



The Victoria **NATURALIST**

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
2013
VOL 70.3

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





The Victoria NATURALIST

Published six times a year by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4
Contents © 2013 as credited.
ISSN 0049—612X Printed in Canada

Co-Editors: Gail Harcombe 250-652-3508, Ken Sohm 250-658-6115
Desktop Publishing: Frances Hunter 250-479-1956
Distribution: Tom Gillespie, Ken Sohm
Printing: Fotoprint 250-382-8218

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

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Honorary Life Members: Mr. David Anderson, Dr. Bill Austin, Mrs. Lyndis Davis, Mr. Tony Embleton, Mr. Tom Gillespie, Mrs. Peggy Goodwill, Mr. David Stirling, Mr. Bruce Whittington

Officers 2012-2013

PRESIDENT: Darren Copley 250-479-6622, dccopley@telus.net
VICE-PRESIDENT: James Miskelly 250-544-0455, james.miskelly@gmail.com
TREASURER: Gordon Hart 250-721-1264, gordh19@shaw.ca
SECRETARY: Ken Sohm 250-658-6115, ksohm@live.com

Directors and Committees

Darren Copley 250-479-6622, dccopley@telus.net (*Membership*)
William Dancer 250-721-5273, w.dancer@telus.net (*Schools Project*)
Gail Harcombe 250-652-3508, g.harcombe@shaw.ca (*Publications*)
James Miskelly 250-544-0455, james.miskelly@gmail.com (*BC Nature representative*)
Claudia Copley 250-479-6622, dccopley@telus.net (*Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary representative*)
Ken Sohm 250-658-6115, ksohm@live.com (*Publications*)
Directors at Large:

James Clowater (host Birders' Night) 778-426-0166, clowater@shaw.ca
Nancie Dohan 250-592-1956, nancied@shaw.ca
Melissa Frey 250-383-2836, melissa.a.frey@gmail.com
Phil Lambert 250-477-5922, plambert@pacificcoast.net
Steven Roias 250-588-0433, coastalcutty@hotmail.com

Presentation Coordinators

Marine Night: Phil Lambert 250-477-5922, marinenight@pacificcoast.net;
Melissa Frey 250-383-2836, melissa.a.frey@gmail.com
Botany Night: Kristen and James Miskelly 250-544-0455, kristen.miskelly@gmail.com; james.miskelly@gmail.com
Natural History Night and Birders' Night: Claudia Copley 250-479-6622, dccopley@telus.net

Membership

Payable online – see website www.vicnhs.bc.ca for details
Individual \$30*; Family \$35*

*less discount: Senior \$5 or Student \$10

Any donation in excess of the above fees is income tax-deductible. A copy of our membership form is available on our website www.vicnhs.bc.ca or can be requested by email: members@vicnhs.bc.ca. For additional membership information and renewal, please contact Darren Copley, 250-479-6622, or write to Membership Committee c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4

RARE BIRD ALERT: 250-704-2555

VNHS Website: www.vicnhs.bc.ca **Twitter** @VictoriaNHS

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline for next issue: December 1, 2013

Send to: Gail Harcombe

7368 Veyaness Road, Saanichton BC V8M 1M3

Phone: 250-652-3508 e-mail: g.harcombe@shaw.ca

Guidelines for Submissions

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.

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

We do our best to ensure your ad is produced accurately. Although hardcopy is accepted, we prefer print-ready high resolution digital files (PDF) as this decreases the risk of errors in reproduction of the material. Should we make an error, please contact us and a correction can be printed in the next issue. A charge is levied for typesetting. Minor alterations to existing ads cost \$10.00. Add \$15 per photo. Advertising fees are due and payable when copy is submitted. Please submit a cheque payable to The Victoria Natural History Society.

Ad Size	Price	Dimensions (in inches)
Back page	\$120	7.5" width x 8" height
Full page, inside	\$100	7.5 width x 9.5" height
1/2 page, horizontal	\$80	7.5" width x 4.75" height
1/2 page, vertical	\$80	3.5" width x 9.5" height
1/3 page horizontal	\$50	7.5" width x 3.25" height
1/3 page, vertical	\$50	3.5" width x 6.5" height
1/4 page, horizontal	\$40	7.5" width x 2.25" height
1/4 page, vertical	\$40	3.5" width x 4.75" height
1/8 page, horizontal	\$25	3.5" width x 2.25" height

Rates as of February, 1994. May be subject to change.

Submit advertising to:

g.harcombe@shaw.ca

or phone: Gail Harcombe 250-652-3508

Thank you for your patronage.

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

Ask about receiving the magazine
in a digital format to see the colour version.

Contents

VNHS Awards: Call for Nominations.....	4
The 2013 Christmas Bird Counts – Early Birds!	
By Ann Nightingale	5
A Fairy Shrimp Worth Searching For	
By K. Thalia Grant	7
Survivor Lost Lake	
By Tina Kelly	13
Hat Tricks	
Partners Working to Complete Brooks Point Park	
By Adam Taylor	16
RPBO Migration Monitoring Wows	
Local Students	
By Ann Nightingale	17
Letters	18
Odds and Ends	
By Gail Harcombe	19
Welcome to New VNHS Members	20
Bulletin Board/Classifieds	20
Calendar of Events	21

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*).
Hawkwatch Sept. 28, 2013 –
although a very soggy day, a 1/2
hour of no rain allowed Martin
and Nick from Pacific Northwest
Raptors to fly a juvenile male
Peregrine Falcon and a juvenile
Harris's Hawk. It was a highlight in
an otherwise dreary day. Oh, and
two turkey vultures were seen.
Better luck next year! Cover/p.3
Photos: Neil Boyle.



In our position as editors, we depend primarily on members for material, and we are fortunate to have so many willing and capable writers and photographers in our club. Thank you so very much. Sometimes we may need a bit more to fill the newsletter and will contact some of our past contributors – such was the case with Marie O'Shaughnessy and the excellent Orca story in the last issue – or look for relevant and interesting material from websites.

However, sometimes we have a little too much. As a result, in future our policy will be to accept articles of any length up to 2200 words. If your piece is over this, submit it anyway and depending on content received, we may be able to accommodate it. But it is possible that we will ask you to resubmit a shorter piece on the same theme, or allow us to do an edit. Be clear that we also love short little stories, with a picture or two. We aim for variety and in this issue the pieces on Western Toads and Fairy Shrimp are refreshing. Our Jan/Feb issue will have an unusual marine bird story in which two of our more intrepid members were involved.

