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# The Victoria NATURALIST

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**Deadline for next issue: October 1, 2017**

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Phone: 250-652-3508 e-mail: [publications@naturevictoria.ca](mailto:publications@naturevictoria.ca)

[Subject: VNHS newsletter submission]

### Guidelines for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, book reviews, etc., up to 2000 words. 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 use a pseudonym or have your name withheld.

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: VNHS photo contest winner—  
Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*).  
Photo: Bruce Whittington

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I'll start with a huge thank you to Claudia, Patrice and Laura (and all others who helped) for preparing the July/August issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*. I was away most of May and June, making my ability to participate sporadic. They did an awesome job!

Where were you, you ask? Well...we were taking advantage of Canada's 150th birthday and the free entry to national parks by exploring national and provincial parks in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. We got as far as Riding Mountain, just over the Saskatchewan border into Manitoba. Look in the November/December newsletter for a taste of what we saw. What an amazingly diverse and beautiful country we live in!

You may notice that this issue is a bit "slimmer" than some, perhaps not too surprisingly, given the summer deadline—people are hopefully out and about enjoying nature in many ways. I encourage you to send me pictures and stories of your adventures...and any other topics that you feel will be of interest to our members. I love having the "problem" of too much content for any given issue!

September is viewed by many as the beginning of a new year...school starts, lots of clubs and organizations gear up for fall and winter activities. For the VNHS, September marks the start of evening presentations (Birders, Natural History, Marine and Botany nights) - make sure you start YOUR new year by attending as many of the fascinating presentations as possible. Check the calendar for dates and details on each of the topics.

And don't forget our field trips! Everything from butterflies to birds and beetles, fungus and ferns, rocks and raptors, birds and boats...something for everyone? We hope so. Please let us know if you have thoughts on trips – we are always looking for new ideas.

Do you like the bat on the front cover of the newsletter? I thought it was not only a great picture, but also rather fitting for October (Happy Halloween...EEK!)

Lastly—remember to let me know if you will be coming to the Hawk Watch BBQ (see ad page four). Have a great September and October.

*Gail Harcombe*

# A Message from Your Board

Just a few quick notes to keep everyone up-to-date on the activities of the Society as we head into the fall.

Sad news since our last issue—the Society has lost one of our longest-standing members: Olive Compton passed away June 25, 2017 at age 96. Olive had been a member of the Victoria Natural History Society since 1983. Fewer than 30 of our approximately 750 members can make that claim. Her family requested that donations be made in her name to the VNHS, BC Knowledge Network, Victoria Dandelion Society, or the BC Cancer Agency. Her obituary can be read at this link: [www.legacy.com/obituaries/timescolonist/obituary.aspx?pid=185953007](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/timescolonist/obituary.aspx?pid=185953007)—her passion for birding evident as she enjoyed the waterfowl at Kings' Pond.

At the Annual General Meeting of our umbrella organization, BC Nature, a membership fee increase was voted in to help defray some of the expenses associated insurance coverage, running BC Nature, and, more importantly, facilitating conservation efforts. Right now \$14.10 of your membership fee goes to BC Nature, but as of January 2018 this will be \$17.10. The VNHS board

has decided that we can absorb this cost increase without impacting our activities and projects, so we will not be passing this fee increase on to you, our members.

A new organization has formed in our region: the Island Pollinator Initiative. It is a coalition of interested individuals and organizations, including the Victoria Natural History Society, and is intended to facilitate collaboration, event and information sharing, outreach, and action to promote protection of pollinators on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The Island Pollinator Initiative has a Google group (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/island-pollinator-initiative>), and everyone interested in pollinator conservation is encouraged to join. If you have information on upcoming events, recent articles, or other sources of information relevant to the protection of pollinators on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, you can share it with the Island Pollinator Initiative via their FaceBook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IslandPollinatorInitiative/>.

While you're checking out the calendar, please consider inviting your friends to meetings or field trips. This town



## You are invited!

### VNHS SEPTEMBER SOCIAL

Saturday, September 30, 2017

3:00 p.m. following Hawk Watch

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, phone Gail: 250-652-3508  
or email: [g.harcombe@shaw.ca](mailto:g.harcombe@shaw.ca) before September 22, 2017

**A reply is only necessary if you plan to come—please specify number of smokies (regular or veggie).**



is full of people who are looking for things to do. One of the Board members mentioned that every time he is out birding he is asked what he is looking at, and if they show some interest, he suggests they come to our meetings or field trips. What a great idea! Another idea: when you are done with your copy of the magazine, leave it in a waiting room. Someone will pick it up and learn about what we do and may even consider joining in the fun.

It is not always obvious what a resource for the community the VNHS provides. We regularly get emails asking for identifications or more information about birds, butterflies, and other nature-related topics. We also serve as nature hosts for visitors to the region. For example, John Henigman led a group called the Orange County Song and Dance Company on a tour of various natural sites in Victoria and they donated \$150 US. Apparently they look up local naturalist groups when they travel to make the most of their visits. But the field trips are not always for out-of-towners: recently Darren and Claudia Copley took Royal B.C. Museum volunteers on a nature walk in Beacon Hill Park and they donated \$90 to the Society in appreciation.

A reminder that we would love to see as many members as possible out for the Hawk Watch/BBQ Social event: Saturday September 30. Check out the information on page four, RSVP if you are able to attend, and cross your fingers for great weather!

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# Into the Great Bear Rainforest

By Rick Searle  
Photos by Author



Images taken in May 2017, highlighting estuaries and how vitally important they are to bears in the late spring as grazing.

Khutze Inlet on the Inside Passage across from Princess Royal Island.



Mother Grizzly Bear with two cubs in Khutze estuary.



Black Bear grazing on Lyngby's sedges near Blunden Harbour, Central Coast.





Draney Inlet estuary, Central Coast. Light green patch of vegetation is Lyngby's sedge (*Carex lyngbyei*).



