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The Victoria NATURALIST

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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, book reviews, etc.

Please note: If you are concerned about protecting your privacy when submitting an item, please notify the editors at the time of your submission and indicate whether or not you wish to have your name withheld or use a pseudonym.

We prefer electronic submissions – these can be submitted in either PC or Mac compatible word processing format – but hardcopies are also accepted. Please include photographs or illustrations if possible, along with a suggested caption and photo credit. If digital, images need to be high resolution: a minimum of 1200 x 1550 pixels, or 300 dpi at the size of photos in the magazine. Once scanned/input, hardcopy materials will be returned to the sender if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material.

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Contents

President's Message <i>By Darren Copley</i>	4
Welcome to New VNHS Members	5
VNHS Awards: Call for Nominations.....	6
The 2012 Christmas Bird Counts – Free for All! <i>By Ann Nightingale</i>	7
HAT Tricks <i>By Adam Taylor</i>	9
Activities of Rocky Point Bird Observatory <i>By Jessie Fanucchi</i>	10
Tatlayoko Bird Observatory (TLBO): An Historic Perspective, Excerpts from TLBO Blog <i>By Andrew Harcombe and Chris Chutter</i>	11
Spring Birding in Texas <i>By Val George</i>	13
Butterflies of Victoria – Photo Request <i>By James Miskelly</i>	16
A Tale of Owls <i>By Barbara Begg</i>	17
Letters	17
Backpack-toting Birds Help UBC Researchers Reveal Migratory Divide, Conservation Hotspots <i>UBC media release</i>	18
New Book: <i>The Outer Spores: Mushrooms of Haida Gwaii</i> <i>By Bryce Kendrick</i>	19
Art for an Oil-Free Coast <i>By Chris Genovali</i>	19
Bulletin Board/Classifieds	20
Calendar of Events.....	21
COVER PHOTO	
<i>Phaeocollybia piceae</i> (exceptional occurrence of this coastal genus in the Interior Wet Belt in the interior of BC). Photo: Adolf Ceska	

Reading our President's excellent piece I was particularly struck by his comment on Elizabeth May's presentation and the evident frustration with our politicians' wilful disregard for scientific research and results. I agree entirely. What strikes me is the extent to which some of our most prominent writers find something to remain optimistic about. Tim Flannery, the brilliant Australian writer, in his 2010 book, *Here on Earth*, feels that we are poised between a positive outcome and a destructive one. A follower of James Lovelock he is more optimistic than Lovelock. His book is wide-ranging and fascinating.

Callum Roberts, the author of the 2012 book, *The Ocean of Life*, has penned an equally fascinating book on the oceans with many references to our west coast fisheries from a historical point of view. A recent review stated that Roberts feels "... that things are going in the right direction and positive change is gathering pace." (Globe and Mail, August 11, 2012)

A recent article in the Globe and Mail business section (Sept 2) was entitled "*A World on thin ice, an economy in peril and a dose of perspective.*" Written by Eric Reguly, it briefly mentioned the European debt crisis, immediately dismissing it as a 'pea under the mattress' and stating that the major problem is global warming. He discussed the ramifications of this summer's drought in the U.S. and went on to his main point, the thinning of the summer ice in the Arctic. Just a few years ago, it was estimated that summer ice would be gone by the end of the century, the consensus is now 2030. An attempt has been made by a group of scholars to quantify the costs of this warming – the estimate is \$1.2 trillion annually. It was encouraging to see an important business writer giving this topic such priority.

For the moment our political leaders are too busy trying to remove the peas from under their respective mattresses and are primarily focussed on the next election. Perhaps one day they will have time to read and heed.

Thanks as always to our many contributors to this edition; there is some great reading awaiting you. Enjoy.

Ken Soh

References

- Flannery, T. 2010. *Here on Earth*. Atlantic Monthly Press.
Roberts, C. 2012. *The Ocean of Life*. Viking (Penguin).

President's Message

By Darren Copley

Fall has arrived and it is great to have our evening presentations back in action. I've had some excellent feedback already on two of them, and the ones I've been to were both entertaining and enlightening. Hopefully you also made it out on one of the great field trips that showcase the changing seasons. I had a chance to catch up with some of you at our annual Hawkwatch and BBQ Social. Thanks to those of you who helped put this event together, as well as all the other field trips and programs! These events keep people connected with the Victoria Natural History Society.

At our September board meeting your directors agreed to help support Rocky Point Bird Observatory's new efforts at more public involvement through their new banding sites. There is a great deal of overlap between our two Societies, and we hope to continue the partnership.

In September we also participated in the Madrona Farm Chef Challenge. Ticket sales through our Society raised almost \$800 for our conservation projects and for farmland conservation. Other outreach activities included a successful day at the Harvest Festival for Children at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific – apparently our display was a big hit. The 'Connecting Children With Nature' School Programs are booking up- we had three requests just in the last week! This outreach to the younger generation involves Society volunteers leading field trips for school groups. If you are interested in this please let me know.

The annual Fall General Meeting of BC Nature was held in Parksville this year. If you've never been to a BC Nature AGM or FGM I highly recommend you go, as it's a great opportunity to connect with other naturalists, as well as

participate in some incredible field trips. We were happy to see some other VNHSers there. This is also an opportunity for all of the provincial clubs under the BC Nature umbrella to come together and discuss issues relevant to us all. Some of the varied topics that came up for discussion were the Raven Coal mine (see CoalWatch: <http://www.coalwatch.ca/> for more information), cuts to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, especially in light of the water shortages salmon-bearing rivers are experiencing, insurance waivers for field trips and events, and clubs willing to host future BC Nature general meetings. The last time our Victoria club hosted one was in 2004, so if we have any great event planners in our membership, please let us know. It is definitely our turn!

The best, and worst part of the FGM, was meeting and hearing Green Party Leader and Member of Parliament Elizabeth May speak about her efforts on all of our behalf. Elizabeth laid it on the line explaining all of the cuts to environmental protection, and our inability to move forward on climate change issues. At the federal level we are handing over the keys to corporations and China, saying just give it back when you're done with it, and don't worry, we'll clean up the mess. Elizabeth received a standing ovation from her audience. To read an article about Ms May's presentation, here is a link: <http://www.pqbnews.com/news/172330951.html?mobile=true> MLA Rob Fleming, the provincial opposition critic for the Environment, also spoke. His responses to questions afterwards provided some optimism for provincial-level politics.

The real strength of naturalist clubs lies in showing people the wonders of nature, so that they'll care more and want to



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protect it themselves. But I continue to be frustrated by what seems our inability to make change in the right direction for nature. So frustrated that I no longer have the patience to even listen to people's excuses about why we are sacrificing the environment for the economy, and why we are conveniently disbelieving scientists. Even among naturalists there are those that still disagree with the overwhelming majority of scientists and evidence that shows climate change is happening at an increasingly high rate due to human activities. So in addition to our efforts, we need to find ways to support organizations that focus their attention on conservation because they are better equipped for this type of work. I continually feel very thankful for their work on all our behalf.

On a positive note, hopefully you all know by now that the Society and the Royal BC Museum have co-published a book about the region. The *Nature Guide to the Victoria Region* will be available at all of our evening presentations for only \$15. Pick one up for yourself and buy another for a friend!