I recently took two visiting friends from Toronto to the Robert Bateman Centre on the Inner Harbour and we were very impressed. Of special pleasure to birders is a gallery dedicated to birds; an intriguing twist is that many of the exhibits have a sensor which gives the song or call of that particular species. Also around town, the RBCM has some great stuff – many 'behind the scenes' opportunities and interesting talks, e.g., one on spiders in October, when, besides familiar spiders, you might have seen a familiar face or two. November and December have talks on birds and beaches, butterflies and fossils...Check out the calendar at www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/ and click on RBCM Calendar and plan to hear about some fascinating topics.

Ken Sohm

VNHS Awards: Call for Nominations

VNHS members contribute to the Society in many ways: writing articles for the Naturalist; leading field trips; or serving on the board or committees. Some go out of their way to ensure 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, 2014.

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


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

**Tilley** GOES WITH ANYWHERE

A symbol of Canadian quality, Tilley hats are now available at Wildbirds Unlimited. Great for any of your outdoor adventures, from a day birding to 2 months in Africa these hats won't let you down.



Bird Feeders - Custom Seed Blends - Optics - Gifts

**Wild Birds Unlimited®**
Nature Shop

3631 Shelbourne St., Victoria - 250-595-3595

*Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten...
Visit our store for your
very best value!*

The 2013 Christmas Bird Counts – Early Birds!

By Ann Nightingale

I know it can't be good news for us when I get phone calls from Vancouver reporters at Christmas Bird Count time. Ladner may be rubbing our noses in their higher number of species – again (they got 146 last year; we got 140), but I am so happy about the number of participants we get that I still think that Victoria (BCVI) is the very BEST Christmas Bird Count circle. We had 230 field participants last year, an all-time record for us, and it may be the highest number for all circles in 2012. If so, this would be the third consecutive year that we are at the top of the field participant list. Our feeder watchers are lagging behind, though. Any thoughts on how we can enlist the help of the thousands of people feeding birds in Victoria would be appreciated. A feeder watch list (with photos) and report form are posted at vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/feederwatch.html.

In 2012, 140 bird species were observed on the Victoria count circle, exactly the same number as in 2011 and 2010. Are we stuck? Let's see if we can ramp things up in 2013, maybe in preparation for another run at a record in 2014, VNHS's 70th anniversary year. The "trick" is finding the

Victoria – Saturday, December 14, 2013

South Salt Spring Island/Sidney

North Salt Spring Island/Galiano

Sunday, December 15, 2013

Sooke – Saturday, December 28, 2013

Duncan – Wednesday, January 1, 2014

rarities in the days leading up to the count, then making sure to track them down on count day. Of course, although the rarities are fun, the more meaningful data come from the birds we see every year – and the changes in their populations. I expect that Brown Pelicans, for instance, are on their way to being a regular species on the BCVI list.

Species with record numbers in 2012 were Brown Pelican, Canada Goose, Heermann's Gull, Barred Owl and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Our rarest bird was a Harris's Sparrow hanging out at Hyacinth Park in Saanich.



Brown Pelicans and Heermann's Gulls were among uncommon birds seen during the 2012 Christmas Bird Count. *Photo: Ann Nightingale*

Everyone is welcome!

The Victoria Christmas Bird Count is on **Saturday, December 14** this year, the first day of Audubon's three-week count period. The BCVI 15 mile diameter circle is centred on the Marigold/Interurban area. It was a very windy day last year, with 61,084 individuals counted. This is about average for us these days—but well below the circle's record of 125,518.

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 assist by acting as a tally person or 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. Come for as long as you can! (There are a few “keeners” who go out looking and listening for owls in the pre-dawn hours.) We are looking for boaters again this year. If you have a boat you'd be willing to take out – weather permitting – please let me know.

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 (birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count). If you have a preference to count in a specific area, you may contact the team leader for the area directly. Feeder watchers don't have to register – just report your birds on the appropriate count day!

Contacts:

Victoria – Ann Nightingale 250-652-6450 motmot@shaw.ca

South Salt Spring/Sidney –

Karen Ferguson 250-537-2831 siskin59@shaw.ca

(Tim Marchant tim@villagecobbler.ca

for **North Salt Spring**)

Galiano Island – Mike Hoebel mhoebel@telus.net

Sooke – Daniel Bryant at 250-361-9049 jingming@uvic.ca

Duncan – Derrick Marven 250-748-8504 marven@shaw.ca

Post-count gathering

The post-count gathering will begin at 5:00 p.m., **Saturday, December 14** in the hall at **Gordon Head United Church, 4201 Tyndall Avenue**. Please bring some treats/finger food if you can. If the social graces are more appealing to you than a day in the field, we need you! It's always great when we can find someone to set up the hall for the chilled and tired birders. Please contact Ann (250-652-6450; motmot@shaw.ca) if you, or someone you know, can help.

2013 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 and meeting times/places will be posted on the website. Feel free to invite a friend!

	Area Name	Leader	Phone	Email
1	Butchart Gardens – N. Highlands	Warren Drinnan	250-652-9618	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	TBA	250-652-6450	cbczone4@naturevictoria.ca
5	Langford Lake	Barbara Lake	250-652-6450	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	Steve Roais	250-588-0433	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	250-208-0825	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	Ann Nightingale	250-652-6450	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	Ian Cruikshank	250-382-1652	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



All photos by K. Thalia Grant

A Fairy Shrimp Worth Searching For

By K. Thalia Grant

Did you know we have fairy shrimp in British Columbia?

There are eight species known for the province: four alkaline shrimp in the saline lakes of the interior, three freshwater species in the mountains and northern reaches, and one freshwater species – the Oregon fairy shrimp, *Eubranchipus oregonus*, in southwestern B.C. If you live on Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, Sunshine Coast or in the lower mainland, *Eubranchipus oregonus* is the species to look for. Looking for *E. oregonus* is just what I hope this article will inspire you to do, for we need to know more about the distribution and status of this species, before it is too late.

What are fairy shrimp?

