography,
hiking, nature*



2012 Birding Courses



RPBO is delighted to be working with the Victoria Natural History Society again to offer two birding courses in Spring 2012. Here's your chance to support both organizations while learning about our local birds. These programs will be taught by experienced trip leaders who have volunteered their time. Victoria Natural History Society members receive a discount on the course registration fee.

Beginning Birding



Beginning Birding: An easy introduction to the pursuit of birding for those with little or no previous experience. The emphasis will be on bird identification in the field. We start with an illustrated lecture on March 1, 2012, and continue with six Saturday morning field trips from March 3 - April 14. The cost will be \$95 (\$65 for VNHS or RPBO members).

Beyond Beginning Birding: Take the next step beyond the basics of identification. Our group of local VNHS and RPBO experts places an emphasis on birding by ear and the identifying field marks of more difficult groups and species. This course includes eight very diverse field sessions around Victoria led by eight different leaders. Sessions run on Sunday mornings, beginning on April 15, 2012, with the May long weekend skipped. The last session will be June 10. The cost is \$105 (\$75 for VNHS or RPBO members)

Beyond Beginning Birding



Information and registration for these courses is on the RPBO website:
< <http://rpbo.org/community.htm> >
or by contacting birding@rpbo.org.



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.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory is offering a **bird monitoring and banding workshop** at Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC, on March 30-April 1, 2012. The 3-day workshop will focus on bird identification, monitoring procedures and techniques, sexing and ageing. The program has been developed for people with little or no bird handling and/or banding experience, but those with intermediate skills will also find the workshop a good way to build knowledge. This is an excellent opportunity for undergraduates, graduate students, bird observatory volunteers and naturalists to explore aspects of the operation of an avian monitoring project, including bird safety, mistnetting, data collection, and bird banding.

The cost is \$300/participant with a \$50 reduction for students and a \$20 reduction for RPBO members. **Enrollment is limited to 18 participants.** For more information/to enroll, contact Jessie Fanucchi at workshop@rpbo.org or 250-818-1226.

New for 2012! Salish Sea Seniors Sessions at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre – a non-profit aquarium and education Centre

in Sidney BC. Seniors are invited to a special series of talks, tours and events every Thursday at 2:30 from February 9 – May 31 (excluding March 15 and 22 due to Spring Break). Program extras—refreshments, additional seating and no school groups booked at this time. Regular admission applies, annual passes accepted, no registration required.

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>. Please contact Gwen Greenwood: tggreenwood@telus.net. 250 652-2876

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Programs: Check out the spring program selection available at Swan Lake <www.swanlake.bc.ca>. Every Wednesday and Sunday Bird Walk. Meet at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary parking lot: 9:00 a.m.– 10:30 a.m.

Capital Regional District Parks. CRD Parks offers programs for nature lovers of all ages. See <www.crd.bc.ca/parks> for more information.

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 Christmas Hill 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.

MARCH

Thursday, March 8

Friends of Uplands Park Public Meeting

Guest Speaker: **Grant Keddie**, Curator, Archaeology, Royal BC Museum. "The Changing Landscape, Mega Fauna and Humans – the last 22,000 Years". Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Location: Windsor Park Pavilion – Upstairs Meeting Room.

Sunday, March 11

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Birding in Parksville

Come to see the spectacle of the annual Pacific Herring spawn. Massive number of sea ducks and gulls follow the herring in close to where we can observe the birds feeding on the herring roe. We can also enjoy the beginning of the congregation of the Brant Geese in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area and vicinity. This will be an all day trip so bring lunch and snacks. No pets please. Meet at Helmcken Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. Carpool expenses will be about \$20.00 per person. Contact **Rick** at 250-885-2454 for more information or **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 to register.

