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[Subject: VNHS newsletter submission]

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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 300 dpi for all sizes is requested.

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Cover Image: Frosted Nudibranch (*Dirona albolineata*) VNHS Photo contest winner. This species was missed at a recent field trip to Harling Point but there were plenty of other interesting finds (p. 6 and 7). *Photo:* James Holkko

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I really miss being a part of the magazine team, but my experience filling in as editor for Gail this issue proves to me that I'm too busy to add it to my volunteer obligations right now: I definitely had feelings of being overwhelmed!

I loved the synergy of several of the articles in this issue: The field trip report (page 6) perfectly dovetailing with the NatureKids article (page 7) about the same outing, and the effort *to not* log the ancient forest of the Walbran Valley (page 8) paralleling concerns about leaving areas of second growth on the way to Port Renfrew to once again grow old (page 12)

Most of all I felt hopeful in these 'trumped-out' times, all thanks to the winner of the Victoria Natural History Society's prize category at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair (letter of thanks, page 19).

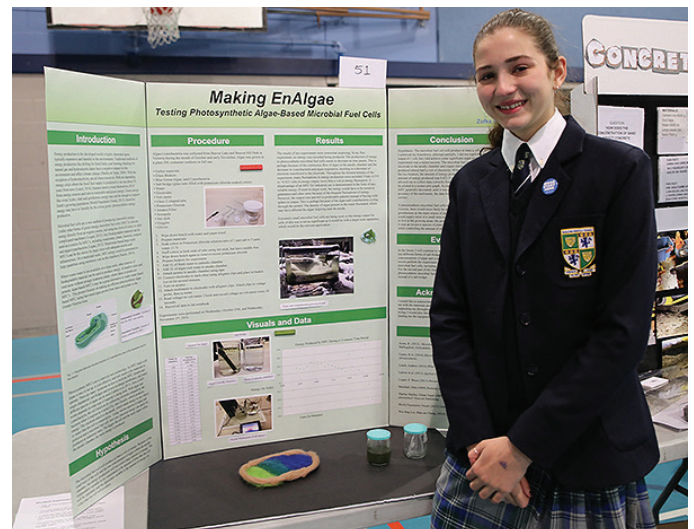


Photo: www.mygns.ca

A grade nine student named Zofka Svec (*shown above*) is working on generating energy from algae that she collected from Elk/Beaver Lake. Seriously: microbial fuel cells that could help power small communities from organisms we have in such abundance that they actually cause issues in the natural environment! You go girl! We desperately need you! I cannot wait to leave some old ideas behind and make room for fresh new ones like these.

Claudia

A Message from Your Board

Every summertime's "message from the board" has to admit that we are not doing much: we are also taking a break from obligations and getting outside and away. But there are a few new items to report on and we have been working on a date for a board retreat, so more ideas will likely come of that too. Stay tuned for new undertakings in the fall.

We now have a full complement of board members: Warren Drinnan has come back onto the board after a long hiatus, and his many years of experience with the Society are a welcome addition at the meetings. Now that Warren is retired we expect to be able to sign him up for all kinds of activities—hopefully he isn't forewarned through reading this!

It was refreshing to have board members step up rather than have to be coerced—a couple of other very new members also expressed interest in the vacancy and we hope they will put their names forward again in 2018 once they have had a chance to learn more about the organization and participate in some of our activities.

Still on the topic of the board: not only has the composition changed slightly but also the various roles. Your president is now Phil Lambert—a member who most of you know from his literally decades of volunteering at Marine Night and leading many field trips to the intertidal

to admire invertebrates, with a definite preference for the echinoderms (sea stars and their relatives). Other people have moved around a bit as well: Stephanie Weinstein is now your Secretary and Warren Drinnan is the Vice President. Gordon Hart remains the "lifetime treasurer", and that takes care of the officers.

Our Society has been involved in a number of initiatives over the last couple of years and some updates to these are noteworthy. A few years ago we gave a small amount of financial support to the Ian McTaggart-Cowan Legacy Project. This project involved the writing of a biography: *The Real Thing: The Natural History of Ian McTaggart-Cowan* which went on to win a 2016 BC Book Prize, the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize, the inaugural Mack Laing Literary Prize, and was even shortlisted for the 2016 Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize. The project also now includes a website hosted by the University of Victoria that contains Dr. McTaggart-Cowan's transcribed field journals, photographs of his early specimens, and excerpts from work on CBC's Web of Life television program. This sort of resource is of interest to naturalists across British Columbia and forms an impressive legacy for an amazing individual. Check it out yourself: <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/landingpage/collection/collection44>

Another initiative that is still very much a work in



VNHS September Social Saturday, September 30, 2017 3:00 p.m. following Hawk Watch You are invited!

Join CRD Parks and the Victoria Natural History Society for Hawk Watch and then join your fellow VNHS members for a BBQ get-together at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Park. Members are welcome to a free smokie (veggie option available), beverage, cake, and camaraderie! Bring a lawn chair.

To RSVP, email or phone Gail: 250-652-3508, g.harcombe@shaw.ca
before September 22, 2017

**A reply is only necessary if you plan to come.
Please specify number of smokies and whether regular or veggie.**

progress is the *Urban Sanctuaries* Project led by the Bateman Centre. Our involvement as a partnering agency varies, but we hope you will find time to participate in events that are being organized and learn more about the three migratory bird sanctuaries at our doorstep. Vicki Metcalfe serves as our project lead on this and can help with any questions you may have. On the 12th of July these sanctuaries will be designated as Nature Canada 'NatureHoods' at a ceremony at Government House presided over by the Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. Other activities falling under the *Urban Sanctuaries* Project banner include an exhibit on migrations at the Bateman Centre that began in June and will travel after it finishes here, stewardship projects focused on forage fish and Pacific Oyster habitat enhancement, and a Bufflehead Festival in October 2017. We promise to keep you updated through Society channels: *The Naturalist* magazine, FaceBook, Twitter, emails, and our website.

In February Rosemary and Sid Jorna presented to the board about what is happening to forested lands along the west coast from the outskirts of Victoria to Port Renfrew. A summary of this series of events is provided (pages 12–15) so you can stay up-to-date on the issues in that region, and get involved if you are able to.

Finally: please join us for the Hawkwatch and BBQ Social event of the year: September 30—see bottom of page four. We need to know you are coming, what you would like to eat, and we want to remind you to bring a lawn chair or a picnic blanket.



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Harling Point Happenings

By Tina Kelly

In my long wish-list of finds for the annual low-tide trip to Harling Point, marine mammals were noticeably absent. Sea lions were a maybe. Killer Whales—didn't cross my mind. Turns out both made an appearance during our sunny adventure. Squatted, head down above tidepools, gently teasing aside the surf grass, the opportunity to spot whales wasn't likely, but a random stretch break gave view to the sudden onslaught of ecotourism boats stopped just offshore. Keen birders in the group, who brought along their binoculars, confirmed the presence of two Biggs Killer Whales travelling east.

Now back to that wish-list; with many eyes on the lookout we found Gumboot Chitons, Blood Stars, Green Sea Urchins, and Umbrella Crabs. Notably absent from fulfilling my day's wish-list were nudibranchs. (Full disclosure, I did find a Red Sponge Nudibranch but since everyone had already left, it seemed a little anticlimactic.)

We also discovered some usual rocky shore suspects: Aggregating Anemones, Ochre Stars, Hermit Crabs, Decorator Crabs, Turban Snails, Northern Clingfish, Black Katy Chitons, Pygmy Rock Crabs, a variety of dogwinkles/whelks and more. Always a fun find are signs of reproduction; large clusters of "sea oats"—or dogwinkle eggs—were found securely tucked under the shady sides of rocks and boulders.

All in all, a pleasant May day on the sunny seaside exploring and learning together.

Thank you to Stephanie Weinstein and NatureKids BC for joining us. Their adventurous spirit, inquisitive nature, and eagle-eyes were a great addition to the morning.