They are small, soft-bodied crustaceans that swim upside down. They are among the oldest crustaceans, with a 400 million-year-old branchiopod ancestor in the fossil record. [Editors' note: Anostraca is one of the four orders of crustaceans in the class Branchiopoda] Anostracan fairy shrimp resembling the ones we have today were in existence at least 145 million years ago, swimming at the feet of dinosaurs, witnessing the emergence of the first flowering plants, diversifying along with the first butterflies and grasshoppers, and traveling the world on continents still breaking loose from Pangaea. Today there are some 300 species of fairy shrimp distributed across the globe (including the polar regions),



Although colour varies and is not considered a species-identifying feature, the Oregon fairy shrimp has distinctive eyes that reflect orange under certain light conditions.

represented by eight families and 26 genera. Despite having no carapace or other defence against predators, they have been able to survive the millennia by inhabiting marginal environments devoid of fish. Their habitats are typically wet for only part of the year and occupied by fresh-water vernal pool species, or are hypersaline and inhabited by brine shrimp (*Artemia* sp.) and other alkaline fairy shrimp species. (The “sea monkeys” sold in hatching kits in pet shops are generally of the latter kind.) Fairy shrimp tend to lead short lives, sometimes completing their life cycle in less than two weeks, but produce hundreds of shelled resting eggs that can withstand long periods of desiccation, freezing, and extreme heat.

The Oregon fairy shrimp

In many respects the Oregon fairy shrimp is a typical freshwater anostracan; it is a filter feeder, with 11 pairs of leaf-like legs (thoracopods) which it beats continuously to move organic particles towards its mouth, to propel itself through the water, and for respiration. It has compound eyes on horizontal stalks, a segmented body, and a forked tail consisting of two feathery cercopods. Like many fairy shrimp species, it also exhibits a range of colours from red and orange to green, blue and white, depending on its age, genes, and the chemistry of its pond. The Oregon fairy shrimp is unusual in being one of the longest-lived fairy shrimp species, with individuals often lasting 25 weeks or more; a reflection of the cool wet climate of the Pacific Northwest which allows for long-duration seasonal ponds. In British Columbia, individuals can emerge in November and last until May, sometimes surviving the coldest weeks under a thin layer of ice. It is also one of the largest of its genus, regularly attaining lengths of 2.5 cm, and occasionally exceeding 3.5 cm. The species is primarily identified by the unique shape and ornamentation of the male’s second antennae, which are modified claspers for holding onto a female when mating.



Male Oregon fairy shrimp have sickle-shaped second antennae, with a tooth-like projection on each side, for grasping the female during mating.

The B.C. Connection

Despite its name, the Oregon fairy shrimp was actually first discovered in British Columbia. In 1918, amateur naturalists and farmers Beatrice and Thomas Lindsay Thacker collected some specimens from the “sloughs” on both sides of the Fraser River near their home on “Little Mountain” (now Thacker Mountain) in Hope, B.C. They also journeyed to Vancouver Island, where, in February 1920, they netted fairy shrimp from a pond in the then-expansive Craigdarroch gardens of Victoria. Their Hope and Victoria specimens were examined in 1921 by biologist Fritz Johansen and recorded as *Eubranchipus vernalis*, the Eastern fairy shrimp, a species now known to be restricted to northeastern U.S. It wasn't for another nine years that *E. oregonus* was described as a separate species, from specimens collected near Portland, Oregon – hence the name – and Thacker's specimens reclassified as *E. oregonus*. Museum records show that in those intervening years, and subsequent ones, more populations of *E. oregonus* were found in B.C.: in Matsqui, Haney, Agassiz, Langley, at least six more places around Victoria, Galiano Island, and several other locations in the Georgia Depression. They were also found in Washington State (where the first life-history study of *E. oregonus* was conducted in the 1940s), and more places in Oregon. Scatterings of populations were even found in Oklahoma (as early as 1926) and in northern California (in the 1990s). However, the highest densities occur in the Pacific Northwest, well within 200 kilometers of the coast. Indeed, the Oregon fairy shrimp might well be named the Pacific Northwest Coastal Fairy shrimp...but for the mouthful of words. And if there were ever a call to rename it, perhaps a better choice would be “Thacker's fairy shrimp, *Eubranchipus thackeri*.”

Unfortunately *E. oregonus* has not attracted much notice in B.C. After the nomenclature of Thacker's specimens was put right, nothing else happened. Well, not nothing.



“Don't it always seem to go, that you don't
know what you've got 'til it's gone”

– Joni Mitchell

Development. Urban development. Agricultural development. Drainage of wetlands. Channeling of wetlands to favor fish. Urban sprawl. And one by one the Oregon fairy shrimp populations of B.C. began to disappear. The fairy shrimp ponds that the Thackers observed every year at the foot of their mountain home, in their orchards, are now buried beneath a golf course. Others were drained away into a network of neatly channelled salmon streams. Today the Craigdarroch garden and other Victoria ponds lie under pavement. Without doubt, many other populations have succumbed to the freight trains of development and habitat modification that have swept through lower B.C. I recently heard from a resident of East Chilliwack who reminisced about watching fairy shrimp in a roadside ditch in the early 1950s on his walk to school. He has never seen them since.

It's not all bad news. Today we know of two confirmed extant populations of *E. oregonus* in the lower mainland. (Forget, for the moment, that the site supporting one of those populations will be turned into apartments next year.) On Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, the species has fared somewhat better, but even there the number of known sites still supporting fairy shrimp is in the single digits.



Female Oregon fairy shrimp can carry hundreds of eggs in their brood pouch at one time. For 3-4 days the eggs are rocked back and forth in the pouch while being coated with secretions from the shelling glands. They are then released into the water, where they sink to the bottom of the pond. Females of this species produce multiple clutches during their life time.

We need to know if and where there are more, and to protect what is left. It may not be easy. The distribution of *E. oregonus* coincides with some of the most developed areas in North America – the coastal valleys – and as such the species is acutely vulnerable to continued habitat loss. It is also an indicator species for a type of wetland that, despite being biologically-rich and of high ecological value, is generally viewed as useless; unsightly “wasteland”, prone to flooding, absent of fish, and therefore quick to be drained and altered. Nor does it help that fairy shrimp have been found in places like junk yard pools, roadside ditches and abandoned tires, giving the misleading impression that they are “probably common” and widespread. They may have been common, but not anymore.

The truth is, humans are decimating fairy shrimp populations through habitat loss at an alarming rate. In heavily populated areas world-wide, fresh-water fairy shrimp have been virtually wiped out. In California, for example, where it is estimated that 80% of the state’s vernal pool habitat has disappeared since the 1970s, several fairy shrimp species (the Riverside fairy shrimp, *Streptocephalus woottoni*, to name just one) have been reduced to a handful of sites, and are now endangered. Even in more rural areas, fairy shrimp are being extirpated at an unprecedented pace: construction, agriculture, forestry, road and dry trail maintenance, green projects to “improve” park land usage, and wetland management practices that focus on other organisms with different needs, are all to blame. It has become so commonplace for the scientists who study fairy shrimp to hear of yet another population that has succumbed to habitat modification, that try telling them a similar story and they’ll beat you to the punch line. For so many fairy shrimp we really have, in Joni Mitchell’s famous words, “...paved paradise, and put up a parking lot.”