Tuesday, March 13

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Glaciers and Tree Rings: How Ancient Forests Buried by Glaciers Can Tell Us about Climate

Recent and extensive glacial retreat has exposed an unprecedented quantity of subfossil wood from forests that were overrun and preserved by past glacial advances. In some cases these ancient forest remains are being exposed for the first time in thousands of years. Subfossil wood provides a unique opportunity to characterize historical glacier and climate fluctuations. Join **Bethany Coulthard** as she discusses how dendroglaciologists have refined the picture of glaciological activity in BC since the last ice age and are moving toward the development of multi-millennium long tree-ring based climate records. These records provide one of the only sources of yearly pre-instrumental climate data, and are crucial for understanding 20th century climate changes. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Sunday, March 18

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Enjoying Early Native Trees and Shrubs

It should be feeling a lot like spring by this time with buds bursting open and most leaves starting to unfurl but still challenging to identify the native shrubs and trees. We will

wander around Cattle Point and Uplands Park checking on the progress of spring and listening for the birds as well. We will be walking at a slow pace and there will not be much in the way of hills but the ground may be uneven and mucky so sturdy boots are recommended. Dress for the weather. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Watch for the sign to Cattle Point off Beach Drive between Dorset and Rutland. Meet at the nature sign by the Cattle Point waterfront parking area at 10:00 a.m. You might wish to bring binoculars. Contact **Agnes Lynn** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, March 20

BOTANY NIGHT

Death Valley – a Once in a Lifetime Bloom

Ron Long went to Death Valley because of a once in a lifetime spring bloom but found it to be such a fascinating place that he has returned five times since that first visit. In addition to Death Valley we will look at the flora of Zion National Park and Joshua Tree National Monument. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m., everyone welcome.

Monday, March 26

MARINE NIGHT

The Fish Stay the Same

Biologist and author **Andy Lamb** relates how the world's oceans are changing, how we are impacting marine life, and what our responsibilities are. Andy has studied the fishes and invertebrates of the Pacific Northwest since 1967 when he became a certified diver. He co-authored *Marine Life of the Pacific Northwest* and *Coastal Fishes of the Pacific Northwest*. He was formerly employed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as a fish culturist and by the Vancouver Aquarium as chief collector and school program co-ordinator. He now owns and operates Cedar Beach Lodge on Thetis Island with his wife Virginia. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday March 28

BIRDERS NIGHT

Love Among the Feathers

Join local ornithologist **James Clowater** as he presents the romantic adventures of resident waterbirds. Birds rely on a beautiful visual language of displays to defeat their rivals and impress their mates. Slow motion video helps to reveal the complex syntax of postures that is the language of love to birds. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

APRIL

Friday, April 6

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Satin Flowers and Birds at Juan de Fuca

For those of you who are not up to the strenuous walk up Mount Wells, this outing is another chance to see masses of Satin Flowers (*Olsynium douglasii*) as well as other early spring flowers. The Shooting Stars (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*), Blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), Spring Gold (*Lomatium utriculatum*) and Fawn Lilies (*Erythronium oregonum*) should be starting to show. Plus it is an excellent place to check out the birds so this trip will have some of each. The ground will be uneven in spots so sturdy boots are recommended. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. You might wish to bring a walking stick and binoculars. No pets please. Meet at Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre (Westshore Parks & Recreation), 1767 Old Island Highway, at 9:00 a.m. We will start from the end of the parking lot nearest to town. Contact: **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, April 8

FIELD TRIP LEVEL 2

Intertidal Exploration Trip

Join **Bruce Hardy**, retired Camosun Biology instructor and volunteer with "Shorekeepers" at Moses Point Beach to identify mainly intertidal invertebrates and algae. Moses Point is a multi-habitat beach with sand, cobble, muddy sand, bedrock, boulders and tidepools. Shorekeepers is a volunteer activity run by Saanich Inlet Protection Society. While the beach is an easy walk, the rocks and seaweed could be slippery. Wear appropriate boots – preferably rubber – and bring your walking poles. Also, bring a spade, dip net, magnifying glass etc. for a hands-on experience. Bring lunch or a snack and water. While this is a trip for non-experts, experts, especially algae experts, are welcome as resource people. Meet at 11:30 a.m. sharp at the bottom of Moses Point Road. To reach Moses Point Beach allow at least 35 minutes from Victoria. Take West Saanich Road to the very end (Lands End Road) turn left and drive 2 km to Moses Point Road. Turn right down Moses Point Road to the end and park. There is an obvious right-of-way to the beach – about two minutes – we will meet on the beach. Or, take Pat Bay Hwy, turn right at Lands End Road overpass (last one before the ferry terminal) then drive about 7 km along Lands End Road to Moses Point Road. Or meet at Helmcken Park & Ride at 10:45 a.m. Contact **Bruce Hardy** at brucehardy@shaw.ca or call **Gwen Walter** 250-727-7376 for more information.