Participants on the Harling Point Field Trip. *Photo: Stephanie Weinstein*



Tina Kelly showing off a Green Sea Urchin. *Photo: Stephanie Weinstein*



Checking out a Gumboot Chiton. *Photo: Stephanie Weinstein*



Umbrella Crab. *Photo: Tina Kelly*

News from NatureKids

By Stephanie Weinstein,
Leader of Victoria NatureKids Family Club



NatureKids learning about bees and pollination at the Fort Rodd Hill Bioblitz. Photo: Stephanie Weinstein

The Victoria NatureKids Family Club has been having a great time exploring some of our special natural areas with support from the Victoria Natural History Society and other local groups. NatureKids BC is a nature exploration organization for children ages 5-12 and their families. There are more than 30 NatureKids family clubs in BC. The Victoria NatureKids Club has more than 40 member families; the kids in this group are not typical of their generation, who usually spend more time plugged in than we care to imagine. NatureKids aren't afraid to get covered in soil or seaweed—in fact they embrace it. They are overflowing with curiosity and enthusiasm for the natural world, thanks to their participation in monthly Explorer Days, led by nature mentors.

In February the Victoria NatureKids celebrated World Wetland's Day with the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society. They gave us a guided tour and scavenger hunt around the last remaining bog on the Saanich Peninsula. Early spring was honoured with a Bird Bonanza thanks to educators from the Rocky Point Bird Observatory. They had interactive games, like match the egg and nest to the parent, and taught bird watching basics including how to use binoculars and field guides, before we tried out our new skills on a walk at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.

May has been a rewarding month of mentorship and sharing between the adult naturalist club and the children's. NatureKids families were generously invited by Parks Canada to spend the night camping in the oTENTiks at Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites to kick off the Bioblitz and International Migratory Bird Day (May 12-13,



2017). What a fabulous experience for the seven families who took advantage of this awesome opportunity! We had an evening bat walk with Habitat Acquisition Trust, s'mores by the campfire, and a pancake breakfast the following morning to give the kids fuel for a full day of bug-hunts, mist-netting birds, pollinator walks in the Garry Oak Learning Meadow, touching and feeling the natural history objects at the VNHS exhibit, and much more.

We also had our first joint VNHS-NatureKids field trip to explore low tide at Harling Point in Oak Bay on May 28, with Tina Kelly, the Director of Learning at the Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea. I admit that the needs and interests of children and adults on a natural history field trip might clash in some instances. But in this case, the two groups were a perfect complement. Everyone carefully clambered over the rocks (admittedly easier for the kids) and uncovered the abundant and diverse marine life in the tide pools and hidden beneath the thick surf grass, including Purple Sponge (*Haliclona permollis*), Red Sea Cucumbers (*Cucumaria miniata*), Umbrella Crabs (*Cryptolithodes sitchensis*), Green Sea Urchins (*Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis*), Aggregating Anemones (*Anthopleura elegantissima*), Black Katy Chitons (*Katharina tunicata*), a Gumboot Chiton (*Cryptochiton stelleri*) peeled off its rock by a hungry (and unsuccessful) predator, and so much more. A pod of whale-watching boats close to shore alerted us to a pair of male transient orcas (now called Biggs Killer Whale), whose immense dorsal fins were easily spotted even without binoculars.

One VNHS member told me how much she enjoyed having the kids there because they're closer to the ground and made it easier for the other participants to look at the animals without having to bend over to find them! The children enjoyed meeting the adult naturalists and learning from them. It was a special opportunity to share the joy of nature across generations.

The community of knowledgeable and passionate naturalists in the Victoria Natural History Society keeps the NatureKids thriving. Thank you for all of your support! If you are interested in sharing your knowledge in a hands-on Explorer Day for the NatureKids, please email Stephanie at srweinstein2@yahoo.com

Ancient Spiders from an Ancient Forest

By Sean McCann
Photos by Author



Cross the 'Bridge to Nowhere' and enter the Walbran rainforest.

Ever wish you could travel back through time and see a west coast Vancouver Island rainforest before industrial logging? To see huge old trees, intact soils, and life in a climax ecosystem? You do not have to invent a time machine, you only need to travel about an hour out of Port Renfrew to the spectacular Walbran Valley.

As part of an effort to document the biodiversity of the valley, I traveled with fellow arachnologists Claudia Copley, Darren Copley, Zoe Lindo, and Catherine Scott, along with birders, mycologists, lichenologists, and assorted volunteers to spend a day among the giant trees. We were there at the invitation of the Friends of Carmanah-Walbran and the Sierra Club to lend our expertise to the effort of cataloguing the biodiversity of this beautiful, yet still at-risk west coast habitat.

We arrived at the somewhat storied "Bridge to Nowhere", where, in 1991, environmental protesters confronted the logging companies, the RCMP, and the government of British Columbia, holding the line against industrial exploitation of a rare ecosystem. What the activists were asking for seems modest: Can't we have just this one watershed, among all the others on Vancouver Island, be preserved and protected from the clearcutting and degradation that is the fate of every other valley on the Island? The answer, so far, after a quarter century has passed, is still "no", so a renewed effort to protect it is underway.

While the Friends of Carmanah-Walbran took the other participants deep into the woods on hikes, we arachnologists ventured only short distances into the woods. Our slow and careful sifting through the soil and beating of the bushes is certainly not a thrill ride for everyone. For us, however, it was thrilling, because within 30 minutes of arrival on site, we had found a dense population of *Hexura picea*, a relative of tarantulas.

These small and relatively nondescript spiders live in small silk tunnel complexes among the soil and rocks of the forest floor. Each tunnel has a main entrance lined with silk, and several other openings which may facilitate rapid escape or offer alternate exits at which to snare prey. Being members of the suborder Mygalomorphae, they are a group of spiders that closely resemble ancient spiders. Many mygalomorphs retain traces of segmentation on their abdomens, unlike the more modern araneomorph spiders. In the Mecicobothriidae (the family of spiders to which *Hexura* belongs) the terminal spinneret segments bear "pseudosegmentation".

The section of forest we found this spider in was a real "tangled bank", in fact a scree slope associated with Walbran Creek and a small tributary, which has since been covered with a layer of soil and a stand of hardy trees. Finding these spiders in the Walbran



Note the long spinnerets on this tarantula relative, *Hexura picea*.

was not unexpected, as they had previously been found in the Carmanah Valley and at Avatar Grove, but their presence on Vancouver Island is somewhat puzzling, as they represent the only known Canadian population, and are not known to be present on the BC mainland.

Given the dense population in the Walbran, the valley would be a wonderful place to study their behaviour, which so far is undocumented. We would presume that much of the activity of these spiders takes place at night, although Catherine was able to lure one out of its burrow by tickling the silken doormat with a twig.

The litter sampling we conducted will surely yield many more species, although we have to wait until the Berlese funnels



Extracting small arthropods from moss using Berlese Funnels. Photo: Claudia Copley

have extracted all of the arthropods. The work of sampling and cataloguing biodiversity takes time, and is not totally congruent with the rapid “bioblitz” ethos.

If you want a trip back in time, head to the Walbran Valley. You may just discover something amazing.

For more information on the effort to preserve the Walbran Valley:

https://www.wildernesscommittee.org/victoria/what_we_do/walbran_valley

<https://friendsofcarmanahwalbran.com/>

Boardwalks, trails, and even campsites have been established, all through volunteer efforts, so a trip to this remnant treasure is well worth it and quite accessible.

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A New Bird for Bhutan

By Claudia Copley



The Himalayan Monal surveying his snow-dusted kingdom.
Photo: Darren Copley

For nature enthusiasts such as myself and five other travelling companions from the Victoria Natural History Society, choosing to visit Bhutan was an easy decision. Bhutan's commitment to ecological preservation was the reason we went: we wanted to support this commitment and to appreciate the results of this protection directly.