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 24 new members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our *Welcome* column:

Paige Erickson-McGee
Howe Street
SAR projects and species

Matthew Koch
Herald Street
Birding

Sandra Ferguson
Lantzville
Birds, butterflies, wildflowers

Ken and Gloria Knowles
Lochside Drive
All aspects of natural history

Jonathan Adams
Quamichan Street
Birding

Jim Dunsdon
Glastonbury Road
*Humming birds,
Garry oak habitat*

Robert Walker
Meadow Park Lane
Birding, diving

Bette MacKenzie
Newport Ave

Des Belton
Aiyansh
Birds

Julia Marshall
Tanglewood Crescent
Botany and field walks

Angela Wyatt
Austin Avenue
*All living things,
especially insects
and birds*

Barbara Braithwaite
Gorge Road West

Travis and Margol McKinney
Cranbrook
All activities of VNHS

Karen Skowron
Victoria
*Behaviour: nature;
human and otherwise*

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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 Honourary 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 their 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
2012 Bill Dancer

VNHS Honorary Life Members

Dr. Bill Austin, Mrs. Lyndis Davis, Mr. Tony Embleton, Mr. Tom Gillespie, Mrs. Peggy Goodwill, Mr. David Stirling, Mr. Bruce Whittington

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The 2012 Christmas Bird Counts – Free for All!

By Ann Nightingale

Top for participation rates

Two hundred and twenty field counters headed out last year, making Victoria one of the top (maybe even the top—results haven't been shared yet) count circles for participation.

To me, this is really what the Christmas Bird Count is all about, so thank you to everyone who participated! This year a change that will make many people happy has the potential to take us off the top of the participation heap—the \$5 mandatory participation fee is being discontinued! We will still be accepting voluntary donations, which can be made through a link on our Christmas Bird Count page on the VNHS website.

Leaders with boats needed for the marine counts.

We are looking for up to three boaters to take on the Victoria waterfront this year. Since before I started coordinating the Victoria circle, Marilyn Lambert and Ron Bates have been offering their boats and time to check the offshore waters and small islands. This year, neither of their boats is available. If you, or someone you know, might want to help us out with this, please let me know!

Victoria Saturday, December 15, 2012

South Saltspring Island/Sidney

Sunday, December 16, 2012

North Saltspring Island/Gabriola

Sunday, December 16, 2012

Sooke Saturday, December 29, 2012

Duncan Tuesday, January 1, 2013

Here is this year's list of leaders

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. The updated leader list will be posted on the website. Feel free to invite a friend!

2011 summary—We're number 1 for the birds, too!

A total of 140 bird species were observed on the Victoria count circle (BCVI) in 2011, exactly the same number as in 2010, and exactly the same as our "rival" circle, Ladner, achieved. The BCVI fifteen mile diameter circle is centred

	Area Name	Leader	Phone	Email
1	Butchart Gardens - N. Highlands	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone1@naturevictoria.ca
2	Central Highlands	Warren Lee	250-478-7317	cbczone2@naturevictoria.ca
3	Goldstream - Finlayson Arm	Robin Robinson	250-391-5995	cbczone3@naturevictoria.ca
4	Thetis Lake - Hastings Flat	Ann Stewart	250-595-3938	cbczone4@naturevictoria.ca
5	Langford Lake	Barbara Lake	250-652-3358	cbczone5@naturevictoria.ca
6	Albert Head - Triangle Mountain	Rob Gowan	250-592-8905	cbczone6@naturevictoria.ca
7	Esquimalt Lagoon - Mill Hill	Rick Schortinghuis	250-885-2454	cbczone7@naturevictoria.ca
8	Esquimalt Harbour	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone8@naturevictoria.ca
9	Portage Inlet - The Gorge	Daniel Bryant	250-361-9049	cbczone9@naturevictoria.ca
10	Victoria Harbour	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone10@naturevictoria.ca
11	Beacon Hill Park	Mary Robichaud	250-507-8760	cbczone11@naturevictoria.ca
12	Oak Bay	Mike Edgell	250-656-5998	cbczone12@naturevictoria.ca
13	University - Cadboro Bay	Val George	250-748-6120	cbczone13@naturevictoria.ca
14	Ten Mile Point - Arbutus Rd	Agnes Lynn	250-721-0634	cbczone14@naturevictoria.ca
15	Gordon Head - Mt. Douglas	Margie Shepherd	250-477-5280	cbczone15@naturevictoria.ca
16	Swan Lake - Cedar Hill	Bill Dancer	250-721-5273	cbczone16@naturevictoria.ca
17	Blenkinsop Lake - Panama Flats	Cheryl Mackie	250-479-4083	cbczone17@naturevictoria.ca
18	Elk Lake - Cordova Bay	Mike McGrenere	250-658-8624	cbczone18@naturevictoria.ca
19	Prospect Lake - Quick's Bottom	Dave Fraser	250-479-0016	cbczone19@naturevictoria.ca
20	Martindale - Bear Hill	Mike Bentley	250-479-7024	cbczone20@naturevictoria.ca
21	Zero Rock (ocean)	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone21@naturevictoria.ca
22	Chain Islets (ocean)	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone22@naturevictoria.ca
23	Juan de Fuca (ocean)	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone23@naturevictoria.ca

on the Marigold/Interurban area. Our number of individual birds rebounded some from 2010, reaching 82,503, but remained well short of our record of 125,518. A Red-naped Sapsucker in the Highlands was a new species for the Victoria CBC list, but hummingbirds had to be the real story. For the first time ever, we counted more than a thousand Anna's Hummingbirds. A grand total of 1063 made our list, almost doubling the previous record of 556. Fifteen other species also broke records in 2011: These were Wood Duck (for the second consecutive year), Merlin, Pigeon Guillemot, Eurasian Collared-dove (also second consecutive year), Mourning Dove, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Townsend's Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Purple Finch.

Everyone is welcome!

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. I'd also be interested in recruiting some groups—walking groups, school groups, scout groups, or any other group that would like to support the activity. 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 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.bird-source.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@village-cobbler.ca if you are on North Salt Spring;) Daniel Bryant at 250-361-9049; jingming@uvic.ca 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

The post-count gathering will begin at 5:00 p.m., December 15th, right after the count, in the hall at St. Luke's Anglican Church 3821 Cedar Hill Cross Road. Please bring some treats/finger food if you can. 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.



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Hat Tricks

Disappearing Western Screech-owls

By Adam Taylor



It was 4 a.m. in late December, just before Christmas. I was bleary eyed, tired, and shivering uncontrollably. It was difficult to recall exactly why I had insisted on dragging my wife and infant son to the Highlands of Greater Victoria in the dark, rather than sleeping at home in a warm bed, and I was somewhat concerned that I might be required to explain my actions soon. I was fortunate this time though – I was rescued shortly by the gentle “ho-ho-hohoho...” bouncing ball-like call of a Western Screech-Owl, a call I hadn’t heard in years. The hope of seeing or hearing an owl was the motivation for our family’s early morning sojourn, and the pay-off was worth the lost sleep.