Northern rice root (*Fritillaria camschatcensis*)—soon to bloom. Another important food source for bears found in the estuaries.



Close up of Lyngby's sedge.



# Grizzly Bear Trophy Hunt to be Banned in B.C.

Excerpt from the Times Colonist, 14 August 2017.

Article by Lindsay Kines.

**T**he NDP has announced cancellation of Grizzly Bear trophy hunting across the province while still allowing people to kill the bears for meat. The change, which takes effect at the close of this year's hunting season on Nov. 30, also bans all hunting of grizzlies within the Great Bear Rainforest.

Natural Resources Minister Doug Donaldson said the move honours the wishes of most British Columbians, while recognizing the economic opportunities associated with eco-tourism and bear viewing.

"People in the province have come to their understanding, their point of view, that trophy hunting of Grizzly Bears is not a socially acceptable practice in B.C. in 2017," he said. Donaldson said this season's hunt will go ahead because permits were issued this summer. "The main factor was the long delay where we had a place-holder government of four months," he said. "During that time, the limited entry hunting tags were issued in June."

The government said there are about 15,000 grizzlies in B.C. and that hunters kill about 250 every year. Donaldson was unable to say how many of those 250 bears will be saved by cancelling the trophy hunt. He did say that

"Hunters will no longer be able to possess the hide or the head or the paws of the bear, so we feel quite confident that this announcement will mean the end of the grizzly bear trophy hunt through the province."

B.C. Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver welcomed the moratorium on hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest, but said the rest of the NDP announcement will please no one. He said environmentalists will be unhappy that grizzlies will still be hunted for meat and hunters will be unhappy that they are unable to harvest the entire animal. ...

Environmental groups were more supportive. ... The Raincoast Conservation Foundation hailed the ban in the Great Bear Rainforest, but reserved judgment on the decision to allow grizzly hunting for meat until more details are available. Chris Genovali, executive director, said ensuring a food hunt would mean that hunters have to surrender the trophy parts—head, hide and paws—to provincial wildlife authorities.

Donaldson said he will consult with First Nations and other groups this fall about the mechanics of ending the trophy hunt.



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# Simple BirdSavers

By Bill McMillan

**M**y wife and I found that birds were striking and injuring themselves on the clear glass panes we had installed on our sundeck. We replaced two panes with frosted panes, where the view from the house was not an issue, but wanted to retain the clear glass elsewhere and also protect the birds. Installing bird silhouettes did not solve the problem.

Somehow, our daughter found a reference to Acopian BirdSavers on the internet. Acopian is the inventor's name, not some obscure technical term! You could purchase the system but it is a very simple do-it-yourself project. Parachute cord is hung, in our case (see photo), from a horizontal cord installed at the top of the glass panels, then vertical cords are hung at intervals about 10 cm (4") apart. They do not have to extend right to the bottom of the glass. We made a loop on one end of each vertical cord and passed the other end through it to attach them to the horizontal cord. This system has minimal effect on your view and we have had no collisions since we installed it last year.

If you have problem windows, the same approach could be used to minimize bird collisions.

Basic details about the Acopian BirdSavers and ordering information, if you prefer that approach, is given at: <https://www.birdsavers.com> and a short video is posted at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAH0MKayIEQ>.

The website describes methods to make your own Acopian BirdSavers.

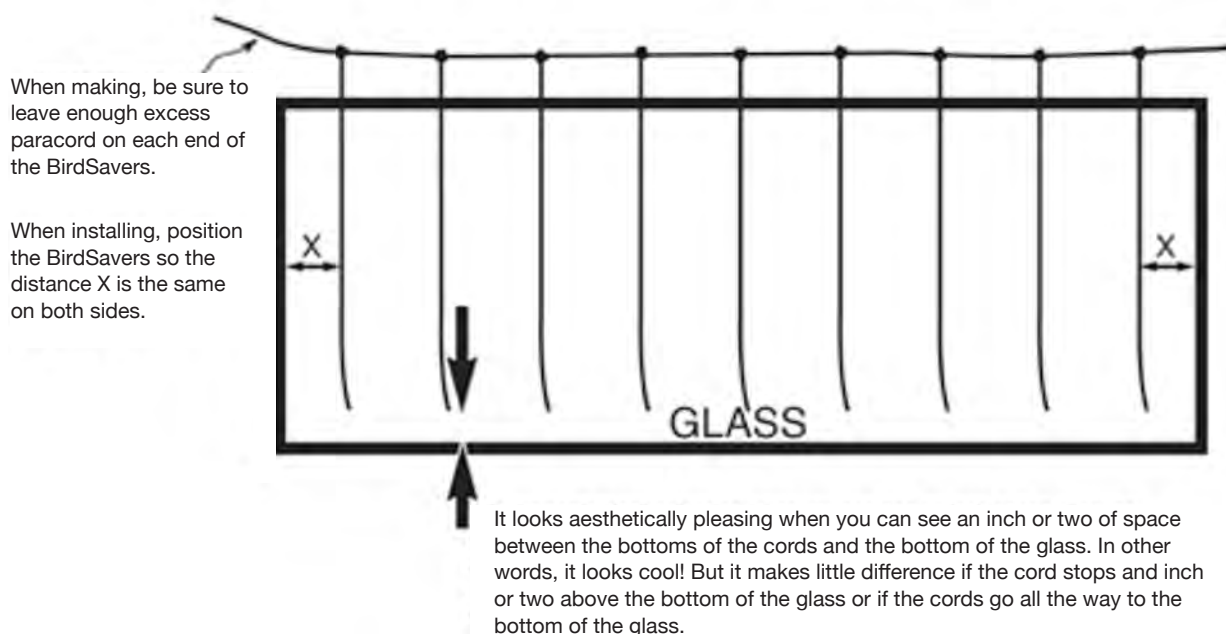
**METHOD 1:** How to make Acopian BirdSavers using paracord for the vertical pieces, and using Vinyl J Channel, wood moulding, aluminum extrusion, or small diameter PVC pipe, etc. for the top horizontal piece.