From Ignorance to Hope

Eubbranchipus oregonus is not an endangered species, but it is recognized as “imperilled” in Canada. It’s not unreasonable to say that its continued survival in B.C. (the only place it occurs in Canada) depends upon a greater awareness of its existence and on some conscious effort to protect the places where it continues to survive. If you know you have something special in your back yard, it’s easy to want to protect it. But it is even easier to eradicate something you don’t even know exists. Unfortunately, that is exactly what is happening to the population that led me to study *E. oregonus* in B.C., and to write this article, in the first place. It is one of the last remaining populations in the lower Fraser valley. Yet it has the misfortune of occupying a controversial piece of swampy, “useless” regional park land that was bartered away for commercial development, with no knowledge of the rare fairy shrimp it supports. In a year or two the land will be cemented over, entombing the ponds forever. Its eradication will be significant. Because fairy shrimp occupy specific kinds of wetland ponds that can be viewed as “islands” in an ocean of inhospitable terrain (both wetland and dry), the destruction of one “island” (or archipelago of islands, if the

population occupies a cluster of ponds) can eliminate the species from a disproportionately large area where no other suitable habitat exists. In this particular case it will be thousands of square kilometers.

I happened upon the site in 2008 – after the land deal was finalized, but before there were any signs it had changed hands. My family and I had just moved to Vancouver from a life in the Galapagos Islands and, suffering somewhat from nature-withdrawal, were making frequent bird watching treks into Pacific Spirit Park. It was on one of these soul-calming wood walks that we happened upon the swamp. Remembering how my biologist parents had relished taking me pond mucking as a child, I encouraged my children deeper in, to explore what lay beneath the tangle of branches, the uprooted trees and the mirrored surfaces of the ponds themselves. I had visions of hydra, daphnia and planaria dancing in my head, and a corresponding educational spiel forming on my lips. Instead we hit the jackpot. The water was teeming with fairy shrimp.

It is always exciting to find fairy shrimp, and I remember each occasion I’ve ever come across them, from my first green ones outside Montreal, to some orange shrimp in Michigan, and neon blue ones in the Galapagos Islands. These B.C. ones, however, turned out to be the most exciting of all. For when I tried to identify the species, the typical reply to my enquiries, sent in all the right directions, and after I’d exhausted the local field guides and trawled the web and asked the neighbours, was “I didn’t know we had fairy shrimp in B.C.!” Clearly we had stumbled upon something special.

And so began my quest, not only to get the species identified (which I eventually did, by a branchiopod expert, and with the help of the Forestry and Conservation Department of UBC), but to find out more about its biology, behaviour, and distribution. At the same time I determined to find out what other fairy shrimp are found in B.C., as no such list existed, at that time, on E-fauna – the online source of biogeographical information for the wildlife of B.C. – or anywhere else. It turned out that *E. oregonus* has been poorly studied in relation to other members of its genus, with just a couple of published articles and notes on its life history, ecology, and distribution. I have expanded on these by trawling through museum records, searching through field reports, reading articles on related species, and corresponding with an ever-widening circle of branchiopod experts and B.C. wetland biologists whose work puts them in the right areas for encountering fairy shrimp. I’ve also spent hundreds of hours back at the swamp, observing the fairy shrimp at each stage of their life cycle, and, after learning of the shrimps’ impending doom, hundreds more hours searching for other populations, both in B.C. and beyond.

It is too late to save this population, but its legacy can be the wakeup call we need to prevent more B.C. populations from going the same way, and the species from slipping onto Canada’s “endangered species” list. Learning more about the current distribution of *E. oregonus* in B.C. will be a first important step. For this we would like to hear from you.



Perhaps you already know of a population? Maybe you will find one on your next outing. Fairy shrimp eggs can remain dormant for several years, hatching only when conditions are favourable. A pond you thought was empty may be full of fairy shrimp this year. There is certainly a good chance of discovering new populations of fairy shrimp on Vancouver Island and the Gulf islands, where the species appears to have survived better, though it still faces the same threats that have swept the lower mainland. But even in the Fraser Valley, there may be pockets of remaining habitat that have gone undetected. I have written that *E. oregonus* has disappeared from Hope, having searched the region in vain for both shrimp and suitable habitat, but I can't be 100% sure they are gone from the entire area. I can still hope (no pun intended) that one day I will receive an email saying, "What do you mean there are no longer fairy shrimp in Hope [or Haig or Chilliwack, or anywhere else for that matter]; I have some in my back yard!"

Where to Look

Now that I have invited you to prove me wrong, here are some tips on where to look for *E. oregonus* in your "backyard":

- Focus on open mixed woodland pools. *E. oregonus* is usually found in association with red alder, maple or other deciduous trees, but in close proximity to coniferous forest.



Typical Oregon fairy shrimp ponds.

- Look for small, clear water bodies. The ponds are usually small and shallow (less than a metre deep), but several may interconnect when inundated. They are always clear or tannic, as opposed to muddy with lots of suspended particles, and sometimes, but not always, contain aquatic plants. The water can be rich in other freshwater plankton such as copepods, ostracods (seed shrimp), and phantom midges.
- If the water is moving, or if you see any fish, look elsewhere. Fairy shrimp ponds have little or no flow, and the shrimp themselves cannot persevere in the presence of fish. Nor can they survive large numbers of water fowl, although a pair of mallard in the area is not uncommon. Other predators, such as Notonectids (backswimmers), dragonfly larvae and predaceous beetle larvae are also low in numbers.
- Restrict your search to the late fall, winter and spring months. The ponds dry completely or undergo a severe drop in water level during the summer months.

There are so many reasons to look for fairy shrimp but perhaps the best is for the sake of our children. Fairy shrimp are the perfect introduction for youngsters to the magical world of pond life and the wonders of nature in general. They have an irresistible name, are beautiful and harmless, and conveniently large enough to be viewed without a microscope. Watching colourful fairy shrimp gliding gracefully through the water with their hypnotically undulating “wings” is a mesmerizing experience that is not soon forgotten. What better incentive for a walk through the woods on a bleak winter day, when snowdrops, spring peepers, and bird song are still a long way off, than to search for a patch of “winter flowers”; a pond teeming with fire-orange fairy shrimp. Wellie boots (with warm socks), an umbrella (to cut

the reflection of the pond) and a love of nature, are all that is needed.