Sunday, April 8

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Leisurely Walk up Lone Tree Hill

This little knoll is a treasure trove of spring wildflowers. There will be some of the early flowers starting by now but it is a bit early for the full diversity of species on this hill. We can certainly take in the fantastic views from this high viewpoint as well as listen for birds such as the Orange-crowned Warbler singing his heart out. Please note the trail is steep near the top but not as challenging as some of the other areas. The walk is at a leisurely pace. Wear sturdy shoes. You might bring a walking stick and binoculars. Start at 10:00 a.m. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Road. Continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Keep left to continue on Millstream Road to the park entrance on the right. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Contact **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 .

Monday April 9

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

Later Season Visit to Mount Wells

Investigate Mount Wells, a gateway to the Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park Reserve. We normally go earlier in the season to view the Satin Flowers (*Olsynium douglasii*) but this year we will go on a date that should include several of the other wildflowers as well Satin Flowers. Enjoy views of Juan de Fuca Strait and the Sooke Hills. This location also offers a good chance to see a Golden Eagle and we may hear or see a Sooty Grouse. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely pace. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended. You might wish to bring binoculars. We will come down on the Sooke Road side and will arrange transportation back to the starting point. Bring a lunch and drinks for the all day outing. No pets please. Take the Trans-Canada highway towards Goldstream Park. Turn left at the new Westshore Parkway (traffic light) shortly before you get to Goldstream Park. Turn right at the roundabout and carry on left when you reach Sooke Lake Road. Turn left on to Humpback Road at Ma Millar's pub. At the intersection with Irwin Road, stay right. Follow Humpback Road to the park entrance. Meet at the parking lot on the right at 10:00 a.m. Don't be late as we may be ferrying people to the start point. Contact **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, April 10

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Ancient Forests of BC: Ecology and Politics

Join the Ancient Forest Alliance's **Ken Wu** and **TJ Watt** for a spectacular slideshow and talk on the ecology, wildlife, and politics of old-growth forests including Avatar Grove, Walbran Valley, Clayoquot Sound, McLaughlin Ridge, and the newly found Mossy Maple Rainforest (aka "Fangorn Forest"). We will also discuss the status of various old-growth dependent species-at-risk in BC, such as the Spotted Owl and Mountain Caribou, as well as the possibly extirpated Vancouver Island wolverine, and the push for new provincial policies to protect old-growth forests. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Sunday, April 15

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Enjoy Early Spring Flowers and Birds at Gore and Oak Haven Parks

What better way to spend an early spring morning than in these two delightful Saanich Peninsula parks with their exquisite spring wildflowers and plenty of birds. To allow more people to partake in the level section in Gore Park, we will do this park first. Oak Haven Park has a climb to the summit but it is not terribly strenuous or long. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended for the Oak Haven section. You might wish to bring binoculars. Bring a snack and drink if you wish. No pets please. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the entrance to Gore Park. To reach Gore Park, proceed along Benvenuto Drive towards Butchart Gardens. Turn right on Amwell Drive. Follow Amwell Drive to reach Greig Road. Turn right to the park entrance on the right. We usually walk to Oak Haven from Gore Park and return. Contact Rick at 250-885-2454 or Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, April 17

BOTANY NIGHT

Mushrooms and Other Fungi of Observatory Hill

For the last seven years, **Oluna Ceska** has been documenting

the macro fungi of Observatory Hill. During this time, this one small natural area has yielded more than one thousand species, some of them bizarre, some extremely rare. Join **Oluna** and **Adolf Ceska** for a pictorial overview of the incredible diversity they have recorded. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 21

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

Enjoy All that Jocelyn Hill has to Offer

Join us to enjoy the wildflowers and the birds as well. Our goal is to see the Gold Stars (*Crocidium multicaule*) in bloom but we will not be disappointed if we miss them as there is an amazing array of other delights and great panoramic views from the ridge. We might see a Golden Eagle on the ridge or a Townsend's Solitaire or hear a Sooty Grouse. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended. Bring a lunch and drinks for the all day outing. You might wish to bring binoculars. No pets please. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Road. Continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Keep left to continue on Millstream Road. Go past Lone Tree Hill Park on your right and watch for Emma Dixon Road on the left. The trail head is on Millstream Road just past that intersection. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Meet there at 9:00 a.m. Contact **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or **Agnès** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634.