Although our interests include everything from botany to invertebrates, we have found that the simplest way to see the most varied ecosystems while travelling is through a guided bird tour, so for this trip we were on a 21-day tour with Bhutan's top bird guide Norbu, owner and senior guide of "Off to Bhutan" birding company. Norbu came highly recommended and we were not disappointed. He and his team *took us to the birds*, just as his company slogan promises.

Among the incredible locations we explored, a visit to the Tharpaling Monastery was a must, because here the magnificent Himalayan Monal can be seen relatively easily. Although this location would be worth a visit under any circumstances, what made it especially beautiful was an overnight snowfall and the clear sunny weather. Seeing the male Monal in bright sunshine on his snow-covered mountain home is a sight none of us will ever forget.

Norbu has been guiding bird tours for fifteen years, so has seen the Monal many times, but never with a snowy backdrop. But, for our seasoned guide, this fresh view of one of the most beautiful birds in the world was easily matched by the discovery of a new bird for Bhutan quietly foraging on the

ground on the way up to the monastery: Godlewski's Bunting.

When it was first spotted, the identity of the small streaky bird was not immediately clear, especially not to the six Canadians for whom almost all the region's birds were unfamiliar. But luckily Norbu had the presence of mind to take several photographs, and, upon later examination on the bus and much discussion, it was concluded that the bird was a new record for Bhutan, bringing the total number of species to 719. Its natural range includes many other countries in the region, so it was suspected of occurring here but had not been confirmed before now. It is not known if the unseasonable weather caused this bird to be off course or if it has gone unnoticed until this sighting. You can be sure that Norbu and others will be keeping an eye out for it from now on.

When you have been observing the birds of Bhutan as long as Norbu, seeing something new becomes increasingly unlikely, so this new record was an exciting find for our tour leader. For the Canadians he was so capably guiding, this bird was no match for the exquisite Monal, but his enthusiasm for the discovery was something we were glad to be a part of.

We were awestruck by the natural beauty of this wonderful country, and are excited to share our experiences. Bhutan's commitment to the natural world is a refreshing change from typical attitudes towards nature; making Bhutan among the most ecologically important strongholds for biodiversity on a global scale, despite its small size. An incredible achievement and one we know the Bhutanese are proud of. We are grateful we had the opportunity to visit.

Author's Note: If you are interested in further details about this trip please don't hesitate to send me an email request (dccopley@telus.net): itinerary, trip list, or any specific questions. Bhutan is definitely worth a visit to support their conservation initiatives.



Another view of the exquisite Himalayan Monal showing off his true colours. Photo: Darren Copley



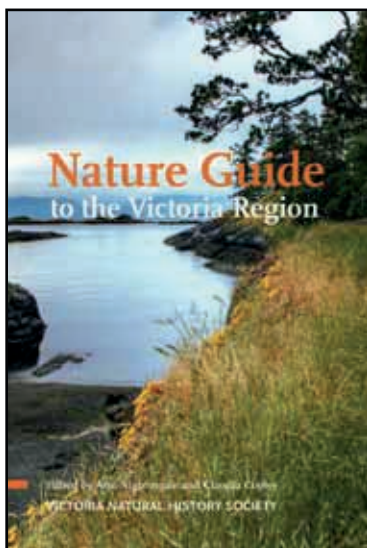
The famous Tiger's Nest Temple, precariously perched 3000 m above the valley below. *Photo: Darren Copley*



Our guide Norbu (*third from right*), his protégé Pema (*left*), and our driver (and Norbu's brother), Tenzin (*second from left*), were all keen spotters. *Photo: Claudia Copley*



Godlewski's Bunting. *Photo: Norbu*



Nature Guide to the Victoria Region

Edited by Ann Nightingale and Claudia Copley

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Under Pressure: Parks and Protected Spaces in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area

By Rosemary Jorna
Photos by author

With forest companies gating land and treaty negotiations under discussion, parks and protected spaces are under pressure.

The Capital Regional District covers 236,735 hectares lying within the traditional territories of the First Nations. They have claims to this land. More than half of the CRD lies within the unincorporated rural Juan de Fuca Electoral Area under the jurisdiction of the CRD.

The 2011 CRD map (see opposite page) shows the protected CRD water supply area which acts as our largest ecological reserve, as well as our parks and trails. The map shows that there is a good concentration of parkland east of the Sooke River but west of Sooke there is a lack of park land. The map emphasizes the problem facing First Nations: a tiny amount of land (hatched lines) are reserves. So what land is available for treaty settlement and how does that affect all of us? This map does not show the publicly-owned Crown Land that is on the table for that purpose.

The Otter Point Official Community Plan (bylaw 3819) area just west of Sooke illustrates the problem (see opposite page). Its 3344 hectares contain large areas that have been logged and released onto the housing market in lot sizes that fail to trigger significant park dedication. Only 0.5% (or 18.61 hectares) is preserved in parks. All that is currently available for recreation and green space in Otter Point is its Crown Land, which makes up 18% of the land base. That 18% is also the land designated in First Nations treaty negotiations. So what is left in Otter Point for public recreation? And how is it to be acquired or financed?

After the 2007 Tree Farm License land release, a large block of land was privately purchased, the parcel was logged, subdivided into 13 parcels, and placed on the real estate market for prices ranging from \$289,000 to \$995,000. Purchase for park seems out of the question with soaring land values. The opportunities to acquire lands for parks or treaties to easily balance the land allocation, has now been lost. We have been told that the CRD has no appetite for acquiring land west of the Sooke River at this time. The CRD Parks board is under increasing pressure to open more of the existing park reserves to the public and the parks budget is limited.

The situation is different in the Rural Resource Lands OCP (bylaw 3591) area covering 132,000 hectares. The old E&N railway grant represents 44% of this area, and it is owned by major forest companies as privately managed forest. The remaining 37% of its area is Crown Land organized into tree farm licences. Forest companies are increasingly reluctant to allow public access. Forestry is a provincial matter so the



Logging between Highway 14 and Bear Beach at Rosemund Creek, May 2016.

provincial government and the forestry companies, not the CRD, are the major players in land use decisions west of the Sooke River. The Official Community Plan only comes into effect when land is released from forestry use.

These are among the province's most productive forest lands: the Enhanced Forestry Zones are "managed to produce higher volumes and values of timber while respecting environmental protection standards of the Forest Practices Code". Some areas are being re-logged after 60 years in a forest that originally took centuries to mature. During peak logging season in 2016, 21 logging trucks passed through Sooke daily. This is having an obvious effect on both the environment and recreational opportunities.

These factors highlight the urgent need to protect two precious areas having unique and endangered ecosystems: the Juan de Fuca Provincial Park and the mature Douglas-fir forest on the Department of National Defence lands at Royal Roads.

The Juan de Fuca Provincial Park is a 1528 hectare wilderness park surrounding a challenging 47-kilometre trail (map page 14). It was created to commemorate the Commonwealth Games. When the trail was opened in 1996, the park was projected to be a success if it was able to attract 100,000 visits per year. Today it receives more than 300,000 visits annually. The trail attracts hikers from around the world. It is being loved to death.