**METHOD 2:** How to make Acopian BirdSavers using paracord for the top horizontal piece, as well as for the vertical pieces.

'Quick Guide' to make your own Acopian BirdSavers

- Use 1/8" diameter, dark colored, paracord (parachute cord).
- How to make your own BirdSavers:
  - a) Using paracord and J Channel, Moulding, etc
  - b) Using just paracord
- Attach the paracord on the outside of the window, above the glass.
- Space the vertical hanging paracord anywhere from 3.5" to 4.25" apart.
- If you are concerned about wind blowing the cords, the bottoms of the cords can be attached below the glass, although many people like the effect when the cords stop about 2" above the bottom of the glass.

This diagram from the website shows a typical installation for a window:



# Invasive Red-Eared Sliders: A Greater Threat than First Suspected

By Alanah Nasadyk, Community and Development Coordinator,  
Habitat Acquisition Trust



A Red-eared Slider swimming. Photo: Habitat Acquisition Trust.



A baby Western Painted Turtle. Photo: Habitat Acquisition Trust.

A row of turtles basks on a log in the lake; the sun warms their bodies like contented sunbathers. It's a delightful, idyllic scene – or is it?

Take a closer look at those turtles. Do they have a vivid red-orange underbelly? Or is the belly yellow and the cheeks with a blushing red to brown streak?

If you've spotted a turtle that appears painted red to orange on its belly, you're lucky to be looking at Vancouver Island's only remaining native species of freshwater turtle, a member of the endangered coastal population of Western Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta bellii*). A welcome sight and an animal that needs all the help it can get to keep its remaining wetland habitat livable.

If you've spotted a turtle with a yellow belly, "red ears", or a bold yellow Z-stripe on the side of its face, you are looking at an abandoned pet. Red-eared Sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and Yellowbelly Sliders (*Trachemys scripta scripta*) can live to 50 years old, and grow to over 30 cm (12 inches) long. Pet owners that find themselves unwilling to honour a life-long commitment to their turtles look to the great outdoors - instead of responsibly finding their pet a new home or surrendering pets to an animal shelter. Yes, many turtles – at least six species – have been abandoned in our lakes and ponds. Unfortunately, the wild is not the place for domestically raised, non-native species. Of all the species released here in B.C., only one – the Red-eared Slider – is released in sufficient number to allow males and females to find each other.

Other turtles released in B.C. include the Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), a Map Turtle

(*Graptemys sp.*), Reeve's Turtle (*Chinemys reevesi*), European Pond Terrapin (*Emys orbicularis*), and one species of softshell turtle (*Apalone sp.*). These five are distinctive and cannot be mistaken for our native Painted Turtle.

If an abandoned pet Slider survives the ordeal of going from a cozy, all-inclusive home to fending for itself outdoors, it now poses a serious risk to coexisting with Western Painted Turtles. We have found that Sliders frequently have respiratory disease when rescued from the wild, and this could be spread to native Painted Turtles.

Disease is not the only problem. Introduced Sliders compete with native turtles for basking habitat, food, and nesting sites. Not only that, but Sliders increase pressure on other species as they gobble up plants, crustaceans, aquatic insects, snails, amphibians, and their eggs. As bigger turtles, Sliders can easily dominate basking logs. Basking spots are not only a nice place to catch some sun, they are essential to maintaining healthy metabolic rate and digestive function in Painted Turtles. Suitable habitat for Painted Turtles is essential, yet in the Victoria region, over 80% of pre-colonial wetlands have already been lost, and water quality has declined in the remaining waterbodies with alteration of flow, as well as modern use of industrial chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides. Now Painted Turtles have to cope with abandoned pets on top of habitat loss and degradation.

Red-eared Sliders are among the top 100 worst invaders recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). But at least these non-native Sliders can't hatch babies in British Columbia's cool northern climate... right? While this was once thought to be true, it turns out





Adult Western Painted Turtles basking at Langford Lake. Photo: Ken Groat

our worst fears about the invaders are confirmed. B.C.'s first record of successfully hatched Slider nestlings in the wild came in 2015, during Coastal Painted Turtle Project nest monitoring in Delta. Before this, we had only found Slider nests with partially developed embryos, and nearly successful but dead hatchlings. The survival of Slider hatchlings in 2015 is concerning for a number of reasons. With projected climate warming, the nesting success of Sliders may only increase. Not only that but, Slider's lower age of maturity could provide a reproductive edge in overtaking our endangered Painted Turtles locally.

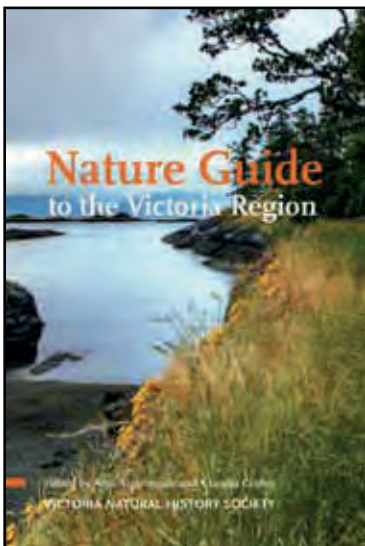
So what's to be done about this rival for precious habitat? Aimee Mitchell and researchers at the Coastal Painted Turtle Project recommend recording non-native turtle and nest observations, removing non-native turtles before successful breeding, monitoring the area following removal, and public education on non-native turtles.

people like you. Please support local turtle stewardship with a gift at [hat.bc.ca/donate](http://hat.bc.ca/donate).