The Highlands’ forested hills are one of the few places on south Vancouver Island you can still hear the once widespread Western Screech-Owl’s (*Megascops kennicottii kennicottii*) call, if you’re lucky. The loss of old forest habitat has taken a heavy toll on this small owl. Earlier this year, the Western Screech-Owl’s status was “upgraded” to Threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, due to “serious declines in the southern part of its range in Metro Vancouver, Victoria and the Gulf Islands areas, where it has nearly disappeared over the last 10 to 15 years.” (COSEWIC 2012) Unfortunately, the Screech-Owl is hardly unique. Many other species, including bats, birds, frogs, and turtles, share the Screech-Owl’s habitat, and are suffering the same fate.

It is a tragic tale. A familiar one too, but this small part at least has a happy ending.

Though I didn’t know it at the time, a significant part of the Highland forest edge where my wife and I searched for

owls was owned by Anne and Jim Ginns. The Ginns bought the property, now an important connecting piece between Thetis Lake and Gowlland-Tod Parks, in 1969 while the pair lived and worked in Victoria. Anne, a horticulturist, and Jim, a mycologist, are keen naturalists, who were attracted to the forested hills, creeks, and rural setting of the Highlands. While they purchased the property, thinking they might someday build a home there, plans changed, and the Ginns found themselves retiring in the Okanagan instead. Not wanting to see their land developed, they consulted a former Highlands neighbour with experience in conserving his property and in 2010 enlisted HAT to help protect their land.

Through the Ecological Gifts Program and a land conservation covenant, Anne and Jim leave a legacy by conserving some of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada, and the species that live there. For me, it means that this Christmas, when I drag my family out of bed in the mid of night and stand shivering by the edge of the road in the dark in the name of “owling”, there is a real chance to hear that soft bouncing call once more. That’s why I believe the real recipient of Anne and Jim’s gift is us: because they protected this forest link there is a better chance for me to share the early morning joy of the Western Screech-Owl call with my children. It is a gift to all of us, to treasure and take joy in. The property was protected in September 2012, with a conservation covenant with HAT and the Cowichan Community Land Trust.

Above: HAT staff visit to the Ginn’s covenant property.
Photo: Todd Carnahan

Activities of Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO)



By Jessie Fanucchi

Our field season is slowly coming to an end. Both our migration sites will end on October 18 and our nocturnal Owl monitoring will end October 31. Our new Pedder Bay migration monitoring site has been doing very well as a new site, having banded approximately 2300 as of October 5th. Our most numerous species banded includes Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, and Wilson's Warblers. Rocky Point has had a typical season, with large numbers of Pacific-Slope Flycatchers, Wilson's Warblers, and Orange-crowned Warblers. We also seem to be having a bumper year for bats! RPBO will occasionally catch bats in the nets in the early mornings or during owl monitoring but we have caught ten so far this year!

We have successfully held two fundraising owl BBQ's again this year, including a sell out night on October 6th.

These BBQ's not only help raise very much needed funds for RPBO but they also give us an opportunity to share our knowledge and teach the public about Northern Saw-whet Owls. Our new Pedder Bay migration site has allowed us to have more visitors come and see our work. We have had kids, interested public from the nearby trailer park, banders from other monitoring stations, as well as a visit from CHEK News. Many thanks go out to our volunteers who have had to help staff three banding stations at once this year!



Western Long-eared Myotis (tentative ID) released from the net the first night of banding. *Photo:* Ann Nightingale



Northern Saw-whet Owl.
Photo: Ann Nightingale

Feature Bird

Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*)

These birds are small (only 18-20 cm long) owls that can be found in Victoria year-round. They are identified by the distinctive V-shaped white on their face, broad brown breast streaking, black bill, and yellow eyes. This species is found throughout the United States, Southern Canada, and some parts of Mexico. Northern Saw-whet Owls are completely nocturnal, solitary owls, spending their days roosting in dense conifers and hunting at night. Active hunters, the Northern Saw-whet Owl's primary prey are mice but they will also eat small birds and large insects. These owls are cavity nesters, laying their eggs at the bottom of the hole using no nesting material. They can lay anywhere from four to ten eggs. The female will do all the incubation and brooding while the male will bring in food.

RPBO has been banding Northern Saw-whet Owls since 2002 in conjunction with Project OwlNet (www.projectowl.net), a Northern American-wide network of owl-migration researchers. Since 2002, we have banded more than 3000 owls at Rocky Point (along with several Barred Owls). Owls banded by RPBO have been recaptured/recovered in other parts of Victoria,

Washington State, California, and Matador, SK. This year we are also working in Boardman, Oregon, banding Northern Saw-whet Owls as fledglings at a poplar tree farm where large numbers of owls have begun using the nest boxes that were placed on the property for rodent control. We are hoping that some of these owls find their way to us in Victoria! Northern Saw-whet Owls have significant population differences between years, something that we have noticed in the almost 10 years of banding at our station. It is thought that these owls have a roughly four-year cycle (Swengel and Swengel, 1995) that can vary between three and five years. Mostly likely this is due to prey cycles. This year is looking to be one of our best ever. As of October 4th, we have banded 420 owls and still have 27 days of banding left. Most exciting however, has been the recapture of 2 previously banded birds, one on the 25th of September and one on the 4th of October. Both of these hatch-year owls were banded at Tatlayoko Lake Bird Observatory [see article p.11], west of 100 Mile House and approximately 350 km directly north of Rocky Point Bird Observatory.

References:

- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. *All About Birds*. <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Saw-whet_Owl/id>
Nightingale, A. 2011. *Rocky Point Bird Observatory Avian Monitoring – Northern Saw-whet Owl Project*. Prepared for Rocky Point Bird Observatory <www.rpbo.org/~rpbo/reports.htm>
Swengel, A., and Swengel, S. (1995). Possible Four-Year Calling Cycle in Northern Saw-whet Owls. *The Passenger Pigeon*, 57(3), 149-155.

Editor's Note: *We thought it might be of interest to our readers to learn about Tatlayoko Lake Bird Observatory and to hear the exciting news that this year, two of the very few "foreign recaptures" (a bird banded at one station but caught in the nets at a different station) at RPBO were Northern Saw-whet Owls banded at TLBO Sept 14th and 20th of this year (two of only 31 owls banded there this season)! GFH*

Tatlayoko Lake Bird Observatory (TLBO): An Historic Perspective Excerpts from TLBO Blog

Andrew Harcombe, Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) Project Leader, and
Chris Chutter, Bander in Charge (BIC)

Andrew – TLBO is a migration monitoring station in the Chilcotin area (west of Williams Lake). The station is similar to RPBO - designed to follow the fall bird migration south through the Tatlayoko valley. NCC owns six properties in the Tatlayoko valley and surrounds, and primary objectives for the area are conservation, monitoring and steward-

ship of migratory birds, Grizzly Bears, wetlands and old-growth Douglas-fir forests.

Science tells us that at least 10 years of data are needed to statistically illustrate true trends in bird monitoring data. Started in 2006, TLBO follows standards set by the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, of which it is a



TLBO Banding Station. Photo: Gail Harcombe



From left: View of the Niut Range of the Coast Mountains, on the west side of Tatlayoko Lake valley. MacGillivray's Warbler banded at TLBO. American Redstart banded at TLBO. *Photos: Gail Harcombe*

member, and received its very own federal banding permit for the station this year...thank you to the Canadian Wildlife Service, Delta, for supporting the first six years under their federal permit. The banding station has grown from an open tent to a well-designed building with solar power and opening walls (built by Peter Shaughnessy). Data entry is now directly into computer spreadsheets rather than paper forms that blew around in the frequent wind.