I suspect that many of us older readers recollect seeing fairy shrimp – in a forest, meadow or roadside puddle – at least once in our childhood. How many of our children and grandchildren will be able to say the same? Here in B.C. we still have the opportunity to give the next generation the chance. But to do this, we need to locate our remaining fairy shrimp sites...and protect them. The Oregon fairy shrimp diverged from its ancestors thousands – if not millions – of years ago. With a little luck they will be around for thousands – if not millions – more.

Please report your sightings to me at kthaliagrant@telus.net. I will also be happy to answer questions you might have.

K. Thalia Grant is a biologist and writer, affiliated with the Beaty Biodiversity Museum and Department of Forestry and Conservation at UBC. She divides her time between Vancouver and Galapagos. As well as studying fairy shrimp, she and her husband Greg Estes organize active, educational, natural history tours to the Galapagos Islands.

Further Reading

- Coopey, R.W. 1950. Life-history of the fairy shrimp *Eubranchipus oregonus*. Transactions of the American Microscopical Society 69:125-132.
- Eriksen, C., and Belk, D. 1999. Fairy shrimps of California's puddles, pools, and playas. Mad River Press, Inc.; Eureka, CA. 196pp.
- Rogers, D.C. 2009. Branchiopoda (Anostraca, Notostraca, Laevicaudata, Spinicaudata). In: Encyclopaedia of Inland Waters. Gene E. Likens, ed. Academic Press. 6492pp.
- Scudder, G.G.E. 1969. The Fauna of the Saline Lakes on the Fraser Plateau in British Columbia. Verh. Internat. Verin. Limnol. 17:430-439.



“Through the looking glass.”

Survivor Lost Lake

By Tina Kelly

All photos by Tina Kelly

Survivor Lost Lake doesn't involve votes, extinguished torches, and last person standing but rather ensures the survival of as many participants as possible. In this reality show, the participants are Western Toads, *Bufo boreas*.

Western Toads are found throughout British Columbia (except the NE corner) but their numbers are dwindling and they are currently listed as a Species of Special Concern and protected by the B.C. *Wildlife Act*. South of the border, this species is under consideration for Endangered Species status. A mixture of threats is to blame, including pollution, development and habitat destruction. At Lost Lake in Whistler, add cyclists and joggers to the threat list.

Bufo boreas breed in aquatic habitats with shallow, sandy bottoms. Although weather dependant (after the snow and ice melt), breeding usually occurs April-July; hatching of



Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*) "toadlet" at Lost Lake in Whistler, B.C.



A lot of toadlets.



eggs takes between 3-10 days and the tadpole stage another 6-8 weeks. Developing from tadpole to juvenile – or toadlet – also signifies a transition from an aquatic habitat to terrestrial living; toadlets inhabit the edge of a lake or marsh to forage for the summer and fall and then move to the upland forest (or grassland for certain populations) for winter. Come winter, these toads hibernate in dens up to 1.3 metres below the frost line. In Whistler, the greatest amount of human-caused toadlet mortality is during this mass migration to the forest.

Tim Rickli, a friend and long-time resident of Whistler, remembers watching the mass migration without incident, as a child 30 years ago. At the time, the area was still relatively “rural” and only a handful of locals explored and enjoyed Lost Lake. Fast forward to today, the region has boomed and Lost Lake can be an extremely busy place. The lake’s easy access from the Village, clean beach and extensive system of trails makes it a popular destination for hiking, jogging, swimming and biking. A paved path leads directly through the toadlets migration route. Now, Tim says, “for many years, at this time, the path is covered in squished toadlets.”



Toadlets are diverted to a bridge or underpass – humans go over and toadlets go under – enabling the toadlets safe passage to the forest.

Good news is, the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) is working hard to reduce those mortalities through public education (interpretive and caution signs, print media, volunteer outreach and even sidewalk chalk) and toad migration “infrastructure”*. This past July, I observed RMOW staff building “amphibian protection fences and bridges”. With the toadlets congregating at the edges of the wetland, which itself abuts the swimming beach and jogging/biking trail, staff have erected a fence; a black plastic crescent moon-shaped fence where the concave side faces the lake, holding the toadlets back from the beach and pathway. How many toadlets could the fence divert this year? Julie Burrows, Fish and Wildlife Technician for the RMOW, is still computing all of the data from the season but noted that the peak count happened on July 23 and produced a value of 35,500 toadlets (On May 14, the peak tadpole count was >40,000). Julie also stated, “These are best estimated counts. Factors that can affect the estimation include overlapping tadpoles, tadpole depth and distance from shore, toadlets in piles and toadlets in long grass or under logs.”

However the fence is not simply for containment; the goal of the fence is to protect and divert. Toadlets are diverted to a bridge or “underpass” – humans go over and toadlets go under – enabling the toadlets safe passage to the forest. Final touches to the bridge were being constructed during my visit and onsite staff were keen to speak with trail users about the need to be aware, with an additional message for cyclist’s to slow down or dismount in the area. As the fence and bridge will not assist the entire Lost Lake toadlet population in their journey, education and increasing awareness is still a key factor in Western Toad conservation.

In a place where money-making and the quest for adrenaline often overshadows nature, it was wonderful to witness the efforts being implemented to reduce human-caused mortality in these coin-sized Survivor participants.



*Note—this is not the first year the RMOW has used infrastructures to increase toadlet survival; however their strategies have varied over the last few years.



Where is the Colour? It's Out There!

Visit it in nature and bring it home in Patrice's art

For original art; museum quality limited edition reproductions, notecards and commissioned art, please contact:

PATRICE PLANK FINE ART

250-474-3907 or sons60rg@earthlink.net

www.patriceplankfineart.com

Hat Tricks

Partners Working to Complete Brooks Point Park



By Adam Taylor, Executive Director, Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)

The Pender Island Conservancy is working hard to complete an incredible shoreline park on the island. Brooks Point Regional Park is home to endangered Sharp-tailed Snakes and the densest, most vibrant display of chocolate lilies in our region, but perhaps is best known as one of the best spots to view Orcas from the shore. It is incredible how close they get to the shore at Brooks Point – it simply must be seen to be believed.

However, the park has one large piece missing – right in

the middle of the Park, where the Sharp-tailed Snake was located! CRD Parks has agreed to add the piece to the Park if community partners can raise \$300,000 before December 2014. For the past year and a half, volunteers from the Pender Island Conservancy Association have managed to raise over \$200,000, and they have now asked community partners to help them finish their fundraising efforts. The Island Trust Fund and Habitat Acquisition Trust have committed \$20,000 to the effort, and hope that the Victoria community will help protect this special place.