#### About HAT

*Habitat Acquisition Trust is a non-profit regional land trust and registered charity that conserves nature on south Vancouver Island. HAT works towards conservation through habitat stewardship, land protection, and community education. HAT accepts donations for all programs including the Western Painted Turtle Program—for more info visit [hat.bc.ca/donate](http://hat.bc.ca/donate).*

Contact Alanah Nasadyk, Community and Development Coordinator 250-995-2428 or [alanah@hat.bc.ca](mailto:alanah@hat.bc.ca) or Paige Erickson-McGee, Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, 250-995-2428 or [paige@hat.bc.ca](mailto:paige@hat.bc.ca).



## Nature Guide to the Victoria Region

Edited by Ann Nightingale and Claudia Copley

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

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# Surprise! I am Watching You Watching Me!



In this situation...

I was sitting alone on my favourite rock overlooking the mud flats at Loon Bay, that borders the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. At this time of year I spend several hours over the course of a month or more, spotting shorebirds. These diminutive little creatures arrive at different times of the day, depending on the tides. Loon Bay is a peaceful place to relax

where few people visit. The shorebirds know of his location at this time of year, so it is a great place to observe the frenetic, feeding behaviours of several migratory shorebird. I have seen as many as 8 species at this locale. The challenge for me is to identify the species, the adults from juveniles based on feather detail, tone, overall size and leg and bill shape and colour. The mud, seaweed and returning tides support a host of tiny, aquatic invertebrates that provide fuel for the shorebirds for their epic journeys to their wintering grounds. There are plenty of small pebbles and long beach grass within this area, that afford cover and camouflage for the shorebirds, making it very difficult to even spot them. Recently while, watching 3 different specie of shorebird foraging, I was aware of a rustling behind me coming from the vegetation covering part of the retaining wall, that separates the beach from the houses. As I turned slowly on my rock, I noticed 3 raccoons, looking at me. This youngster in the photo stared curiously at me for quite a while. Meanwhile, mom and her other youngster hurried away. Soon followed by the straggler. On previous visits, I have been joined by a few other of Nature's delightful creatures, mink, deer and river otter, but the Raccoon encounter was truly special and unexpected.

Marie O'Shaughnessy

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# Precious Lichen Collection Evacuated from British Columbia Wildfire Zone

Linda Jennings, Herbarium Manager, Assistant Curator Vascular Plants & Algae  
BEN—Botanical Electronic News, No. 521 August 9, 2017

This summer's BC wildfire season is likely to go on record as among the worst in recent history. Trevor Goward and Curtis Bjork, Co-Curators of the lichen collection at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum's Herbarium contacted the Director, Dr. Jeannette Whitton, to ask for help in evacuating their collection, located near Clearwater, B.C. Their community has been told to be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice.

Trevor and Curtis maintain one of the largest and certainly most important personal lichen collections in North America at their Edgewood Herbarium, with over 20,000 specimens, including more than 100 species new to science. Trevor began this collection more than 40 years ago, and it has grown to the most comprehensive personal lichen collections in Canada.

They knew they needed to get the specimens out before the roads were closed, knowing their life's work could be lost. ... UBC alumnus Derek Woods, a past collaborator of Trevor and Curtis, along with his friend Evan Morson-Glabik came to the rescue. Derek and Evan rented a U-haul in Vancouver, drove it to Upper Clearwater to pick up the specimens, and then turned around to deliver them to the Beaty Museum.

A team of volunteers met Derek at the museum to help

unload the collection last Saturday. By Monday morning, the herbarium team - Olivia Lee, Erin Fenneman, Barbara Nato-Bradley and Linda Jennings—was in place to prepare the specimens for freezing, so that they can safely be worked on. Freezing is a chemical-free way of killing any unwanted pests that might be hiding among the specimens, and could damage these and other collections. The specimens were evacuated just in time—on Tuesday there was an evacuation order for parts of Clearwater.

## UPDATE by Linda Jennings: August 6th, 2017

The lichen collection has now been ... distributed to offices and lab spaces within the Museum ... since the collection is too large to fit in any one room. Updates [will be] available on our Herbarium Instagram site ... <https://www.instagram.com/pressedplants/> . Our curators, Curtis and Trevor, still need to stay in Clearwater to protect their home, as there is no relief of rain in sight. We will store the collection and wait for the curators to be out of harms way, so that they can come to the museum to properly work through the collection.

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## TLBO Up and Running Again

By Andrew Harcombe

After a year's hiatus, Tatlayoko Lake Bird Observatory is up and running again for its 11th year. While no longer a Nature Conservancy of Canada project, the migratory bird banding station continues operations on Tatlayoko Lake Ranch with permission from NCC, under the leadership of BC Spaces for Nature and project manager Avery Bartels. Two banders from Ontario are working there this fall and volunteer help is always appreciated. Extensive fires north, east and west of the site are resulting in dense smoke that may be influencing how birds from the western boreal are migrating. For up-to-date information, follow the daily blog at [tatlayokobirds.wordpress.com](http://tatlayokobirds.wordpress.com).

Russell fence at Tatlayoko Lake Ranch. *Photo: Gail Harcombe*



## BULLETIN BOARD

### Land Trust Alliance of B.C. Nature Photo Contest CLOSES September 6!

In celebration of our 20th anniversary and Canada's 150, we are looking for pictures to showcase our beautiful province and what there is to protect and preserve. Categories include landscape, people in nature, wildlife shot, youth photograph (age 18 and under), amateur photograph, and professional photograph. There will be a prize for each category. First place category winner will be awarded \$150, second place \$50. See <http://ltabc.ca> for information or email Jemma Tonken at [devofficer@ltabc.ca](mailto:devofficer@ltabc.ca)

### All Buffleheads Day Oct 15, 2017

PLUS boat trip 9:00–12:00 p.m. in the NatureHood! Look for arriving Buffleheads on the 298th day of the solar year, in and near Victoria Harbour Bird Sanctuary, Chain Islets Important Bird Area and the Oak Bay archipelago. Visit Constance Bank, Trial Islands, Oak Bay Flats, Seabird Point and Ten Mile Point area. \$50. An All Buffleheads Day celebration with the Friends of Shoal Harbour (FOSH) will also take place on land at Roberts Bay, on the shores of Shoal Harbour Bird Sanctuary. We'll also check for Buffleheads later that day in Esquimalt Lagoon Bird Sanctuary. Check the VNHS and [www.shoalharbour.com](http://www.shoalharbour.com) websites for more information closer to the date.