Because of the park's shape, not much protection is offered to the ecosystem. The first 24 kilometres of the trail is in a park corridor approximately 200 metres wide. Highway 14 is approximately one kilometre from the coastline. The Park does not extend to the highway but it depends on the forest

Capital Regional District
Map 3
Parks and Protected Areas in CRD

CRD
 Building a Better Area

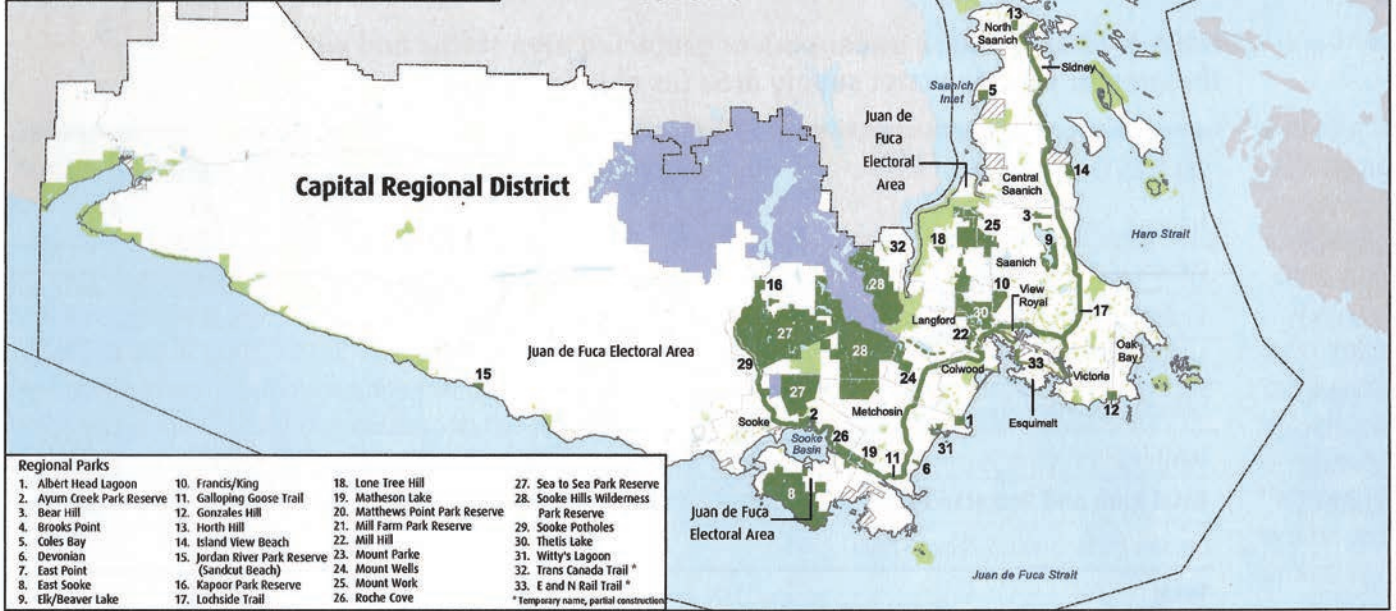
Regional Park	Lake / Reservoir
Other Park; Protected Area	Capital Regional District
Greater Victoria Water Supply Area	Municipal Boundary
First Nations Reserve	Regional District Boundary

0 2 4 8 12 16 20 Kilometres

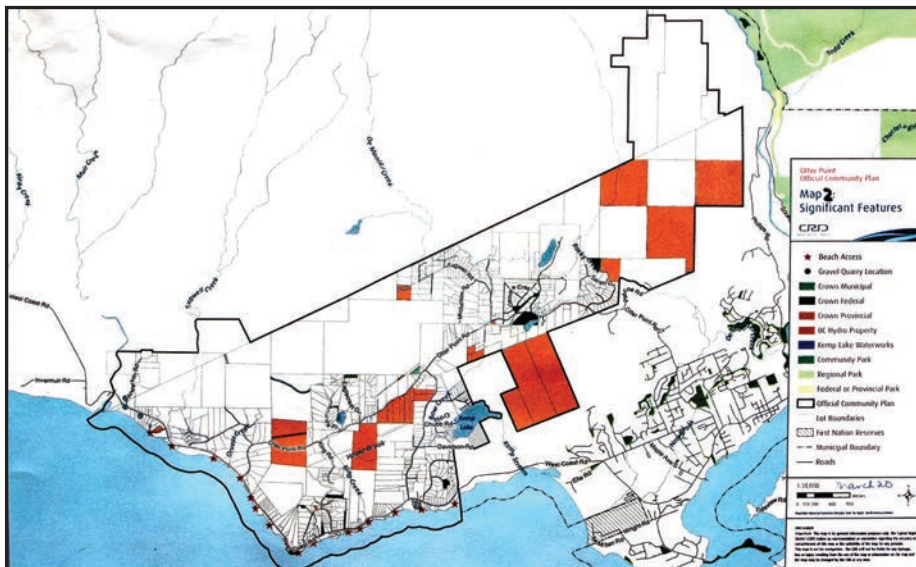
Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 10, North, North American Datum.

DISCLAIMER
Important This map is for general information purposes only. The Capital Regional District (CRD) makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of this map or the suitability of the map for any purpose. **This map is not for navigation.** The CRD **will not be liable** for any damage, loss or injury resulting from the use of the map or information on the map and the map may be changed by the CRD at any time.

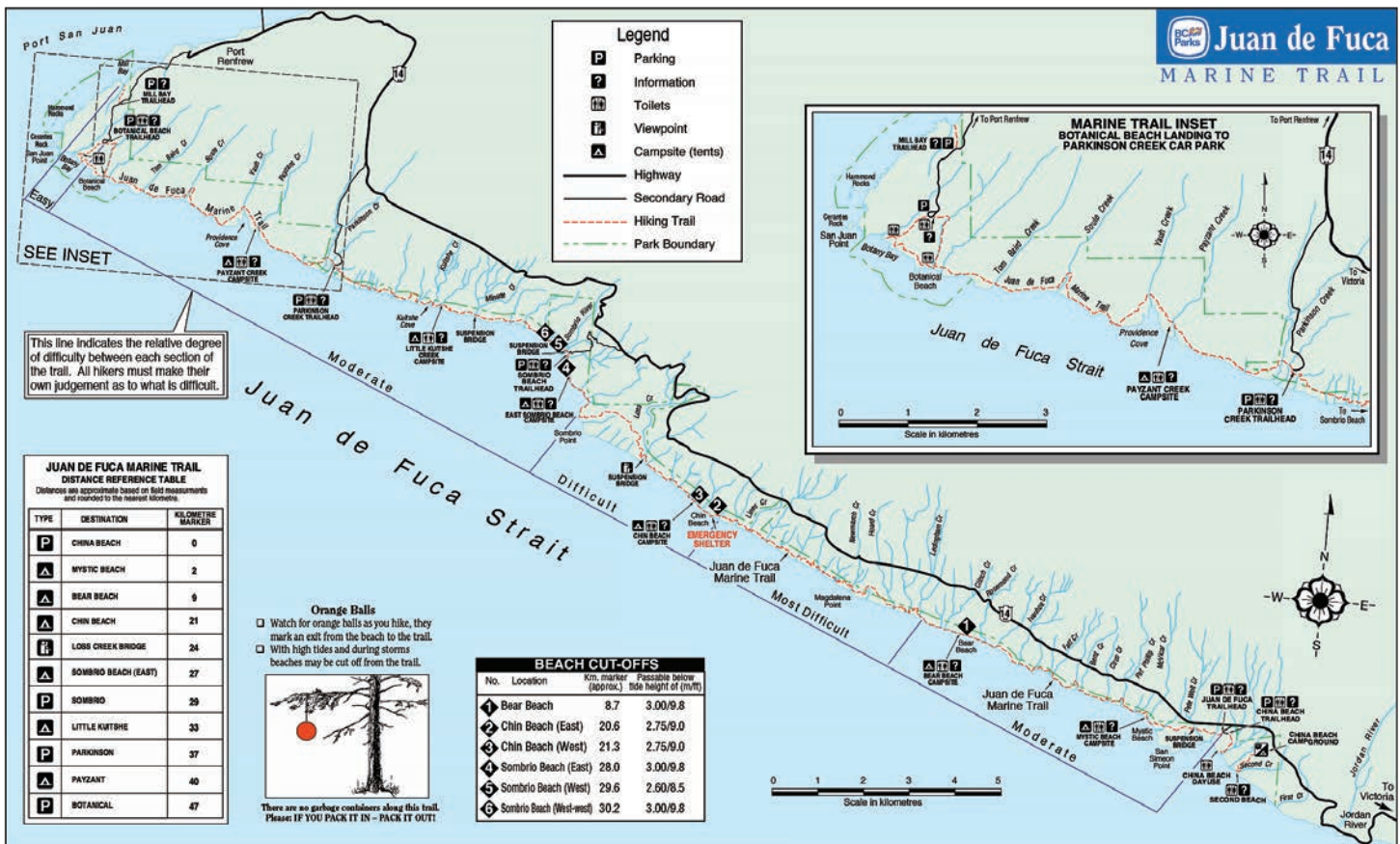
Jan 2011 | Map3_Parks_Trails_Overview_8.5x11_0LR_w_PA.mxd | gis@crd.bc.ca



REGIONAL PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN | JULY 2011



Map of the Otter Point Official Community Plan showing crown land



between the trail and the highway for its wilderness feel and for its ecological protection. Land not in the park can be logged.