Brooks Point, Pender Island. *Photos: Adam Taylor*

RPBO Migration Monitoring Wows Local Students



By Ann Nightingale

Photos by Ann Nightingale

In the early days of Rocky Point Bird Observatory, school groups occasionally visited the banding station. However, since the events of 9/11/2001, security concerns and access issues on DND lands have prevented visitors from observing our field work and learning about our bird monitoring efforts. When we launched the Pedder Bay Marina site in 2012, our thoughts turned once again to school field trips and we are delighted to announce that four classes visited in the first two weeks of our new education program.

Environmental educators Stacey Hrushowy and Marianne Dawson have developed field activities that fit well with the ecology component of the BC Grade Seven curriculum. The program isn't just about the "ooing" and "aahing" of seeing birds up close. Everything is geared to align with the prescribed learning outcomes for the middle school science classes. The students are given assignments in advance of their visit, including having each one learn about a species they might see at Pedder Bay Marina. They are then able to help their classmates find that species during their visit and share the natural history of "their" bird.

While at the Pedder Bay site, the students participate in three field activities: a bird walk representing our daily census, a bird mist-netting and banding demonstration, and a specimen investigation and analysis station where they are asked questions about morphology and bird behaviour. Since large groups could be disruptive to the standardized banding

protocol at the migration monitoring site, the educational activities take place a short distance away, but several volunteers help out at both locations.

During the first week of school visits, the students were lucky enough to see a Barred Owl and Anna's Hummingbird being banded, much to the delight of the groups from Dunsmuir and Journey Middle Schools. Sightings during the



Barred Owl, Pedder Bay

"On the field trip I learned a lot about birds and scientists and how they identify birds with their songs and their field marks. My favourite [part] was seeing the bird I studied (barred owl)." – Grade 7 student



Environmental educators Stacey Hrushowy and Marianne Dawson with grade seven students at the first school visit of RPBO's new program.

2nd Annual

Lagunas Bird Festival

Santa Maria del Oro, Mexico

Feb 8-28, 2014

Join a small group of birders, butterflies, and naturalists for an exciting week with local guides exploring the Lagunas Encantadas (volcanic lagoons) in Nayarit State.

Endemics, uncommon local specialties and eastern neotropical migrants abound amongst the pine-oak forest, thorn scrub, and lakeside riparian habitats of the upland interior of western Mexico.

Based in San Blas following the festival, we'll investigate mangrove endemics and wintering shorebirds via boats and beach walks and soak up the ambiance of this little Mexican seaside town.

Side trips are available to enjoy historical and cultural experiences.



Please contact **Dannie Carsen** at 250-544-2117 or dcarsen@shaw.ca for more information.



bird walks included kettling Turkey Vultures and a Peregrine Falcon practicing its pursuit skills. Anna's Hummingbirds were singing their territorial songs, and an Evening Grosbeak even put in a short appearance. Many of the youngsters and their teachers were surprised to learn that they could recognize birds by sound as well as by appearance. A Great Blue Heron roosting in a tree provided a great opportunity to talk about their unexpected nesting habits. At the end of the field component of the visit, the classes graphed historical observations of Northern Rough-winged Swallows on a chart and learned how the data gathered during monitoring can be used to generate trend lines showing changes in populations.

Feedback is being gathered from the teachers and students, and the program will be refined and modified for other grades. Dunsmuir teacher Barb Kersch said "The students really enjoyed the hands on activities and talked about releasing banded birds in the class for days. I am sure seeing the owl will be a fond and 'forever' memory for my class."

We are most grateful for financial support for our educational program from the BC Public Conservation Assistance Fund, the Stewart Fund (Vancouver Foundation) and the McLean Foundation. VNHS lent binoculars and field guides for the students' use. Pedder Bay Marina (Oak Bay Marine Group) has provided a wonderful location for our activities, and of course, none of this could be done without the amazing RPBO volunteers. If you are interested in becoming involved with this or other RPBO programs, please check out our website at rpbo.org.

Letters

The VNHS provides free field trips to children, and the following is a thank you letter (received as VNHS online feedback form) submitted Sept. 13, 2013.

School Name: Victoria Homelearners Network
Association
Ages: 7-8, 9-10 (14 boys, 6 girls)
Visited Before: No
Visit Again: Yes
Tell Someone: Yes

Comments: The children and adults were captivated by the entire experience. Bill Dancer of the VNHS provided binoculars which many of the children had never used before. They were looking at everything that Bill pointed out. We were all impressed with how the banders shared their techniques and passion for birding. The kids pick up on the interest and passion and that makes them want to know more and understand. The method of answering kids' questions and pointing out interesting birds was the perfect learning experience for our home learning students. We hope to have another Nature walk and talk with VNHS again soon.

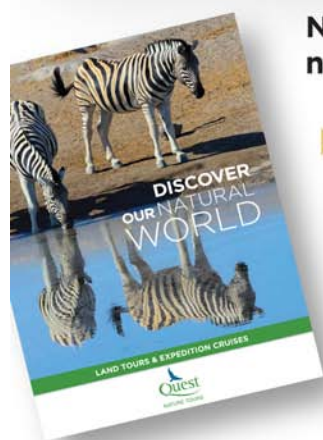
Lisa Wilson

DISCOVER OUR NATURAL WORLD

WITH LIKE-MINDED TRAVELLERS



Discovery & Enrichment | Exceptional Value | Small Group Size | Environmental Responsibility



New catalog

now available! Call or email to request your copy.

Featuring upcoming Departures:

Patagonia Photo Tour
Galapagos Islands Cruise
Birding in Trinidad & Tobago
Namibia, Botswana & Victoria Falls
Brazil's Pantanal, Amazon & Atlantic Forest



Expert-led tours for over 40 years. www.QuestNatureTours.com



Contact us 1-800-387-1483 | travel@worldwidequest.com

Odds and Ends

By Gail Harcombe

From The Victoria Naturalist April 1975

Cattle Point Confusion (or Fine Feathers Fox Fine Birds)

By J.P. Hutchings

At Cattle Point, each Tuesday morn,
Bird-watchers flock together,
But, heedless of the proverb's rule,
They're all of different feather.

The puzzled birds, who try, in turn,
To watch the human race,
Perceive some similarities
Of figure, form and face,

But here, at Cattle Point, they scratch
Their feathers in despair
And page their Man-books through, in vain,
For kinds that are not there.

Not only does the winter garb
Make other seasons' pale,
But brighter plumes do not, they learn,
Identify the male.

Resplendent bodies, heads and limbs
They see of every hue,
But those they grew to know last week
Today wear something new.