### 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). Donations are appreciated. For information, see <http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/adult-programs.php> Download the sanctuary bird checklist: <http://tinyurl.com/birdchecklist>

### Outerbridge Park Sunday Bird Walks

Sundays Sept. 10 and Oct. 8 at 9 a.m.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory hosts guided bird walks at Outerbridge Park in Saanich on the 2nd Sunday of each month. The easy walks,

suitable for people with mobility concerns, begin at the parking area off Royal Oak Drive. For dates and details, see <http://rpbo.org> Download the bird list [http://www.rpbo.org/outerbridge\\_park.pdf](http://www.rpbo.org/outerbridge_park.pdf)

### Introduction to eBird Part 1

Saturday, September 16, 9:30 am to 12:00 noon

Community Room, Uptown Mall (in parkade near the Walmart entrance)

Learn how to use eBird to find information on birds, whether or not you intend to add your own records. eBird is a great resource for travelling, as well as local information. Covers setting up an account and searching for birds by species, region, or eBird hotspots. Learn how eBird can track your local, regional, and other lists, look at barcharts and eBird migration animations, and tap into the many resources available (including photos and audio files). This course is best suited for laptops or tablets (i.e., larger screens). We'll have some available if you don't have your own. This is a hands-on course, so you'll practice what you learn in class. Cost \$20 RPBO members or \$25 non-members. Visit [www.rpbo.org](http://www.rpbo.org) for more information. Limit 12 participants

### Introduction to eBird Part 2

(pre-requisite: Intro to eBird Part 1, or an eBird account and some eBird experience)

Saturday, September 16, 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm, Community Room, Uptown Mall (in parkade near the Walmart entrance)

Focuses on inputting your data into eBird, either using a computer or mobile device. eBird can be used to store historical as well as current data. You are welcome to bring your field notebook or other lists. Covers creating personal locations, finding hotspots, calculating time and distance, and inputting other data that eBird requests or requires. Learn how you can retrieve information about your records, and how your data contributes to wider knowledge of birds around the world. This is a hands-on course, so you'll practice what you learn in class. Cost \$20 RPBO members or \$25 non-members. Visit [www.rpbo.org](http://www.rpbo.org) for more information. Limit 12 participants

## Leave a Lasting Gift

Donate to The Nature Trust of BC in your will to help conserve the natural diversity of wildlife, plants and their critical habitats for future generations.

For more information, contact Deb Kennedy at [debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca](mailto:debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca) or call 604-924-9771 or 1-866-288-7878

[www.naturetrust.bc.ca](http://www.naturetrust.bc.ca)





# VICTORIA HARBOUR MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

ESTABLISHED OCTOBER 27, 1923

## Bufflehead

male (left), female (right)



J.Fenwick Lansdowne, *Birds of the West Coast*, Vol. 1, 1976, M.F. Feheley Pub. Ltd., Toronto

A common wintering duck in and near the entire sanctuary, from Portage Inlet to Ten Mile Point. In Victoria Harbour, 300 to 400 may winter in West Bay alone. Known for being punctual, it usually begins to return to Greater Victoria by Oct. 15, "All Buffleheads Day", the 298th day of the solar year. In 2015, one female arrived in Shoal Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary (Sidney) on that day when one male and nine females were also reported at Esquimalt Lagoon Migratory Bird Sanctuary. No Bufflehead was detected in Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary until Oct. 21, with two males and four females in Oak Bay near Bowker Creek, and a group of 30-40 on Portage Inlet near Colquitz Creek, on Oct. 25.

Brought to you by Friends of the Bird Sanctuary, 2015, in homage to J. Fenwick Lansdowne (1937 - 2008).

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# Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 35 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

**Christine Galipeau**

Victoria

*Jogging, hiking, research and writing and road trips*

**Seigo Murakami**

Victoria

*Nature walk, wildlife observation, environmental education*

**Jane Ross**

Victoria

*Birding, lectures, day trips*

**Shelby Kutyn**

Victoria

*Everything biology related!!!*

**Bill Mursell**

Victoria

**Les Peterson**

Victoria

**Phyllis Pullinger**

Saanichton

*Birding, butterflies, local flora & fauna*

**Everett Hyman**

Austin, Texas

*Birding, novelist*

**Alison Giegerich**

Victoria

*Hiking, gardening, kayaking*

**Rhys Harrison**

Victoria

*Birds, butterflies, flowers, trees, history*

**Valerie Murray**

Victoria

*Wildlife and conservation, particularly ending the BC Grizzly Bear hunt - website: justiceforbcgrizzlies.com*

**Leah de Montreuil**

Sidney

*Birds, wildflowers, edibles, marine*

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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](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](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.



## SEPTEMBER 2017

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### Sunday September 3

#### 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. This outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will start at the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Rd). Meet at 1:00 p.m. in the lot by the reservoir where we will have an initial look for butterflies and then decide where to go from there. Contact Gordon at (250) 721-1264 or [butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca](mailto:butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca) for more information.

### Saturday September 9

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

##### *Waterfront Birding*

This is a good time to check out the waterfront for birds. **Marie O'Shaughnessy** will be your leader. Meet at Cattle Point (Beach Dr between Rutland Rd and Dorset Rd) at 7:30 a.m. We will wander around Cattle Point and make a few stops between there and Clover Point. Finally we'll end up at the Ogden Point Breakwater. There will be birds on the water as well as shorebirds to watch for. Contact Marie at (250) 598-9680 or email Agnes Lynn at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca) for more information.