Mainstays of TLBO are the banders, the volunteers, and the valley project managers. We have been fortunate to have had three main banders over our first seven years - first Steve Ogle, then Chris Chutter (database manipulator extraordinaire), and now Avery Bartels (young birder who spends his winters in Colombia). Our volunteers usually visit and help for a week at a time. Primarily from B.C., they have also come from Ontario, Alberta, and now, by coincidence, from Colombia. Peter and Roma Shaughnessy, NCC project managers for Tatlayoko, coordinate and orient volunteers, occasionally provide the banders with home baking, fix fences, monitor bluebirds, and generally act as NCC ambassadors for this beautiful valley.

Chris – This season overall was a great one, like all seasons at TLBO. We banded hundreds of birds, found three new species, banded 31 Northern Saw-whet Owls, had our first foreign recovery, and had several very interesting observations and banding records. This year we added Black-throated Gray Warbler, Blue Jay, and Long-billed Dowitcher to the station list. We banded several unusual birds including Swamp Sparrow, Blackpoll Warbler, two Magnolia Warblers,

Boreal Chickadee, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. Unusual sightings included several Northern Shrike, our second Black-and-white Warbler ever, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Solitary Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Common Tern, Eurasian Collared Dove, and Blue Jay.

Andrew – We think that TLBO sits in the most beautiful landscape of any station in Canada. It is with pride that we show new people NCC's work here and TLBO in particular. Showing a volunteer from South America her first Spruce Grouse is a wonderful thrill. Check the TLBO blog at <http://tatlayokobirds.wordpress.com/> for species lists and other data, and give some thought to visiting and helping TLBO continue for future years. Holding a just-banded American Redstart and then releasing it to fly to Central America is a rewarding experience that is priceless. For more information, contact Andrew Harcombe: Andrew.Harcombe@natureconservancy.ca

Year	Birds Banded	Birds Re-Capped	Species Banded	Species Re-Capped	Obs	Census	ET
2006	1595	272	52	20	110	118	131
2007	1770	199	53	20	121	116	137
2008	1874	459	57	29	119	111	137
2009	1866	307	54	28	116	108	129
2010	1817	297	54	20	121	115	138
2011	1331	232	49	19	111	105	125
2012	1284	269	51	19	109	108	124

Spring Birding in Texas

By Val George

To begin at the end: actually, the penultimate day of our 10-day Spring birding trip to southern Texas. Our guide, Russell Cannings of BC Big Year record fame, got word that a possible Tropical Mockingbird had been reported the previous day at a location not far from where we were. This would be the first North American record if confirmed. The eight of us in our group piled into the van and headed for the place, Sabine Woods near the Louisiana border in eastern Texas. When we arrived we had no difficulty finding the location because over 50 vehicles were parked there. Over a hundred birders were looking for the celebrity bird, which hadn't been seen for awhile; however, within ten minutes of our arrival it was located again, and we all had excellent views of it, a bird similar to the Northern Mockingbird we were familiar with but with definite diagnostic differences. This was a great end to our trip because none of us had previously been in on a first record for North America. The closest I had come was the Dusky Thrush, an Asian species that showed up in the Fraser Valley about twenty years ago – this was a first for Canada and the first record for North America outside western Alaska.

Our tour was operated by Avocet Tours, an ecotour group based in Kelowna. The trip was timed to hit the peak of the spring migration. Southeast Texas is a funnel for birds migrating to the eastern States and Canada from Central and South America. For me, there was the added attraction of seeing the specialties of that part of the continent, having only been there once before to see the Whooping Cranes that winter on the South Texas coast.



This isn't going to be a full trip report. That would take too long to tell because the trip was one notable sighting after another. Rather, I'm just going to focus on some of the highlights.

The mockingbird was obviously one of the major highlights. Another was not a bird at all but a bat – many millions of them to be precise. We started our tour in the area just west of San Antonio, which took us near the Frio Bat Cave. This cave accommodates one of the largest roosts of bats in the world. The species is the Brazilian Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*). It's a small brown bat, so not particularly exciting as an individual, but 10–12 million of them roost in this cave during the summer. When they exit at dusk to feed they create an unforgettable spectacle.

When we arrived at the cave about half hour before dusk, several hundred Cave Swallows were flying into and out of the entrance where they breed. The evening was already notable for me because the swallow was a life bird and completed my list of North American swallows. But the really incredible sight started as the light began to fade. First a few bats started to emerge from the cave mouth; soon, this became a massive black cloud that continued until it was too dark for us to see them clearly. According to the naturalist



Left: American Avocet in non-breeding plumage. Right: Northern Cardinal. All photos by author

who took us and a few dozen other people into the site, it takes over two hours for all the bats to leave for their nightly feeding foray. During the night they would consume over 100 tons of insects.

The Tropical Mockingbird was not the only rarity we saw on this trip. One morning we were at a Texas Ornithological Society reserve in the southeast region of the State when we noticed several other birders almost running through the trees in the same direction. We asked one of them where they were going and were told that a Black-whiskered Vireo had been sighted. This is a bird very similar to a Red-eyed Vireo with, as its name implies, black “whiskers”. In North America it’s only found at the very southern tip of Florida so here in Texas it was a real rarity. I admit I’d never heard of the species before, nor had any of our group; but we joined the frantic rush to the place where it had been seen. As with the mockingbird, we easily found it due to the several dozen other birders already there.

Another rare, or at least very uncommon, bird was the Tropical Parula that had conveniently appeared and stayed around for a few days very close to one of the lodges we stayed at on the Edward’s Plateau west of San Antonio. The lodge is beautifully located on the small and very scenic Frio River, and it was in the riparian area that the bird had taken up residence. Shortly after arriving at the lodge we walked along the river bank and quickly found it, a striking blue and yellow warbler.

Warblers are one of the top attractions for birders visiting Texas during migration. Over three quarters of all the warbler species that regularly occur in North America either breed in or pass through southern Texas in spring. We managed 32 species for our trip, including some that breed only in the extreme southeastern region of the continent, such as Swainson’s and Golden-cheeked, and sought-after species like Cerulean and Worm-eating warblers.



Another highlight was our visit to a breeding colony of Roseate Spoonbills and Great Egrets. Several dozens of each species were in a communal colony near Smith Oaks reserve in southeastern Texas. The spoonbills occur in North America only on the southeast coast where they breed in Texas and Florida; their bright pink plumage never ceases to make them a treat for birders to observe. In the colony we visited, they contrasted sharply with the pure white of the egrets. Whilst at the colony we were fortunate enough to watch some of the egrets displaying, showing off their magnificent plumed feathers in peacock-like fashion.

Texas, of course, is a very large State, so it has a great variety of habitats. We spent the first part of our trip in the dry region of the State west and south of San Antonio on the Edward’s Plateau, and then worked our way to the upper coastal area in the east. Here, the attractions were the migrant passerines coming in from across the Gulf of Mexico and from south of the Rio Grande, as well as the shorebirds and herons. Our base for this portion of the tour was Winnie, a small town just east of Houston. This provided easy access to High Island and the Bolivar Peninsula, two of the top birding areas in North America. The High Island area is a trap for migrating passerines, whilst Bolivar Peninsula is the place for shorebirds, herons, and rails.