One form alone they recognize,
And gratefully revere:
The Cloth-capped, Pipe-filled Davey is
The same from year to year.

[Davey = David Stirling]

Answers to Fun Quiz from September/October issue

1. A centipede has 4 legs (2 pairs) per segment.
A millipede has 2 legs (1 pair) per segment.
2. The duck is a Harlequin Duck, found in the ocean, and is a diver.
3. *Spirea douglasii* (hardhack) grows in swamps and wet areas.
4. A gribble is any one of about 56 species of marine isopods from the family Limnoriidae. They are mostly pale (white) small crustaceans. The name "gribble" was originally assigned to the wood-boring species, but now includes seaweed and seagrass borers.

ANNE HANSEN

www.oystercatchergirl.blogspot.com
<https://picasaweb.google.com/anitabike>



*Your wall deserves a solstice gift!
Collect Anne's framed prints
of select artworks.*

**Oak Bay Studio Tour
November 30th weekend**

anitabike@gmail.com (250) 381-7313

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 21 new members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our *Welcome* column.

Marjie Welchframe
Humboldt Street
birds, marine life

Thalia Grant
Vancouver
nature, art, hiking

Brenda and John O'Hara
Glen Lake Road
natural history

Kristin and Gerry Fleming
Emery Place
birds, botany, getting kids involved

Marilee Pitt
Bay Street
birding

Jennie and Mary Sutton
Kinross Avenue
sea kayaking, marine birds, native plants

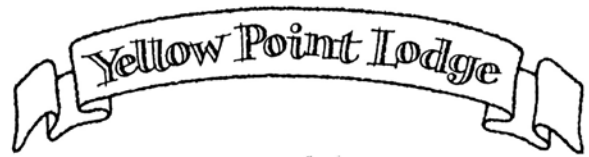
Matt Hall
Chinook Place
all facets of natural history

Lallania Anderson
Roy Road
birds

Martha Keller
Cordova Bay Road
birding and wildlife rehabilitation (Wild ARC)

Karun Thanjavur and Helen Kirk
Torquay
natural history

Natasha Sergio
Douglas Street
animals, plants, fungi, insects, rocks, hiking, beach combing



Has been serving guests since 1939.

We have recently signed a conservation covenant on nearly 70 acres of our property.

www.yellowpointlodge.com
(250) 245-7422

BULLETIN BOARD/CLASSIFIEDS

VNHS – Fish Watching

Victoria and nearby area is home to several species of fish that can easily be observed from the surface (land!). Our local streams, lakes and coastal shoreline offer a wide diversity of fish adapted to near shore and shallow aquatic environments. Join Steven Roias at the Goldstream Salmon Run at Goldstream River Provincial Park during the renowned annual autumn salmon run on Saturday November 9, 2013, 10 a.m. See Calendar for details. Everyone welcome. Reservation not required. Contact Steven Roias for more information 250-588-0433, coastalcutty@hotmail.com

Birds and Windows Project

It has been estimated up to 1 billion birds are killed in North America each year as a result of bird window collisions! This is one of the largest threats to bird populations, with residential homes representing the majority of building-related mortality. To better understand what can be done to reduce bird window collisions, the University of Alberta has developed the Birds and Windows Project to study bird window collisions, and wishes to actively involve YOU in data collection. They ask you to think about bird window collisions you have observed in the past and

would like you to regularly search around your residence for evidence of bird window collisions in the future. Collecting these data may help identify the factors that make some windows more risky for birds than others. As a citizen scientist you can help! More information: <http://birdswindows.biology.ualberta.ca/>

Mushroom Events

There are lots of exciting mycological events in the area at this time of year. South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (www.svims.ca) member Kem Luther maintains an online list of all the local mycological events throughout the fall. Go to www.metchosinbiodiversity.com/mushrooms for details on these diverse events.

Swan Lake Guided Bird Walks

Every Wednesday and Sunday at 9:00 a.m. Bring your binoculars and walking shoes and meet in the parking lot for this informal and informative walk around the lake area. Walks are generally led by Victoria Natural History Society members. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary is at 3873 Swan Lake Road, off Ralph Street.

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 or steeper grades, requiring agility. LEVEL 4 – Very steep, insecure footing, or longer hikes requiring good physical condition. **Please – no pets on VNHS field trips.**

Members! Remember that if you want to do a talk or know someone who might, please contact one of the talk night coordinators. 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 – Claudia Copley; Marine Night – Melissa Frey and Phil Lambert; Botany Night – Kristen and James Miskelly. Email/phone numbers on p.2 of the newsletter. If you have ideas for field trips, please contact Steven Roias 250-588-0433, coastalcutty@hotmail.com

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

Meets every Tuesday at the foot of Bowker Ave on the waterfront (off Beach Drive) at 9:00 a.m., rain or shine. Birding activities take place at various locations around Greater Victoria. For more information, call **Bill Dancer** at 250-721-5273. Novice and experienced birders all welcome.

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP

Meets every Saturday morning, usually at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. Call the Rare Bird Alert (250-704-2555) or check the Rare Bird Alert on the web (<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/rarebird.html>) on the Thursday/Friday before to find out the week's location. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at thelynns@shaw.ca. Novice and experienced birders all welcome.

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 3

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Mike McGrenere will lead this trip on the MV 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 US Customs.**

Saturday, November 9

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1-2)

Fish Watching

Join **Steven Roias** for 1-2 hours as he walks through and introduces our local ichthyofauna (fish) without plunging into the frigid North Pacific! Learn about adaptive strategies, life history traits and species identification coupled with fish behaviour, ecological role and vulnerability in waterways right here in our own home town! Tour takes place at Goldstream River Provincial Park during the renowned annual salmon run. Learn about the fish community this stream supports and the cultural and ecological importance that make this stream a significant landmark for humans and wildlife. Meet at 10 a.m. on left side of Finlayson Rd. Bridge (main parking lot). Sturdy footwear, rain gear and binoculars are all you need. Level of difficulty is easy, but could be slippery/muddy. Everyone welcome. Reservation not required. Contact **Steven Roias** for more information 250-588-0433, coastalcutty@hotmail.com

Sunday, November 10

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. South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (www.svims.ca) member **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 if you wish. Meet at Royal Roads University (2005 Sooke Rd) by the Tennis Courts near the university entrance at 10:00 a.m. **NOTE: Parking fees in effect.** Contact Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, November 12

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

The Cougar: Beautiful, Wild and Dangerous

Vancouver Island is known not only for having the highest density of cougars, but also the most aggressive cougar population in North America. Join **Paula Wild**, author of the new book *The Cougar: Beautiful, Wild and Dangerous* (Douglas & McIntyre) as she gives a slideshow presentation about our

evolving relationship with this enigmatic predator, featuring amazing photographs from the book. She will share cougar encounter stories, discuss how Canadian's views of cougars have changed over time, share tips on cougar safety and awareness, and show how coexisting with cougars on the island isn't about fear, it's about knowledge. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, November 16

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 up 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 plan to return on the 5:00 p.m. 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 for more information and contact **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 to confirm attendance.