The terrain is so rugged that the trail is on the beach at Bear, Chin, and Sombrio. Hikers have to watch the tides or they can be cut off. The park is so narrow that the trail encroaches on adjacent land parcels in many places. This had not been an issue until 2008, when Marine Trail Holdings Ltd. purchased seven parcels of land bordering the first 15 kilometres of the trail. This purchase was followed by three years of escalating development proposals, ending in an application for more than 270 vacation homes, a restaurant, and a recreation centre. It took a three-year fight by the public (local, national, and international) to maintain the Rural Resource Land Zoning and defeat the proposal. After three days of public hearings in September 2011, the CRD Directors concluded that the best use of the land would be to purchase it and include it in the park. The CRD, in partnership with The Land Conservancy, had acted decisively in 2010 to purchase land at Jordan River, Sandcut Beach, and the Sooke Hills as it was released by the forestry companies, so there was no money left in their park acquisition budget to do this.

The provincial government appears to have no political will to expand the park, although prior to 2015 all of the land between Highway 14 and the park was owned by the Crown with the exception of eight parcels: the seven owned by Marine Trail Holdings Ltd. and one near Port Renfrew owned by Weyerhaeuser.

Land is needed for treaty settlement and, in March of 2013,

the Pacheedaht First Nations Incremental Treaty Agreement identified four parcels of Crown Land above the trail in negotiations. Two of the parcels are near Sombrio River and two are near Parkinson Creek.

In December 2015, the province bought three parcels of land from Marine Trail Holdings Ltd. When knowledge of the purchase became public in May 2016 and it was requested that the parcels be added to the park in honour of Canada's 150 years, Minister Rustad, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, stated that the parcels would not be added to the park, but instead the plan is to add the four trail encroachments on those parcels into the park and hold the rest for First Nations treaty negotiations.

In January 2016, Pacheedaht Enterprises Ltd. bought three parcels from Marine Trail Holdings Ltd., one of which had already been logged. By August 2016 another parcel had been logged.

With the seven parcels the provincial government is reserving for treaty negotiations, the Pacheedaht Nation has potential ownership of 10 parcels of land above the trail. While treaty negotiations are taking place, Rural Resource Lands Zoning (ByLaw 2040) holds. Once the treaties are settled and the land changes hands, First Nations have their own zoning.

The character of the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail Provincial Park is compromised with logging, but would be lost completely if the adjacent lands are developed. The rich ecosystems that supported the culture of the Pacheedaht elders will never have a chance to return for coming



Outside of the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail Park.

generations unless there are significant areas left undeveloped and allowed to regenerate. There are unanswered questions. Are areas on the other side of Highway 14 being considered for Pacheedaht treaty negotiations so that areas adjacent to the park are not essential to produce a revenue stream for them?

Will economics force development? How can we work with the Pacheedaht Nation to

preserve these lands for cultural use, wildlife refuge, and low impact recreation?

All of us on the coast have a vested interest in the health of our forests, people, and environment. The community worked hard to create the park in 1994 and to preserve the park in 2008–2011. The community should have a voice in its stewardship even if ownership of adjacent parcels is transferred to the Pacheedaht. It will require negotiation and formal agreement if this small strip is to have a real chance of

reverting to a mature, diverse, west-coast ecosystem capable of sustaining all of us and giving all a glimpse of the rich Pacheedaht heritage.

Within the settled areas of CRD there is little Crown Land and much need for treaty lands. Recent developments show there is a way forward. The precedent for open discussion and creative solutions is being set by the discussions that Langford, Metchosin, and the Beecher Bay Nation held with their communities as they worked out the innovative land swap approved by the province on March 14, 2017. The Department of National Defence is releasing approximately 263 hectares of Royal Roads to the Songhees, and Colwood has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together with DND over the next two years.

The Capital Regional District, in partnership with many groups and individuals, have acquired land for a world-class parks system close to the core area. The CRD Parks map shows the need for parkland for recreation and ecological preservation west of Sooke. There is no lack of Crown Land and there are precedents for open discussion among all stakeholders. The people of the Pacheedaht and the CRD have the flexibility to work together to determine common goals.

Rosemary Jorna worked tirelessly during the three-year campaign to stop the intensive resort development above the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail. She worked on the Otter Point Visioning Project. She is a member of the Victoria Natural History Society and a director of the Juan de Fuca Community Trails Society.

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Matson Conservation Area and the Migratory Bird Sanctuary: Birdy Benefits of Connected Corridors



By Alanah Nasadyk, Habitat Acquisition Trust Community and Development Coordinator



The view from the Matson Conservation Area of the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary. *Photo provided by: Alanah Nasadyk*

The diversity of wildlife observed from the Matson Conservation Area is spectacular! Looking out to sea, you may catch a glimpse of the wild red head of a mother merganser, the sleek iridescent feathers of a bobbing Bufflehead, or the vibrant orange beak and shrill peeps of the Black Oystercatcher. Birds bring us innumerable joys, and do countless beneficial things for the ecosystem too. From the renowned pollination penchant of hummingbirds to the ability of aerial acrobats like Purple Martins to control insect populations, and impressive seed dispersal by many songbirds, as well as the cycling of nutrients between marine and terrestrial systems carried out by waterfowl, it is no wonder we feel compelled to take care of our feathered friends.

Matson Conservation Area is a 2.4 acre property in Esquimalt containing Victoria Harbour's last patch of rare and endangered Garry Oak ecosystem. Accessed easily from the Westbay Marina end of the Westsong Walkway, Matson is an urban oasis for wildlife and people alike. This naturalscape boast more than one hundred oak trees; providing food, shelter, and adding magnificent twisting branches to the scenery. Habitat Acquisition Trust owns Matson Conservation Area and it is protected with a conservation covenant held by the

Nature Conservancy of Canada. A conservation covenant is a legal agreement held on the title of a property that ensures the protection of the land in perpetuity for its ecological values.

Luckily for us and the birds, Victoria's Harbour and much of the surrounding coastline is protected as part of the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary, established in 1923 and the oldest Migratory Bird Sanctuary on the Pacific coast of Canada. Originally established to protect the Brant Geese from over-hunting, the Sanctuary officially defends all migratory birds from hunting, nest destruction, and possession of either the birds themselves or their nests within its boundaries. In more recent times, as awareness of the Migratory Bird Sanctuary spreads, citizens can consider how to do their part to protect bird life, but also all the other organisms that occur naturally in this ecosystem.

Matson Conservation Area serves a key role in protecting important habitat for terrestrial species, and conserves the shoreline values important to marine species. Migratory birds depend on stopover spots, like the Victoria Harbour, where they can find food, shelter, and rest along their journey. Protected sanctuaries like the Matson Conservation Area and the surrounding harbour are particularly valuable in cities where



At the Matson Spring Fling visitors “hunt” for hummingbirds.
Photo: Peter Pinfold

suitable habitat is very limited. Research suggests that forested habitat and proximity to water, particularly in highly-altered landscapes, host high concentrations of migratory birds. This makes the Matson Conservation Area an even more important protected spot in a largely urbanized harbour.