### Sunday September 10

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

##### *Here, There, and Everywhere:*

##### *Biodiversity of Beetles and Other Insects*

Did you know that beetles are the most biodiverse group of organisms on the planet? And that BC is home to almost 4000 of them? If you want to learn more interesting facts about beetles and many other insects, join **Charlene Wood** and **Zaid Jumean** on this VNHS insect walk-and-talk. Charlene and Zaid are local biologists with many years' experience studying, collecting, and identifying insects. Our field site is yet to be determined since we'll choose a location that considers the waning summer conditions of September. Since we'll be gathering around looking at small critters while we're out there, we'd like to maintain a cozy group of up to 12 people so register early if you're keen for a spot. 12:00-2:00 p.m., Location TBD. Please contact Zaid to register at [zaid.jumean@gmail.com](mailto:zaid.jumean@gmail.com).

### Tuesday September 12

#### NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

##### *Cool Plants and their Fungal Friends*

Plants are fascinating; fungi are fascinating. But for sheer entertainment value, it's difficult to beat plants plus fungi! Fungi have been associated with plants since the earliest plants colonized land, and are requisite partners of almost all of our familiar Pacific Northwest plants. Join Andy MacKinnon, forest ecologist and co-author of the well-known book series, *Plants of British Columbia*, in this exploration of the fruitful union of two of his favorite Kingdoms. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Free—all welcome, so bring a friend! Note: UVic parking is \$3. \*See companion field trip on October 27, after the rains begin, to explore a local forest looking at fungi and plants.

### Saturday September 16

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

##### *Pedder Bay Birding*

Come join the VNHS Saturday Birding Group at Pedder Bay Marina. To reach Pedder Bay Marina, go out Rocky Point Rd and watch for a left on to Pedder Bay Rd. There is a big sign for the marina. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the grass parking lot behind the RV registration kiosk on the right. Rocky Point Bird Observatory operates a banding station there and several interesting birds have been reported from there. We will walk around the area for a couple of hours and after that you will have an opportunity to visit the banding operation if you are interested. Contact Agnes at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca) or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

### Saturday September 16 to Sunday September 24

#### 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](mailto:butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca) if you would like to help out.

### Sunday September 17

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

##### *University of Victoria Campus Tree Walk*

The Centre for Forest Biology has produced a walking tour of the campus (<http://web.uvic.ca/forbiol/sites/default/files/Treewalk.pdf>). You could follow this tour by yourself but it is more informative and enjoyable to come along with someone who can show you the trees. **Agnes Lynn** has been on campus since 1964 and has enjoyed watching and studying the trees since then. We will wander around the suggested route identifying trees as well as other shrubbery. This will include details on native plants as well as ornamentals. Some plants are in the Finnerty Gardens but many are simply trees that enhance the campus. Ask her about why we should plant trees. Wear good walking shoes and bring binoculars if you wish. Park in Lot 6. Meet in front of the Interfaith Chapel at 10:00 a.m. No parking fee on Sunday. Contact Agnes at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca) or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

### Tuesday September 19

#### BOTANY NIGHT

##### *Plants and people in Nicaragua*

Between 2005-2008, **Hannah Roessler** had a wonderful opportunity to live and work in Nicaragua, where she spent most of her time living on a permaculture farm, and working in a nearby village on projects related to food and medicine plants. She will share with us ethnobotanical stories of people and plants of the area, and how the experience opened her mind to the varied and often complex ways people learn about and "know" plants. She will also show photos of the various food and medicine plants on the permaculture farm. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

### Saturday September 23

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

##### *Juan de Fuca Pelagic Birding*

We have once again hired the boat *Fantasea II* to go from Victoria Harbour out into the Juan De Fuca Strait and towards Race Rocks to find some of the pelagic species that feed there. We repeat this

popular tour each year as it always turns up something to keep us interested in going again. We will follow the tide debris line that occurs between Victoria and Race Rocks as the currents cause an upwelling of nutrients from the bottom, resulting in the best feeding spots for the birds. Possible birds include shearwaters, murrelets, auklets, jaegers, Northern Fulmar, many species of gulls, phalaropes and other pelagics. We generally are able to go through Race Rocks to see close-up the variety of sea lions and seals that laze on the rocks there. We are sometimes treated to views of whales if they are in the area. There is room for 20 people. The cost is \$70.00 per person for VNHS members, \$90.00 for non-members. The trip is 5 hours (9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.). Please book as soon as possible, by Sep 15 at the latest. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay through PayPal (details when you register) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. See more details about the trip at <http://vicnhs.bc.ca/fantasea.html>. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

## Monday, September 25

### MARINE NIGHT

#### *Humpback Comeback*

They're big, they're beautiful, and they're back from the brink of extinction! Join **Jackie Hilderling** for a discussion on the return of Humpback Whales to B.C.'s coast. Jackie is a researcher with the Marine Education and Research Society ([www.mersociety.org](http://www.mersociety.org)). Information will include MERS research on Humpback feeding, rate of entanglement, efforts to increase awareness around collision and what to do if entanglement is witnessed. Jackie is an educator, avid diver and underwater photographer, and is also known as "The Marine Detective" recently featured on Animal Planet's "Wild Obsession" series and in the BBC productions "New threat to Canada's Pacific humpback whales?" and "Ingenious Animals". We meet in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## Wednesday, September 27

### BIRDERS' NIGHT

#### *Birds, Beaches, Road Trains and 'Roos*

**Jim and Jeannie Cosgrove** spent three months travelling across Australia from Sydney to Coral Bay, and brought home pictures to prove it! Their emphasis was finding the unique birds of Australia, but they also spent time with other wildlife including scuba diving with whale sharks. Join them in reliving the experience through slides and stories! We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Rm. 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone welcome—come early to socialize! Presentation will follow announcements and updates. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## Saturday, September 30