High Island is a small elevated region of forest and scrubland on the Gulf Coast in an area that otherwise doesn’t provide much cover for small birds. Since it is near the coast, this makes it a natural attraction for tired birds that have flown over the Gulf of Mexico. The birds usually leave the Yucatan coast at night and reach the Texas coast in the afternoon. Under favourable weather conditions for birders – though maybe not for the birds because wind conditions make it difficult for them to fly further inland – many hundreds of birds can be in this relatively small area. This



Left: Great Egret displaying at heronry. Right: Western Scrub Jay.

may include many species of warblers mixed with vireos, tanagers, swallows, buntings, thrushes, and orioles. On good days the real challenge is to focus on a bird of interest amongst so many others in the same patch of foliage. Four sanctuaries in the area, however, make for easily accessible and very pleasant birding.

Bolivar Peninsula, a 30k long strip of land stretching into the Gulf, provides a resting and feeding haven for migrating shorebirds. Of particular interest to western birders are the large numbers of American Avocets, Willets, Wilson's and Piping Plovers, and Ruddy Turnstones among the many other more familiar species. The foreshore, wetlands, and reedbeds of the peninsula also provide habitat for herons, bitterns, and egrets – we had a grand slam of all the dozen species of herons that regularly occur in North America – terns, pelicans, and rails.

Before concluding, I must mention our Red-cockaded Woodpecker chase. We saw several species of unfamiliar woodpeckers, Red-headed, Golden-fronted, Red-bellied, and Ladder-backed, but the one we all really wanted was the rare and endangered Red-cockaded, since it occurs only in the extreme southeast region of the continent. The species is of special concern to wildlife managers due to loss of habitat, and considerable effort has been put into maintaining the remaining areas where the birds breed. Our first day of the trip we searched for them in one of these protected areas. A couple of hours of looking, however, did not turn up any of the birds, though other birders had seen some. Obviously, we were disappointed and reluctantly gave up when Russell assured us we'd get another chance at the end of the trip. It was our last day when we went to the Angelina National Forest near the Louisiana border. This time the search was ridiculously easy; on arriving at a place where a pair was supposed to be, both of them flew in within a few minutes of our arrival and proceeded to flake off tree bark looking for



Green Heron watching for supper.

insects, a characteristic behaviour of the species, just a few metres from us.

The Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were a very satisfying ending to a most enjoyable tour. As well as the highlights, every day brought a plethora of other birds which, though common for the area or to be expected, were treats for westerns like us – Cardinals and the no-less spectacularly red Scarlet Tanagers and Vermillion Flycatchers, colourful orioles, such as Scott's and Hooded, flocks of Indigo Buntings and the occasional Blue Grosbeak, and some of the more exotic warblers like Prothonotary and Blackburnian.

As Russ said when birding got relatively slow, "A bad day birding in Texas in April is still a great day's birding".



Royal Terns on Bolivar Peninsula.

Butterflies of Victoria – Photo Request

By James Miskelly

This winter, the society will be working on an identification brochure for Victoria-area butterflies. You may have seen the place-mat style Guide to the Garden Butterflies of the Georgia Basin produced by the Vancouver Natural History Society. The District of Saanich has also produced a very nice brochure on native flowers that we can use for inspiration.

We hope that this will be the first in a series of brochures that will treat a variety of different animal or plant groups in our area. Before we can get started, however, we need photos. There are recent records of 38 species in the Victoria area. At this point, we are seeking photos of as many as possible, though the total number included in the brochure may ultimately need to be reduced. Photos of adults, caterpillars, and chrysalises are welcome. If you have a photo that you are particularly fond of, or just willing to share, or if you would like to be involved in the planning and design of this brochure, please contact james.miskelly@gmail.com or call 250-544-0455.

ANNE HANSEN

Goldfinches are the new oystercatchers!



Oak Bay Studio Tour: November 3 & 4, 2012
<http://www.oystercatchergirl.blogspot.com>
 anitabike@gmail.com 250.381.7313



Top from left: Claudius Appolo, Western Elfin. Below: Cedar Hairstreak. Photos: James Miskelly

The complete list of species that will be considered for inclusion in the brochure is:

Proterpius Duskywing	Western Spring Azure
Two-banded Checkered Skipper	Silvery Blue
European Skipper	Satyr Anglewing
Western Branded Skipper	Green Comma
Woodland Skipper	Oreas Anglewing
Clodius Apollo	California Tortoiseshell
Anise Swallowtail	Mourning Cloak
Western Tiger Swallowtail	American Lady
Pale Swallowtail	Painted Lady
Pine White	West Coast Lady
Cabbage White	Red Admiral
Sara's Orangetip	Hydaspe Fritillary
Orange Sulphur	Field Crescent
Purplish Copper	Mylitta Crescent
Cedar Hairstreak	Lorquin's Admiral
Western (Brown) Elfin	Common Ringlet
Moss' Elfin	Common Woodnymph
Western Pine Elfin	Great Arctic
Grey Hairstreak	Monarch

A Tale of Owls

By Barbara Begg

Where I live, in a 75-acre townhouse complex with semi-natural yards and surrounded by woods and farm fields, both Great Horned and Barred Owls nest on or very near the property. Each usually fledges at least two young a year. We also have a small pond with native and exotic vegetation around it, and woods and backyards nearby. The Barred owls are frequently seen at the pond by day and the Great Horned less often. The latter, being more nocturnal, are likely to be tucked away in a tree after a night's hunting for rodents in the more open areas.

While visiting one day, David Stirling and I watched an immature Barred Owl perched on the top railing of the pond bridge. Suddenly the owl flew down and almost disappeared in a clump of Sword Fern. After a few minutes it stretched



Photo: J. Fisher

its wings, struggled out of the ferns and flew to the lowest railing of the bridge. For all that hard work? Only a small Pacific Chorus Frog! It must have taken five minutes to finish its snack, perhaps expending more energy than calories taken in, but a learning experience for a young owl.

A little more than two weeks later, at the end of July, one of the residents here picked up an obviously distressed immature Barred Owl and took it to the Wild Arc, a rehabilitation centre in Metchosin. They determined that it had an abscess in its mouth and the infection had spread to its esophagus. It was put down. It was likely our frog-eating owl as it had been a little too tame, even for an owl. Very sad.

Letters

*To the Victoria Natural History Society team
(especially Bill and the volunteers)*

Thank you so much for attending our Aug 25th market with your wonderful display. We've had lots of compliments about the artefacts you brought and the work that your organization is doing. You were a great addition to our celebration of nature!

Hope you would consider attending again in the future – we would love to have you back!

All the Best

Jared,

James Bay Market Society

The Victoria Natural History Society sponsors several scholarships and bursaries at the University of Victoria, Camosun College, and Royal Roads University. Below are some letters of thanks from students receiving these awards:

To the Victoria Natural History Society:

Thank you for your generous donation of the Freeman F. King Scholarship. My name is Erick Jantzen, and I am returning to UVic to study second year Biology and History in Art. I not only appreciate your gift of financial aid to students like me, but also the other work of the VNHS. Having grown up in Victoria with a nature-enthusiast for a father I have been to a number of VNHS events. I value the conservation work that you do and I hope that in future I will have your passion for the natural world.