Roosting Great Blue Herons in the Douglas-firs, raptors like Cooper’s Hawks or Bald Eagles, and a host of other birds like Cedar Waxwings, Bushtits, and wrens call Matson home at different times of the year. One of the inspiring migrators that relies heavily on this patch of habitat is the Rufous Hummingbird. This species of hummingbird migrates all the way from Mexico to Alaska. Covering a distance of more than 6000 km, this is the longest migration of any bird of its size. This is especially impressive for a high-energy flapper in comparison to the soaring examples of albatross and petrels that cover such impressive distances. Rufous Hummingbirds travel north to breed and while they are here, they provide benefits to our blossoming plant communities through pollination. A single Rufous Hummingbird visits between 1000 and 2000 flowers in one day!

On a stroll through Matson Conservation Area, you may be lucky enough to spot a species of concern, like the Purple Martin that nest in the harbour. These aerial insectivores fly

overhead, scooping up insects, and perching on nearby Garry Oak trees to rest. Some of those insects that become a meal get their start in the habitat found at Matson. The Matson Conservation Area provides nurseries for insects that start their juvenile life in vernal pools, in the ground, among leaf-litter, and in shoreline tidepools. Once adults, these insects become important food resources for the martins and other insectivorous animals.

Unfortunately, crucial ecosystems like these are under threat. Invasive species such as English Ivy or Daphne Laurel envelop these areas and jeopardize terrestrial habitats by forming a monoculture that cannot support the same diversity of species needed to maintain a healthy and functioning ecosystem. Habitat Acquisition Trust is thankful for the incredible efforts of various volunteer groups across the Capital Regional District that dedicate their time to mitigating this threat through local stewardship efforts and weed pulls. In particular, we are very appreciative of the efforts of the Matson Mattocks, a team of dedicated volunteers committed to restoring Matson. Anyone interested in helping to keep this special place vibrant and diverse can volunteer on regular invasive plant pulls. For more information about volunteering at Matson and other conservation areas, contact volunteers@hat.bc.ca.

There are also many other stewardship groups offering programs and ongoing restoration activities along the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Take a look at the Gorge Waterway Nature House, Cecelia Creek Clean-up Project, Friends of Cuthbert Holmes, Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary, and Swan Creek Watershed, as well as Robert Bateman Center online for more details. The Capital Regional District produces a great guide on Migratory Bird Sanctuaries of the capital region available for pick-up at the HAT Office at 825 Broughton Street.

Support the protection of habitat for birds at the Matson Conservation Area and across the CRD with Habitat Acquisition Trust by becoming a member or making a donation at: <http://hat.bc.ca/donate>.

ANNE HANSEN: *A different species of wildlife artist*



Find Anne’s art cards at
Ivy’s Book Shop, 2188 Oak Bay Avenue
Niagara Grocery, 579 Niagara Street
The Local, 1440 Haultain Street

Visit Oystercatcher Central by appointment:
anitabike@gmail.com (250) 381-7313
www.oystercatchergirl.blogspot.com

A Taste for Bones

By Ben van Drimmelen

Photo by author

On any of our Society's all-season birding walks, we'll usually see or hear a noisy, hyperactive, little bird with bold white eyebrows, flicking its long tail as it hops from branch to branch – the Bewick's Wren. This spring, a couple of Bewick's Wrens decided that they liked the skull of a Dall's Porpoise. This taste for bones piqued my curiosity to know more about this energetic beastie.

Although apparently abundant here, the Bewick's Wren is mainly restricted to this corner of British Columbia, with 99% living right here in the Georgia Depression, mostly in the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone. It likes the brushy habitats along the edges of forests and fields, powerlines, wetlands, and road edges. It is at home in our gardens, residential areas, and parks.

Both sexes look alike, as do juveniles. Nimble and acrobatic, Bewick's Wrens forage on the ground and prowl through brush and trees up to about three metres off the ground, often hanging upside down to pick off eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults of insects and other small invertebrates. The menu include bugs, beetles, bees and wasps, caterpillars, butterflies, moths, grasshoppers, crickets, flies, and spiders. They even occasionally catch insects on the wing.

Like most insect-eaters, the dining process can get a bit harsh. Seizing insectivorous prey in its bill, the Bewick's Wren crushes it, shakes it, or bashes it against a branch. Having thus subdued its food, the wren swallows it whole and then fastidiously wipes its bill (as many as 100 times!) on a handy napkin-twig. They will also eat seeds, fruit, and other plant matter, especially in winter, and are particularly fond of suet feeders. Adults sometimes ingest pebbles and mud, perhaps for nutrients or to help with the grinding digestion of their food.

Like most songbirds, Bewick's Wrens vocalize with both calls and songs. Foraging wrens stay in contact with short calls: "*plink plink*" or "*pee*" or - from females - "*sker*". The males also sing, to both attract mates and defend territory. That's when you'll see dueling wrens perched within ten metres of each other, belting out an intricate string of whistles, warbles, burrs, and trills. Typically, the song begins with a few quick introductory wheezy calls, suggesting that the bird is warming up. That is followed by two or more high notes, dropping into a lower, burry phrase, and ending on a high trill, augmented with additional warbles and buzzy notes. If this sounds complex, that's because it is; a single male has ten to twenty distinct songs, repeating one song for a couple of minutes, then switching to another. It gets so complex that novice birders are advised "If you don't recognize the song, it's probably a Bewick's Wren". The males put a lot of effort into singing. In early spring, singing can take up to half of their time. Bewick's Wren may well be responsible for the collective term for wrens – a group of wrens (although I've never seen a group) is apparently called a "chime".



The wren family is *Troglodytidae*, from "troglodyte" or cave-dweller, and they do indeed love mini-caves (i.e., cavities) for nesting. Bewick's Wrens usually build within three metres of the ground and have a reputation for making nests in the weirdest places—mailboxes, barbecues, tin cans, bicycle saddle bags, garden hose rollers, abandoned cars, old shoes, pockets in clothes left hanging in sheds, hanging skillets, buckets, even a paper bag still filled with nails—and, of course, that porpoise skull in my back yard.

Males begin the nest-building process, starting several incomplete "dummy" nests. Once a female is attracted to check out the real estate, she will select the preferred site and dive in, so that both contribute equally to construction by the end. The process usually takes less than eight days, though sometimes it can stall, requiring weeks to complete. The cup-shaped nest has a base of sticks, grasses, rootlets, leaves, moss or other plant materials; depending on what the local environment provides. That is then lined with feathers, wool, hair, or plant down.

The female lays and incubates one to seven eggs, which hatch in about two weeks. The male feeds the female during incubation. At the sound of approaching humans, an incubating female Bewick's Wren usually flushes quietly from her nest cavity, but remains perched and scolding nearby. Some females, however, sit tightly on their eggs, even when provoked with a stick. (I wonder how that was determined; sounds like pretty rough old-style birding, like in the days when the only verified sighting was over the barrel of a shotgun!) Both parents feed the nestlings, which leave the nest after another three weeks.

Life is not always as cheerful as their songs suggest. A very severe decline of Bewick's Wrens in eastern North America since the 1970s apparently coincided with range expansion in the House Wren, which tends to remove eggs from nests in cavities. Happily, there is little sign of a Bewick's Wren decline here, although House Wrens do breed locally. Nevertheless, the eastern population crash imposes a high responsibility on us for Bewick's Wren conservation.

Letters

Dear Mr. Darren Copley,

Re: Victoria Natural History Society Bursary

I want to thank you again for choosing Royal Roads as your partner to support students and their goals for life-long learning. Education and research, applied to problem-solving across all areas of life, creates opportunities that continue to reach outward from one life to many. Your partnership is a vital part of creating that impact in communities and workplaces across the globe where more than 23,500 of our students and alumni live and work.

It is my pleasure to provide you with this annual report for the Victoria Natural History Society Bursary. The following awards have been distributed: Kelsey Allbee \$500

In 2016, donors enabled us to distribute more than \$265,212 in student awards. Yet that is only the beginning to what we hope to achieve in order to make life-long learning accessible to everyone who seeks it. Since our last report to you, Royal Roads has established six new student awards and we continue to develop the partnerships that support robust and meaningful learning opportunities: workplace integrated learning, applied research, teaching innovation and preservation of our unique heritage and habitat.