Sunday, April 22

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Two for One Bargain – Horth Hill and Bear Hill Wildflowers

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

Wednesday April 25

BIRDERS NIGHT

Marbled Murrelets and Climate Change

Some 15,000 years ago Marbled Murrelets discovered a vast area of novel habitat that stretched from British Columbia to Alaska. Retreating ice revealed deep fiords that provided the murrelets with new foraging and nesting opportunities and reduced competition from their larger relatives. Today they are the most abundant water bird in fiords and often outnumber all other species combined. Marbled Murrelets owe much of their success to their speed in the air; the mist, fog, and drizzle that make the fiords so dreary may create a medium that aids their speedy flight. We appear to be entering another period of global warming during which many habitats will become

unrecognizable. Arbutus has spread north to Gold River and Western Red cedars on southern Vancouver Island are dying for lack of summer rains. Join **Gary Kaiser** as he discusses the possible effects of climate change on Marbled Murrelet populations and how we can make effective conservation plans for the species. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159, Fraser building. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, April 28

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Magnificent Wildflowers and Birds at Mill Hill

Enjoy a visit to Mill Hill for a spectacular spring show of wildflowers and listen for the many birds as you climb through the varying habitats. Since 2000, CRD Parks staff and volunteers have been battling invasive Scotch broom in the park's Garry Oak ecosystem. Soak up the glorious colours of spring and admire the results of this restoration. We are hoping to see, perhaps, a Townsend's Solitaire at the top as you look down over the tree tops as well as listen all the way up and down for the birds. Please note the route is steep and rough on the way down but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Wear sturdy boots and you might wish to bring a walking stick and binoculars. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Meet at the Mill Hill Regional Park information kiosk at 9:00 a.m. To get to the park, take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right at the traffic light at Six Mile Road just before the bridge, then left on Atkins Road. Turn left at the four-way intersection to continue on Atkins Avenue that leads to the park entrance on the right. Contact **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or **Agnès** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday, April 29

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Matson Conservation Area

This will be our first visit to the area that is protected by a covenant and is being restored by the Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT). Todd Carnahan will be our guide and will tell us the history of this project as well as a bit more about HAT and its purpose and projects. As a result of conservation efforts, the Camas (*Camassia*), Seablush (*Plectritis congesta*) and other native wildflowers in this Garry oak habitat have emerged from beneath the invasive species such as ivy and daphne that had taken over the site. Although we will not be walking a long distance, some of the terrain is tricky so wear sturdy shoes and perhaps bring a walking stick and binoculars. Bring a snack and a drink if you wish. No pets please. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the parking lot at the foot of Head Street on the left side away from the marina. Contact **Agnès** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634.

Monday, April 30

MARINE NIGHT

B.C.'s Forgotten Oyster, the Olympia Oyster, Ostrea lurida

The Olympia oyster, native to the Pacific Northwest coast, was once common and widespread and supported a commercial fishery until it crashed in the early 1900s. In 2003 it was listed under the Species At Risk Act (SARA) as a species of special concern. **Alicia Donaldson**, a Masters candidate at UVic, is studying the effects of temperature, salinity and substrate type on their growth and development and hopes to determine their preferred settlement substrate. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

International Migratory Bird Day

May 12th, 2012



**Beaver Lake Regional Park
Picnic Shelter (9 am - 2 pm)**

(follow the signs from the nature house or park at the filter beds)

Live Raptors
Hummingbird Banding Demonstrations
Mist-netting Demonstrations
Bird Walks
Children's' Activities
Information Booths

For More Information Please Visit:
www.rpbo.org or www.crd.bc.ca



BC Hummingbird
Project



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