It seems that beyond just thanking you I want to encourage

your members that work of this kind is valued even by us of the younger generation. I vaguely remember a lecture called 'The Larger They Are the Harder They Fall' about whale conservation, even though it was many years ago.

And I enjoy hearing about the Christmas Bird Count or Native Plant Garden at Swan Lake just down my road.

Though I pay too little attention to this good work your donation has reminded me of its value and motivated me.

Thank you again,

Erick Jantzen (ejantzen@uvic.ca)

I would like to express a personal thank you for the Victoria Natural History Society Bursary I received. This financial aid is greatly appreciated, not only by me, but my whole family. It is always nice to receive recognition for the hard work over the years and the sacrifices that I have made for my new career path. Once again, thank you very much and I will most definitely continue the hard work.

Warm regards,

David Edwards, Environmental BSc. candidate,
Environmental Technology Diploma,
Business Administration Diploma,
Royal Roads University.

Your gift is not only greatly appreciated, it is also inspiring!

Thank you,

Peter Letouffe

Backpack-toting Birds Help UBC Researchers Reveal Migratory Divide, Conservation Hotspots

Media Release, September 25, 2012, University of British Columbia

By outfitting two British Columbia subspecies of Swainson's Thrushes with penny-sized, state-of-the-art geolocators, University of British Columbia researchers have been able to map their wildly divergent migration routes and pinpoint conservation hotspots.

"Birds of a feather do not necessarily flock together," says Kira Delmore, a PhD student with UBC's Department of Zoology and lead author of the paper. "Our teams of thrushes took dramatically different routes to get to their wintering grounds, either south along the west coast to Central America, or southeast to Alabama and across the Gulf of Mexico to Columbia."

The study, to be published this week in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B [Series B]*, is the first to collect a complete year's worth of data from individual birds to document such a migratory divide. "This detailed level of migration and stopover data helps us pinpoint vital feeding and rest habitats that the birds rely on at key points during their long journey – just before crossing the Gulf of Mexico, for example," Delmore adds.

The researchers say the study also raises the possibility that migratory behavior may play a role in speciation, the process by which one species evolves into two. "Given that migratory behavior is under genetic influence in many species of birds, these results raise the question of what hybrids between these two subspecies would do," says Darren Irwin, associate professor of Zoology at UBC and co-author of the paper. "One possibility is that hybrids would take an intermediate route, leading to more difficulties during migration. If so, the migratory differences might be preventing the two forms from blending into one."

Background – backpack-toting birds

About Swainson's Thrushes

Swainson's Thrushes, with olive-brown feathers, lighter mottled undersides, and distinct light eye-rings, are typically 16 to 20 cm (seven inches) in length with a wingspan of 30 cm (one foot). They are not endangered.

Research methodology

UBC researchers caught 40 thrushes in June 2010 – 20 each of a subspecies from Pacific Spirit Park near UBC in Vancouver and another 20 from locations near Kamloops, B.C. The birds were lured into six metre-wide mist nets with mating calls. The geolocators used weigh 0.9 gram and with attachment materials they weigh approximately four per cent of the body weight of a thrush. Researchers then attached the newly invented geolocation devices, which record sunrise



Above: Swainson's Thrush. Photo: Ken Sohm. Right: photo from the article "Captured Swainson's Thrush wearing a geolocator." Photo: Kira Delmore, UBC.

and sunset times, on the birds with special harnesses before releasing them. To collect the data, Delmore undertook the process in reverse a year later.

Funding partners

This research was funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Environment Canada, and the Wilson Ornithological Society.

NB: Photos of the thrushes wearing their geolocator "backpacks" and maps showing the thrushes' migratory routes are available at <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/?p=63623>.

For more information, go to <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2012/09/25/backpack-toting-birds-help-ubc-researchers-reveal-migratory-divide-conservation-hotspots/> or contact Chris Balma, UBC Faculty of Science, Tel: 604-822-5082, Cell: 604.202.5047, E-mail: balma@science.ubc.ca

New Book

The Outer Spores: Mushrooms of Haida Gwaii

By Bryce Kendrick

Kroeger, P., B. Kendrick, O. Ceska, & C. Roberts. 2012. *The Outer Spores: Mushrooms of Haida Gwaii*. Mycologue Publications, Sidney, BC & Haida Gwaii Museum, Skidegate, BC. 189 p. ISBN 978-0-9692237-3-3 [soft cover] Price: CND\$ 25.00

Mycologue Publications and the Haida Gwaii Museum are happy to announce the publication of *The Outer Spores - Mushrooms of Haida Gwaii*, a new book about the fungi of Haida Gwaii (formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands). The authors visited this archipelago off the north-west coast of British Columbia many times over a 5-year period, and collected on numerous islands in order to compile a database of its macrofungi (and some microfungi). We collected over 600 species, and these are carefully documented in text and almost 300 sparkling colour photographs in the book. Special emphasis has been placed on the nature of fungi, their nutritional and ecological groups (mycorrhizal, saprobic,

parasitic, dune-inhabiting, carcass-exploiting), and their cultural aspects, including edible, poisonous and hallucinogenic species. A number of rare, and in some cases possibly undescribed, fungi are documented, as is our progress in accumulating taxa over the five years.

Andy MacKinnon says about *The Outer Spores*: “This is a terrific book, lavishly illustrated and deliciously idiosyncratic. It’s not a field guide to mushroom identification, per se, though it will assist those looking to become satiated or stoned. *The Outer Spores* is eminently readable and, as a bonus, the title is an excellent pun.”

This 200-page book is a unique exploration of a unique habitat, and belongs on every mycologist’s bookshelf. Copies can be ordered from Mycologue Publications, 8727 Lochside Drive, Sidney, BC, Canada V8L 1M8. Prepayment of \$25 plus HST and shipping is requested.

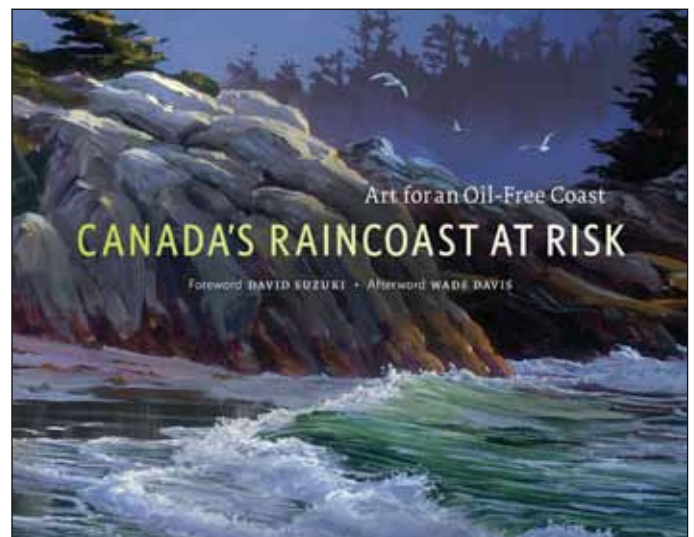


Photo: Sherry Kirkvold

Art for an Oil-Free Coast

By Chris Genovali, Executive Director, Raincoast Conservation Foundation

Fifty artists – some of the country’s most celebrated and many who are First Nations – have taken up paintbrushes and carving tools to portray Canada’s fragile “raincoast” – one they feel is threatened by Enbridge’s proposed Northern Gateway oil pipeline and supertanker project. Their goal is to bring attention to the dramatic beauty and ecological diversity of B.C.’s central and north coast that will be at risk if tankers are permitted to ship tar sands oil through the region’s narrow and dangerous channels. The artists explored some of the most spectacular and remote coastal areas over a two-week expedition in June, and the resulting works, combined with prose and poetry, will be published this November as an art book: *Canada’s Raincoast at Risk: Art for an Oil-Free Coast* (the book includes a foreword by



David Suzuki and afterword by Wade Davis). The original artworks, donated by the artists, will become part of a traveling art show to raise public awareness of what is at stake on this priceless coast and why it needs to be kept oil-free.