Sunday, November 17

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. We will be joined by members of the Friends of John Dean Park so we can get acquainted with their organization. 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. As this is a park, there will be strictly no collecting. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. at the far end of Carmanah Terrace. Follow East Saanich Rd to Dean Park Rd 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. Contact **Agnes Lynn** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, November 19

BOTANY NIGHT PRESENTATION

The strange world of pitcher plants

Ever wonder what it's like to be eaten by a plant? Join **Jonathan Moran** in exploring the strange world of pitcher plants. You'll learn how pitcher plants have turned the tables on animals, and how they attract, catch, and use them for their own ends. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Monday, November 25

MARINE NIGHT PRESENTATION

Holey Rocks! Ground breaking studies of rock-boring clams

What do piddocks and badgers have in common? What are those "eyes looking out"? Join biologist and author **Rick Harbo** (Research Associate, Royal BC Museum) to discover the unique adaptations of rock-boring clams causing "holey rocks." Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday, November 27

BIRDERS NIGHT PRESENTATION

Lagunas Encantadas – rescheduled from October 23

Join **Dannie Carsen** for a presentation on birding the Enchanted Lagoons near Tepic in Nayarit State in western Mexico. Take a "ride on the running boards" of a kingcab truck cruising the backroads of Nayarit looking for birds while Dannie narrates the backstory to his intensive three-day birding trip to three upland volcanic lakes: Santa Maria del Oro, Laguna Tepetitlic, and Laguna San Pedro northeast of Tepic. For those thinking of visiting Mexico with birding in mind, this is a good introduction to the range of birds, landscapes and food you can expect. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, November 30

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 but all are welcome. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 250-885-2454 if you need more information.

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 7

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at Juan de Fuca (Westshore) Recreation Centre Park and Ride (Ocean Blvd and Sooke Rd) at 8:30 a.m. for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the recreation centre property, parts of Esquimalt Harbour and the roadsides in between. 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 but all are welcome. For more info, call **Ann Nightingale** at 250-652-6450.

Tuesday, December 10

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Biodiversity in Nature Conservancy of Canada's Interior Grasslands

Join **Andrew Harcombe** for this talk which will describe some of the key NCC properties in the Southern Interior and their biodiversity, as well as ongoing inventory and management efforts. Less than 1% of the province is covered in grasslands, so long-term conservation efforts are critical. Recent acquisitions will be described. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Fraser building. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

Saturday, December 14

2013 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – EARLY BIRDS!
Everyone Welcome!

Victoria – Join us for the Victoria Christmas Bird Count, on the first day of Audubon's three-week count period. You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. For more information, and

lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, check the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/) and the Christmas Bird Count site (birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count). See article p. 6 for contact information for specific count areas.

Sunday, December 15

2013 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

South Salt Spring Island/Sidney, North Salt Spring Island/Galiano. See December 14th for information. **Everyone Welcome!**

Tuesday, December 17

BOTANY NIGHT

Members' Night – Botany Night Christmas Party

Do you have a few botanical photos or stories you'd like to share? Do you have images or specimens you'd like to have identified? Do you have a favourite muffin recipe you want to show off? Join us at the Botany Night Christmas Party for

informal mini-presentations and treats. If you have something to present, please contact kristen.miskelly@gmail.com (250-544-0455). Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Saturday, December 28

2013 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sooke – See December 14th for information. **Everyone Welcome!**

And Happy New Year!

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 1, 2014

2013 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Duncan - See December 14th for information. **Everyone Welcome!**

New Guidelines for VNHS Field Trips

Message from the Board

For several months your Board of directors has been working on **Guidelines for VNHS Field Trips**. We will be implementing these starting in November and asking for feedback in late spring on how the new guidelines are working.

The main features of these guidelines can be summarized as follows:

- Definition of the various roles and responsibilities of people involved in field trips
- an expansion – a democratization if you will – of the participation of individual members in the process
- the creation of a 'release of liability, waiver of claims' form
- guidelines for being prepared for field trips

We hope to publish the guidelines in our next newsletter. A brief summary follows:

Roles and Responsibilities

A new position, **Field Trip Coordinator**, has been created. Steven Roias, one of our newest Board members, has agreed to fill that position. All proposed field trips will be directed to the coordinator, who will maximize variety, try to avoid conflict in dates, and may initiate or lead trips.

The **Field Trip Organizer** proposes trips, leaders, and dates. This role has been very ably filled primarily by Agnes Lynn and Rick Schortinghuis in recent years. The organizer may also be the trip leader.

The **Field Trip Leader** conducts the trip.

All the above positions have certain duties and some limits specified in the guidelines.

Waiver Forms

The introduction of a waiver form, to be signed by all those on a field trip, is long overdue. Most clubs use one. For VNHS members, one form per year suffices. For non-members, a form will be signed on every trip. Since waiver forms are pretty standard, we don't plan to publish this sheet.

Individual Members

All members are encouraged to provide input into our already great outings, and be part of making them even better. You can suggest a theme, location, and hopefully a leader. Don't be afraid of leading a trip. You do need to know the area proposed, have some general field knowledge, and be a good organizer. Usually there are knowledgeable participants who can complement your knowledge. Your input applies not only to field trips but also to our fall/winter presentations at UVic.

Preparations for Field Trips

While most of our members are pretty savvy when it comes to outings, it never hurts to be reminded. Our guidelines are comprehensive, covering everything from clothing and footwear to drinks and snacks to washroom stops before you start. In this way, we hope to make it unnecessary for field trip organizers to spell everything out each time. Once you get this information, keep it handy as a reminder.

Once you receive the Guidelines, please study and save them. Should you lose them, we will try to have copies available at evening presentations. Or advise the secretary and we will email one or insert in your newsletter. Happy trekking.



Close up view of Nest with an adult Brandt's Cormorant and two medium downy chicks at Mandarte Island, 10 August 2013. *Photo by D. Donnecke.* Full article "First breeding of the Brandt's Cormorant at Mandarte Island, British Columbia", by H. Carter, M. Lambert, and D. Donnecke, to be published in January/February 2014 issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*.