Your gift continues to have tremendous impact on our students, our campus and the opportunities we create together. Thank you. We are truly grateful for your partnership.

Sincerely,
Hayley Bennett Ortner
Advancement Officer, Royal Roads University
250.391.2561 hayley.bennett@royalroads.ca



Dear Mr. Gordon Hart,

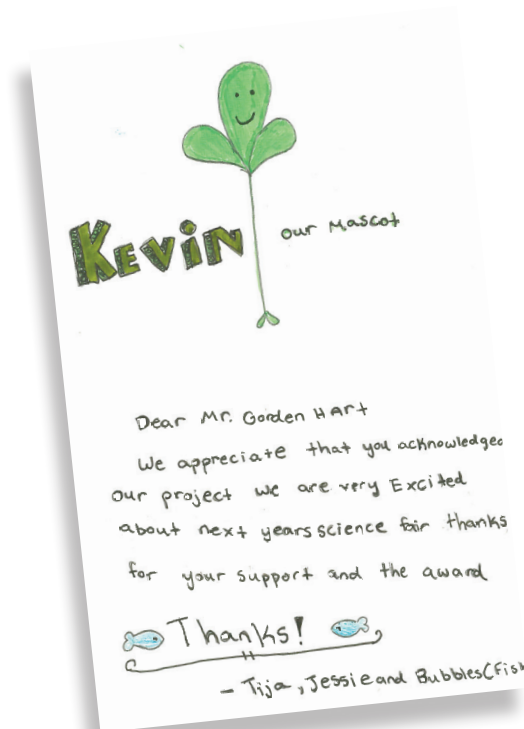
Re: The Victoria Natural History Society Award awarded for excellence in a project relating to the impact of humans on the environment.

Please accept this letter as my expression of gratitude for being awarded \$100 for my project titled *Energy from Algae: Voltage optimization in photosynthetic microbial fuel cells* through the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair.

I am a thirteen year old girl in grade 9 at Glenlyon-Norfolk School and I have had a passion for science since I can remember. This is my third year participating in the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair.

I very much appreciate this donor's award. I will put the award toward funding my project for next year, which I have already began working on. I hope to expand on my project and improve it significantly in the coming year.

Sincerely yours,
Zofka Svec



BULLETIN BOARD

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary Guided Bird Walks

Every Wednesday and Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Bring binoculars and walking shoes and meet in the parking lot for this informal and informative walk around the lake area (usually led by VNHS members). Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Store in Shelbourne Plaza posts the bird reports from the Sunday walks. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, 3873 Swan Lake Rd, off Ralph St. Donations are appreciated. For more information, see <http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/calendar.php> Download a copy of the sanctuary bird checklist: <http://tinyurl.com/birdchecklist>

Gull Identification Guide (free download)

Do you have trouble identifying gulls? Species are similar and plumage changes dramatically over the first few years of life, giving a diversity of plumages that can be confusing. John Muir Laws has developed an identification guide with all the plumages of common west coast gulls shown side by side, with detailed notes re subtle differences. Download free guide <http://johnmuirlaws.com/natural-history/gull-identification-guide-free-download>

A Guide to Bird Calls of Southern Vancouver Island (CD and booklet set) available at Rocky Point Bird Observatory!

Want to improve your birding by ear? This guide provides an introduction to call notes of common birds found on southern Vancouver Island. When learning to bird by ear, many people concentrate on learning the songs because songs tend to be complex and often beautiful. However, songs are generally only by breeding males in the spring and summer, and there is a whole world of simpler sounds given year-round by songbirds of all ages and sexes. Being familiar with these could enhance your birding year-round! For information or purchase (discount for RPBO members), contact rpbo@rpbo.org

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 21 new members since the last issue and the following have agreed to have their names published in this Welcome section.

Peter Masterton
Victoria

David Badke
Victoria
Birds, invertebrates, lichens, mosses, photography

Sonia Powers
Sooke

Jane Ross
Victoria
birding, lectures, day trips

Seigo Murakami
Victoria
nature walks, wildlife observation, environmental education

Shelby Kutyn
Victoria
everything biology related!!!

Bill Mursell
Victoria

Les Peterson
Victoria

Christine Galipeau
Victoria
Jogging, hiking, research and writing, and road trips

Fox Sparrow Information:

I'm working as a research assistant at the University of British Columbia, and part of my research this summer is working to identify resident populations of Fox Sparrows in the Georgia Basin. I am looking for anyone who can shed some light on breeding Fox Sparrows near Victoria. While these birds are not so common in the summer, we have evidence that some populations in the area are fully resident, contrary to the expected migratory strategy in most Fox Sparrow populations. Anything that Society members might know on the subject would be immensely helpful.

Thanks very much, and please let me know if you have any more questions about my research or any relevant information: Dominic Janus: dominic.janus@gmail.com

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held September–April on the following days: **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake 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/?page_id=1518 and is updated regularly. PLEASE NOTE: EVENT DETAILS ARE ACCURATE AT TIME OF PUBLICATION BUT CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR ANY CHANGES OR ADDITIONS.

Remember that if you want to do a talk or know someone who might, please contact one of the presentation night coordinators. If you have an idea for a field trip or wish to volunteer as a leader, please contact the Field Trip Coordinator Claudia Copley. Many of you do interesting things either for fun or for work, and it would be great to share! See page two for email addresses and phone numbers.

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.**

NB. While evening presentations are open to the public, field trips are designed for members. If space allows, guests may participate for up to three trips, after which they are expected to join the Society.

Despite our best efforts to schedule events in advance, changes are inevitable. Please check the website close to the date for any changes. We sometimes also schedule additional events due to unexpected opportunities. Please be sure that VNHS has your up-to-date email address to receive these changes or notice of additional events. If you do not use the internet, team up with someone who does to keep up with changes.

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING

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 VNHS members all welcome. Non-members can participate for up to three trips, after which they are expected to join the Society.

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Meets every Saturday morning, usually at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. Check the Calendar page of the VNHS website (http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?page_id=1518) on the Thursday/Friday before to find out the week's location. Novice and experienced VNHS members all welcome. Non-members can participate for up to three trips, after which they are expected to join the Society. For more details, contact Rick Schortinghuis at 250-885-2454 or Agnes Lynn at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634.

JULY

Sunday July 2

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Monthly Butterfly Outing

Join **Gordon Hart** on our monthly Butterfly outing. Each outing is intended to help us learn more about our local butterflies. The outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will meet near the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Rd) and decide where to go from there. Meet at 1:00 pm at the main parking lot just north of the summit. Contact Gordon at (250) 721-1264 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca for more information.

Sunday, July 9

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Checking Out Some Wild Edibles

Join naturalist **Sean Rangel** as he shows us that there are a lot of edibles in the outdoors right under our noses that we overlook every day. Anyone wanting to explore wild foods for forging, education, or just fun should have a safe foundation on which to explore. We will learn how to properly identify common edible plants and families, as well as common toxic plants and families. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 am and we will carpool from there to an area where we can sample a few of nature's treats. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Saturday, July 15 to Sunday, July 23

VICTORIA BUTTERFLY COUNT WEEK

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers so get out your field guides. Contact **Gordon Hart** (count coordinator) at (250) 721-1264 or butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca if you would like to help out.