"This is one of the most rich and beautiful biotic zones on planet Earth and it could be utterly destroyed," said Canadian icon Robert Bateman, who was part of the June expedition.

We are also excited to present the documentary film, *Reflections: Art for an Oil-Free Coast*, which shares the story of the Raincoast-sponsored artists expedition into the stunning and remote landscape of the Great Bear Rainforest, weaving together the artists' work and their emotional

response to a people and region at risk. The film, produced in association with Strongheart Productions, premiered at the Vancouver International Film Festival in October.

The *Art for an Oil-Free Coast* book and film project is being coordinated and supported by the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, a non-profit science-based environmental organization. For more information, please visit www.raincoast.org.

***Art for an Oil-Free Coast* exhibition schedule:**

Vancouver, Performance Works, November 27 – December 1

Victoria, The Bay Centre, December 4 – December 9

Salt Spring Island, Art Spring Theatre, December 11 – 16

Nanaimo, Nanaimo Art Gallery, December 20 – January 5

BULLETIN BOARD/CLASSIFIEDS

Year-round Tuesday Morning Birding Group

Meets Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. at the foot of Bowker Avenue on the waterfront (off Beach Drive) in Oak Bay. Birding activities take place at various locations around Greater Victoria. For more information call Bill Dancer at 250-721-5273 for more information.

Saturday Morning Birding Group

Meets every Saturday morning - Call the Rare Bird Alert (250-704-2555) or check 'Rare Bird Alert' on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Starting 8:00 a.m., depending on sunrise, rain or shine. For more details, call Rick at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca. Novice and experienced birders all welcome.

Play Again Film

HAT and Open Cinema will be hosting a screening of Play Again this November. View the trailer at www.playagain.com, and watch for the announcement from Open Cinema. Hope to see you there!

Swan Lake Craft Sale

Your one-stop Christmas present shop. Saturday, December 1, 12:00–3:00 p.m. at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, 3873 Swan Lake Road, Saanich. Please join us at this family friendly Craft Sale with demonstrations of quilting, needle felting, card making and painting. Beautifully hand-crafted gifts galore, including quilted & needle felted items, animal hats, almond bark & chocolate truffles, apple sauce, baked goods, cards, and other nature-themed items. Admission by donation; free parking; \$2 to make your own crafts. 100% of funds raised will support the nature sanctuary's educational and habitat restoration projects.

Up-dated map/brochure of BC's Ecological Reserves

For many years, as part of their public education service, BC Parks provided a map brochure of BC's Ecological Reserves (ERs). Since that map went out of print fifteen years ago there

has been a gap in public knowledge and understanding of the role and importance of Ecological Reserves as part of BC's protected areas system.

Happily, as part of the BC Parks Centennial Celebration (2011), BC Parks provided funds to the Friends of Ecological Reserves to up-date the information on ERs for extension purposes. The new ERs map provides a summary of the diversity of ecosystems represented and protected in ERs, as well as the challenges for managing ERs. The map brochure also provides insights into the role the Ecological Reserves can play in understanding and sustaining BC's biological diversity.

This updated map may be of interest to resource managers, natural research scientists, environmental educators and members of the general public who have an interest in natural resource conservation. To view the map brochure and to order copies visit the Friends of Ecological Reserves website at <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/2012/09/11/ecological-reserves-of-bc-map-and-brochure-produced-2012/>. As a volunteer organization Friends of Ecological Reserves needs to cover shipping costs. A single copy of a map/brochure is 4.50 plus an additional charge of 1.50 for shipping for a total of \$6.00. Larger orders of ten maps will be billed at a cost of \$3.00/map plus a shipping of cost of \$10.00. We can accept payment by Paypal on our web site.

Support RPBO

Are you a BC government employee? Do you make donations through the Provincial Employees Community Service Fund? If so, please consider supporting Rocky Point Bird Observatory (DC1411). Your donations would be most gratefully accepted and would support our bird conservation and public education efforts on southern Vancouver Island.

Volunteer opportunities

Members are always welcome to help staff our displays at events. Contact Darren Copley if you are interested in helping VNHS at events (or in any other way) 250-479-6622, dccopley@telus.net

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.

***Members!** Remember that if you want to do a talk or know someone who might, please contact one of the talk night coordinator. Many of you do interesting things either for fun or for work, and it would be great to share. Contacts: Birder's Night and Natural History Night – Christina Ball; Marine Night – Phil Lambert; Botany Night – Adolf Ceska. Email and phone numbers are on p.2 of the newsletter.*

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 3

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Call the Rare Bird Alert (250-704-2555) or check the Rare Bird Alert <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/rarebird.html> on the Thursday/Friday before for this week's location. For details, call Rick at 250-885-2452 or email **Agnes** at thelynnns@shaw.ca. Novice and experienced birders all welcome.

Tuesday, November 6

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

Meet Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. at the foot of Bowker Avenue on the waterfront (off Beach drive) in Oak Bay. For more information call **Bill Dancer** at 250-721-5273.

Wednesday, November 7, 7–9 p.m.

NON-VNHS EVENT

Identifying Mushrooms with Keys

Swan Lake/Southern Vancouver Island Mycological Society (<http://www.svims.ca/ff1208.pdf>) presents this introductory session on Wild Mushrooms. **Ian Gibson** will discuss "Identifying Mushrooms with Keys". Slide lecture, hands-on experience using different types of keys to identify mushrooms. Cost is \$25 (\$20 for Swan Lake/SVIMS members). Registration required. Contact Swan Lake 250-479-0211.

Saturday, November 10

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

For details, see November 3. Novice and experienced birders all welcome.

Sunday, November 11

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. Sorry, parking fees in effect. No pets please. Contact **Agnes** at thelynnns@shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, November 13

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

For details see November 6.

Tuesday, November 13

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Local Projects of the Nature Conservancy of Canada

Tim Ennis will be showcasing the work of the Nature Conservancy of Canada in the West Coast program area, with an emphasis on local projects such as the sand spit/dune restoration program on James Island, species at risk recovery in the Garry Oak ecosystems of the Cowichan Valley and marine conservation in the Sooke Basin. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Wednesday, November 14, 7-9 pm

NON-VNHS EVENT

Mushroom Crafts

Swan Lake/Southern Vancouver Island Mycological Society (<http://www.svims.ca/ff1208.pdf>) presents this introductory session on Wild Mushrooms. **Christine Roberts** presents "Crafting with Mushrooms." She explores the mystery and beauty of fungi as a tool for self-expression. The class will offer the opportunity to do hands-on crafts. Cost is \$25 (\$20 for Swan Lake/SVIMS members). Registration required. Contact Swan Lake 250-479-0211.