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

#### *Hawk Watch*

The VNHS Saturday Birding Group will join the combined VNHS and CRD Hawk Watch event at East Sooke Park. To come to the vantage point above Beechey Head to watch for raptors, meet at the Aylard Farm parking lot at the end of Becher Bay Rd at 9:30 a.m. (earlier than when the crowds appear!). **Daniel Donneck** will lead the way up to the lookout (although the route will be marked if you wish to come later) and Daniel and others will be

available up there to help you find those illusive raptors till about 3:00 p.m. The hike up to the viewpoint requires a 20-minute trek up a steep and rocky trail. Bring binoculars, water and perhaps a lunch if you plan to stay for the day. You can stay as long as you like and then return to the parking lot whenever you wish. If you do not want to make the trek up to the hill, there are good opportunities in the field near the parking lot to look for raptors as well. After 11:00 am there will also be live raptor demonstrations and other activities and displays right near the parking lot as well. You may wish to stay for the BBQ for VNHS members following the main event at 3 pm but please pre-register for this (see ad page four for details on BBQ). Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

## OCTOBER 2017

### Sunday October 1

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Monthly Butterfly Outing*

Join **Gordon Hart** on the last of the season's monthly Butterfly events. Each outing is intended to help us learn more about our local butterflies. This outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will start at the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Rd). Meet at 1:00 p.m. in the lot by the reservoir where we will have an initial look for butterflies and then decide where to go from there. Contact Gordon at (250) 721-1264 or [butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca](mailto:butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca) for more information.

### Sunday October 1

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

#### *Sooke Hills Wilderness Trail (South End)*

Join **Ann Nightingale** for an exploration of the southernmost 2-3 kilometres of the new Sooke Hills Wilderness Trail. This trail will be part of the 700 km Vancouver Island Spine Trail and the Great (formerly TransCanada) Trail, but for now, provides access to Greater Victoria Water District lands that have been closed to the public for years. The trail is in good shape and easy to walk, but does have a few steeper sections in the part we will cover. Walking sticks are advised for those with knee issues. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. to carpool, or at the trailhead parking lot on Humpback Rd at Irwin Road at 9 a.m. Contact Ann at 250-514-6450 if you require more information.

### Sunday, Oct 8

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *A Cook's Tour of Geological Formations of Greater Victoria*

In this field trip we will visit representative examples of all of the geological formations (terrane) that occur in the Greater Victoria area. We will carpool to Armstrong Point in Sidney, Finlayson Point in Beacon Hill Park, Gonzales Beach in Victoria, the prehistoric estuary of the Goldstream River on Metchosin Road and will finish at Witty's Lagoon/Tower Point in Metchosin. Along the way you will see the sandstone Nanaimo Group, the gneiss rock of the Wrangellia Terrane, the argillite and schist of the Pacific Rim Terrane and the pillow lava basalt of the Crescent Terrane. We will see lots of evidence of glaciation at the various stops. Meet at the Beaver Lake Road entrance on Elk Lake Drive (in the Parking area by the Pat Bay Highway) at 10:00 a.m. for carpooling. A basic map of the sites to be visited will be provided.



Walking at each site involves short easy trails and we should be finished at Witty's Lagoon/Tower Point by 4:00 pm. Please bring a lunch. Contact **John Henigman** at [jfhenigman@gmail.com](mailto:jfhenigman@gmail.com) or (778) 678-6439 if you need additional information. The book reference for this field trip is *The Geology of Southern Vancouver Island Revised Edition* by C.J. Yorath.

## **Tuesday October 10**

### **NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT**

#### ***New Zealand Nature***

Join **Brooke Clibbon** and **Eric Tull** for their presentation of *New Zealand Nature*! Brooke took video on a birding trip to New Zealand, and their video presentation shows many of the land birds and seabirds that they encountered, as well as the marine mammals. The video format shows interactions among the various wildlife species, especially a brutal fight between two male takahes—giant flightless gallinules—while the female watches casually. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Free and all are welcome, so bring a friend! Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## **Sunday, October 15**

### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)**

#### ***Juan de Fuca Pelagic Birding***

See September 23 trip for details. Please book as soon as possible, by Oct 7 at the latest.

## **Tuesday, October 17**

### **BOTANY NIGHT**

#### ***Death Cap Mushroom: Coming to a neighbourhood near you?***

The deadly poisonous death cap mushroom is an ectomycorrhizal fungus that was inadvertently introduced to North America decades ago. Until recently, death cap mushroom in British Columbia has been found fruiting almost exclusively with exotic boulevard trees in the developed environs of Victoria and Vancouver. But that changed two years ago with the discovery that death cap mushroom can fruit in association with a native BC tree species. Will this host expansion lead to spread of death cap mushroom from our cities to our forests? What, if anything, can we do about this? Join us for **Shannon Berch's** presentation at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

## **Saturday October 21**

### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)**

#### ***Birding at Viaduct Flats***

Come join the VNHS Saturday Birding Group at Viaduct Flats. The birds will be back enjoying this area by now after the quiet summer season. As well as good birds on the water, there should be lots in the surrounding woods. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the viewing platform. This is near the intersection of Interurban and Viaduct. Contact Agnes at thelynns at [shaw.ca](mailto:shaw.ca) or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

## **Wednesday October 25**

### **BIRDERS' NIGHT**

#### ***Coastal Raptors:***

***A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two on the Beach!***

**Dan Varland**, founder and Executive Director of the non-profit Coastal Raptors, will give a slide presentation on raptor banding research on the Washington coast. During his 22 years of research, Dan and a host of volunteers have captured and banded more than 300 raptors of eight species, including 240 Peregrine Falcons and 32 Bald Eagles. Once in hand, in addition to banding, blood and feather samples are taken to assess contaminant levels and disease exposure. There have been more than 1000 resightings of the marked birds, some made by residents of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Scarlett Point Lighthouse at the north end of the island. Dan will share the how and why birds are banded, how to report a banded bird, findings from the research, and the value of banding to conservation and research. We meet in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## **Friday, October 27**

### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)**

#### ***Exploring Metchosin Wilderness Park (Clapham Drive entrance)***

Join world-famous author and forest ecologist, **Andy MacKinnon**, for an exploration of a local forest, looking at fungi and plants. This outing is the companion field trip to Andy's presentation in September (Tuesday, September 12, Natural History Night: *Cool Plants and their Fungal Friends*). It is meant to be timed with the beginning of the fall rains. Meet at 9:00 am at the Clapham Drive entrance to the Metchosin Wilderness Park, off Rocky Point Road. Contact Andy MacKinnon at [metchosinmacs@gmail.com](mailto:metchosinmacs@gmail.com) if you need additional information.