Sunday, July 16

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Tufted Puffins, Sea Otters and Archaeological Museum

Join us for a field trip on the Olympic Peninsula to investigate the Makah Tribal Culture plus visit Cape Flattery. The first part of the trip involves visiting the Makah Cultural Centre and Museum. In 1970, tidal erosion uncovered an ancient whaling village at Ozette, parts of which had been covered by mud slides hundreds of years ago. The artifacts that were subsequently found have now classified Ozette as one of the most significant archaeological discoveries ever made in North America. In 1979, the cultural and research center opened to the public in order to share this great archaeological find. We will spend part of the morning visiting this museum before heading for Cape Flattery. This is the most northern point on the west coast of the continental United States and is one of the closest locations to Victoria where you can see Tufted Puffins. Islands off the point are home to thousands of seabirds throughout the year. We will observe the birds from platforms which are located about a half hour's walk through the forest. Sea otters are becoming more common from this point as well. It could be cool or rainy, so dress appropriately. Bring a lunch and drinks. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 am for the 6:10 am sailing of the MV Coho. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$50 CDN return. The ferry cost is not included in what you prepay. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will be back to Port Angeles by 7:30 pm to give us time for supper at one of the nearby restaurants before the ferry leaves at 9:30 pm (90 minute crossing). Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$80.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 1 or after July 9. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay the cost of the tour through PayPal (get online link when you reserve) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Contact Agnes at thelynnns@shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

Sunday, July 23

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Mount Washington Botanical Day Trip

This trip is planned for peak bloom time, but the area is interesting over several weeks with a succession of sub-alpine flowers so there will be lots to see even if the season is a bit early or late. We are planning to do some short walks this year rather than the usual one long one that we have done in the past. We will start with a slow walk around Paradise Meadows, checking out all the flowers as we go. Then if the weather is clear, we plan to take the chairlift up to the top of the mountain and walk around the short trails at the top to look at some of the higher elevation plants. Then as time permits, we will check out some other short loops near the base of the chairlift. We may even find a few interesting butterflies as we meander around. We will leave Victoria at 7:00 am and return late, stopping for a quick supper on the way home. We'll eat our bag lunch someplace out on the trail. Register by contacting Agnes after July 6. First nine people to sign up have the option of coming in her van. Others to carpool by pre-arrangement. Cost to come in the van or carpool with others will be about \$35 for the day from Victoria. Although the weather

is generally sunny and clear, due to the high elevation, it could be quite cool or rainy. Also wear sturdy boots and hiking poles might be handy. Bring a lunch and drinks. Remember to bring money for the chairlift (about \$11.00) and a fast-food supper. Contact Agnes at thelynnns@shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 to register or if you need more information.

Saturday July 29

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Florence Lake & Langford Lake Birding

Join the Saturday Birding Group as we head to Florence Lake and Langford Lake. We will meet at the boardwalk at Florence Lake at 7:30 am. To reach our starting point, go out the Island Highway and take Exit 15 McCallum Rd. Turn right at the stop and you will be on McCallum/Spencer Rd. Turn left on Springboard Place (formerly Brock Ave.). Park at end of road (not in turnaround) where we will meet. It's about a half block to the boardwalk from there with a great view of the lake. Listen for Soras or Virginia Rails. Sometimes we'll get Steller's Jays and Band-tailed Pigeons and other birds not that common in town. After that, we will continue to Langford Lake. To get there, return on McCallum/Spencer Rd. to the corner by the Shell station. Curve around the front of the gas station on to the frontage road which leads to the Leigh Rd. overpass. Left at Leigh Rd. and cross the highway on the overpass. Turn right on Goldstream Ave. Park at the west end of Goldstream Ave. just before it deadends at the highway. Meet at the parking pullout and the group will meander down to the boardwalk from there. The marshy area often yields interesting birds as well as the walk through the forest to the lake usually gives us woodpeckers and other good woodsy birds. Contact Agnes at thelynnns@shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday, July 30

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Olympic National Park Obstruction Point Road

We have arranged for a van in Port Angeles to take us up to travel along the scenic high elevation Obstruction Point Rd. Timing of the trip is planned for peak wildflower displays. Rather than one long hike, we will stop at a number of places and do several short excursions in search of sub-alpine flowers not too far from the road. This year we may do a longer walk at the end of the road in search of species endemic to the Olympic National Park. Be prepared for travel on unpaved, twisty roads. Although the weather is generally sunny and clear, due to the high elevation, it could be quite cool or rainy, so dress appropriately. Bring a lunch and drinks. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 am for the 6:10 am sailing of the MV Coho. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$50 CDN return. The ferry cost is not included in what you prepay. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will return on the 5:20 pm sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing). Also there is usually good birding from the ferry. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$75.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 6 or after July 23. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay the cost of the tour through PayPal (get online link when you reserve) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Contact Agnes at thelynnns@shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

AUGUST

Sunday August 6

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Monthly Butterfly Outing

Join **Gordon Hart** on our monthly Butterfly outing. Each outing is intended to help us learn more about our local butterflies. The outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will meet near the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Rd) and decide where to go from there. Meet at 1:00 pm at the main parking lot just north of the summit. Contact Gordon at (250) 721-1264 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca for more information.

Sunday, August 13

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

The Ho Rain Forest and Rialto Beach on the Western Olympic Peninsula

The first stop with the bus will be to the Ho Rain Forest on the west side of the Olympic Mountains. The area is full of magnificent tall conifers covered in trailing mosses and lichens. Wildlife abounds in the forest, including Olympic Elk. We will then move on to the Pacific coast at Rialto Beach with the fascinating haystack formations. We should see shorebirds and, if we are lucky, some Brown Pelicans. This will be a long day so bring a lunch, snacks and drinks. Dress for potentially changeable weather. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 am for the 6:10 am sailing of the MV Coho. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$50 CDN return. The ferry cost is not included in what you prepay. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will be back to Port Angeles by 7:30 pm to give us time for supper at one of the nearby restaurants before the ferry leaves at 9:30 pm (90 minute crossing). Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$80.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 6 or after Aug. 6. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay the cost of the tour through PayPal (get online link when you reserve) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

Saturday, August 19 to Sunday, August 27

VICTORIA BUTTERFLY COUNT WEEK

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers so get out your field guides. Contact Gordon Hart (count coordinator) at (250) 721-1264 or butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca if you would like to help out.

Saturday August 19

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Island View Beach & Saanichton Spit Birding

Join the Saturday Birding Group as we go to Island View Beach and Saanichton Spit. Meet at 7:30 am at the north end of the parking lot. It's the time of year that we might find some interesting shorebirds on their return migration and we might still see a few beach flowers in the dunes as we walk along. To reach Island View Beach, go north on the Pat Bay highway, turn right at the lights at Island View Rd. (Michell's Market) and follow that to a left on Homathko Rd. which leads to the parking lot. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday August 20

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Spider Spotting at Island View Beach

The black widow spider biologists are back at it and they want to share their work with you! Join **Catherine Scott** and **Sean McCann** for a different view of Island View. They study, in Catherine's words, the "fascinating but largely unseen and underappreciated world of spiders". Their intimate knowledge of the park's smallest inhabitants will offer you an opportunity you won't want to miss. To reach Island View Beach, go north on the Pat Bay highway, turn right at the lights at Island View Rd. (Michell's Market) and follow that to a left on Homathko Rd. which leads to the parking lot. Contact Catherine at catherine.scott@mail.utoronto.ca if you need more information.

Monday August 21

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Sidney Spit Birding

It's the time of year to make the trek over to Sidney Spit on Sidney Island to look for interesting shorebirds on their southern migration. There have been some good ones reported from there – Baird's Sandpiper, Sanderlings, Semipalmated Sandpipers and Plovers, maybe even that illusive Buff-breasted Sandpiper! Also close-ups on Purple Martins, and we'll see other passerines in the woods. **Mike and Barb McGrenere** will be our leaders. Bring a lunch and drinks. Due to the over-crowding on the ferry on the weekend, we have chosen to go during the week this year. We will go over on the ferry from Sidney that leaves at 10:00 am. Be there about an hour early to buy your ticket as it can sell out. Cost is \$19 for adults (\$16 seniors). Ferry leaves from the foot of Beacon Ave. Allow enough time to find a place to park. Parking rates vary on how far you are willing to walk. The return ferry leaves the island at 1:00, 3:00 and 4:30 pm so you can choose how long you wish to stay. Contact Mike at 250-658-8624 or Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca if you need more information.



Big news for 'Big Red' (top)—babies! Nestbox near Beaver Lake. Photo: Sean McCann



First prize winner in the marine category of the 2017 VNHS photo contest: Harbour Seal. *Photo: S.C. Harper*