Saturday, November 17

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 80 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 a.m. for the 7:00 a.m. ferry sailing. We will return on the 5:00 pm sailing. Cost should be about \$60.00 per person with car-pooling. Bring a lunch, snacks and drinks. Dress warmly. Call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca to confirm.

Saturday, November 17

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING
Come to Reifel with us!

Sunday, November 18

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Fungi Observations in John Dean Park

Mycologist **Bryce Kendrick** (www.mycolog.com) will lead us on an informative nature walk through the Park. Mushrooms are only one of the types of organisms that he will show us. We will learn how molds and slime molds differ from the mushrooms. You might also ask him why fungi are more like animals than plants. He also will discuss how the Kingdoms of Life have evolved and where these organisms that we are observing fit into this big picture. This will be a light-hearted discussion as we enjoy observing the bounty that the fall provides in the woods. As this is a park, there will be strictly no collecting. We will meet at 10:00 am at the far end of Carmanah Terrace. Follow East Saanich Road to Dean Park Road and right on Carmanah Terrace to the end. Dress for the weather as it may be cold or wet. Although we will not cover a large distance, the ground will be uneven and occasionally steep. Wear sturdy footwear and you might wish to bring a walking stick plus a snack and a drink. No pets please. Contact **Agnes Lynn** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 for more information. See page 19 article on the new book *The Outer Spores: Mushrooms of Haida Gwaii*. Bryce is one of the co-authors.

Sunday, November 18

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. He has been doing this trip for about ten years now and this is the best opportunity to see bird species that are usually found further out to sea, including shearwaters, fulmars and phalaropes. The crossing takes 1½ hours. 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 about \$35.00 Cdn. return. **Important!! You will require a Passport or enhanced driver's licence to go through Customs.**

Tuesday, November 20

BOTANY NIGHT

Ginty's Ghost and the Alpine Plants of the Central Coast Range

Chris Czajkowski lived in cabins at Nuk Tessli in the Coast Range, guiding hikers and naturalists for 23 years. She recently moved to Ginty Creek in the Chilcotin. Join Chris as she talks about the original homesteader at Ginty Creek and the alpine

plants of the Central Coast Range. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Tuesday, November 20

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP
For details see November 6.

Wednesday, November 21, 7-9 pm

NON-VNHS EVENT

Mushroom Cultivation

Swan Lake/Southern Vancouver Island Mycological Society (<http://www.svims.ca/ff1208.pdf>) presents this introductory session on Wild Mushrooms. **Scott Henderson** presents "Mushroom Cultivation" Slide talk, demonstration, samples. Learn techniques for growing your own mushrooms. Cost is \$25 (\$20 for Swan Lake/SVIMS members). Registration required. Contact Swan Lake 250-479-0211.

Saturday, November 24

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

For details, see November 3. Novice and experienced birders all welcome.

Monday, November 26

MARINE NIGHT

Voyages to Inner Space

Dr. Verena Tunnicliffe, Canada Research Chair in Deep Ocean Research, has done numerous research dives in submersibles and with ROVs around the world. It is difficult to understand how human activities affect the deep ocean because access is limited. This talk will explore some new discoveries in the deep sea and reflect on the value of ocean ecosystems to our future. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend and a coffee mug. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday, November 28

BIRDERS NIGHT

Diving Birds: Challenge and Adaptation

Diving birds have adapted to forage in an underwater environment that is often dark, dangerous, and demanding. The challenges presented by the sea and the adaptive solutions found in diving birds are the topic of this power point and video presentation by local ornithologist **James Clowater**. Join James as he discusses the various adaptations in cormorants, loons, grebes, and other diving birds. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

DECEMBER

No Botany, Birding or Marine nights in December

Saturday, December 1

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at the bridge at Esquimalt Lagoon at 8:00 a.m. for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the ocean birds along the lagoon and will go into the fields back behind the lagoon to provide a variety of birds. Bring your walking shoes, field guide, and note-pad.

Dress for the weather. A great opportunity for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters to get some practice. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 250-885-2454 if you need more information.

Saturday, December 1

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Come to the Christmas Bird Count tune-up!

Tuesday, December 4

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

For details see November 6.

Saturday, December 8

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at Juan de Fuca (Westshore) Recreation Centre Park and Ride (Ocean Blvd and Sooke Road) 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. Dress for the weather. A great opportunity for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters to get some practice. For more info, call **Ann Nightingale** at 250-652-6450.

Saturday, December 8

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Come to the Christmas Bird Count tune-up!

Tuesday, December 11

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

For details see November 6.

Tuesday, December 11

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Hiking and Beach Walking on Remote Haida Gwaii

The west coast of Haida Gwaii is a remote place devoid of both formal and blazed trails. It is a place where **Dave Lacelle** has taken solitary trips for the past 30 years. Come join Dave as he shares his many discoveries and adventures in this area. He will show photos of the area, and talk about old Haida sites, odd findings, five message bottles. He also has some comments to share on the ecology and geology of the area. Meet at 7:30 p.m.

in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, December 15

THE 2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS – FREE FOR ALL!

Victoria – Join us for the annual Christmas Bird Count.

Everyone is welcome!

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. 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). See article p.7 for additional contact information for specific count areas.

Saturday, December 15

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Come to the Christmas Bird Count in Victoria area!

Sunday, December 16

THE 2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS – FREE FOR ALL!

South Saltspring Island/Sidney

North Saltspring Island/Gabriola

See December 15 for information. **Everyone is welcome!**

Tuesday, December 18

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

For details see November 6.

Saturday, December 29

THE 2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS – FREE FOR ALL!

Sooke – See December 15 for information. **Everyone is welcome!**

Saturday, December 29

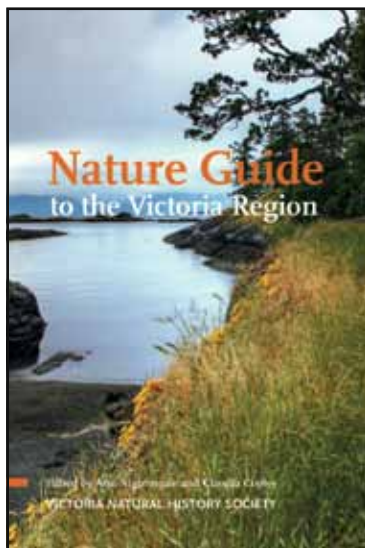
SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Come to the Christmas Bird Count in Sooke!

Tuesday, January 1, 2013

THE 2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS – FREE FOR ALL!

Duncan – See December 15 for information. **Everyone is welcome!**



Nature Guide to the Victoria Region

Edited by Ann Nightingale and Claudia Copley

With chapters by David Stirling, Alan MacLeod, James Miskelly, Robert Cannings, Bryce Kendrick, Philip Lambert, David Nagorsen, Anna Hall, Gavin Hanke and Leon Pavlick.

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned naturalist, this book will give you the knowledge you need to get the most out of your explorations of southeastern Vancouver Island.

\$15 at Society evening presentations. Look for them in your local bookstores!



Northern Saw-whet Owls at Rocky Point, preparing for their migration across the Juan de Fuca Strait. *Photo: Ann Nightingale*