## **Sunday October 29**

### **EVENT**

#### ***SVIMS Annual Wild Mushroom Show—non-VNHS Event***

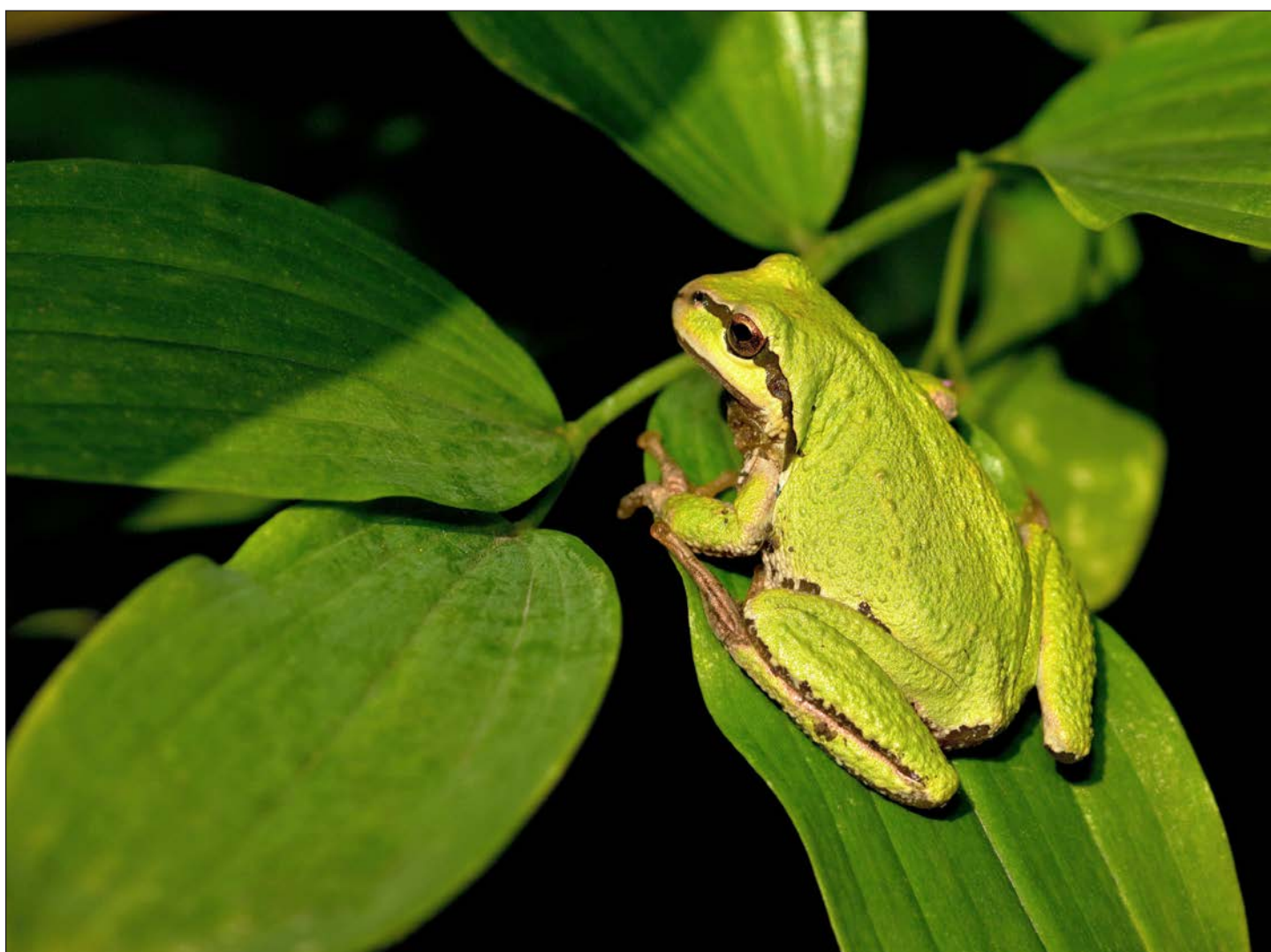
You may wish to attend the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society Annual Wild Mushroom Show. Location is at the Cordova Bay 55+ facility at 5238 Cordova Bay Rd (next to Cordova Bay Elementary School). There is lots of close parking. View edible, incredible and dangerous fungi. There will be speaker presentations throughout the day. Also mushroom growing kits and mushroom books for sale. Bring your mushrooms to be identified by friendly and knowledgeable experts. Admission by donation. Open 10 a.m.–4 p.m. More details at [www.svims.ca](http://www.svims.ca).

## **Monday, October 30**

### **MARINE NIGHT**

#### ***Hitchhikers on Marine Debris from the Great Japan Tsunami***

The devastating Great Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011 washed an estimated five million tons of debris into the Pacific Ocean. This debris made the journey across the ocean to land on the shores of North America with over 300 species of fish, seaweed, and shellfish aboard; some of which are well-known global invaders. **Dr. Cathryn Murray**, Senior Aquatic Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will describe some of these species and the potential threats to our marine ecosystem. We meet in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.



VNHS photo contest winner – Northern Pacific Treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*). Photo: James Holkko