



The Victoria NATURALIST

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
2018
VOL 75.3

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





The Victoria NATURALIST

Published six times a year by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
P.O. Box 24061 Royal Oak, Victoria, BC V8Z 7E7
Contents © 2018 as credited.
ISSN 0049—612X Printed in Canada

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Printing: Fotoprint 250-382-8218

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Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

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Deadline for next issue: December 1, 2018

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[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 requested. E.g.,

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Cover Image: Anna's Hummingbird.
Photo: Kim Beardmore

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As the weather starts to get colder, you may be starting to think of more indoor pursuits, but November and December in the Victoria area are great months to get out and see and do things. The field trips and presentations described in this issue offer a good variety—something for just about every interest. Treat yourself by attending as many of the fascinating presentations as possible, and get your “nature fix” by joining others on the field trips. There are even a couple of festive occasions in keeping with the season—Botany Night Holiday get-together and the post-Christmas Bird Count party. Sounds like fun!

Speaking of Christmas Bird Count—for all you birders out there, check the dates for the 2018 CBC. Every year brings new species and several times, record numbers of species. It is a great way to spend the day, and you will be contributing to “citizen science” at the same time! You don't have to be experienced—all are welcome. And that brings me to the CBC4Kids... a fun way to introduce kids to birding and to nature in general. A great family event.

One item in this issue that I found particularly interesting was the book review about the book “The Lost Words”...to think that words that I hear in common usage may be considered “extinct” is strange. Might be an interesting challenge to see how many words YOU use that are in the book.

Don't forget to send in your nomination(s) for the VNHS Awards—see page five—due Feb. 28, 2019. I am sure there are many deserving members “out there” whose efforts should be recognized.

Oh yes —since I will not be writing another note until the new year, I will take this opportunity to wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season.

Gail Harcombe

A Message from Your Board

Thank you to all who helped with the 2018 HawkWatch and BBQ Social: staffing the booth during the event, food preparation, set up, and take down. It is a great event, but so weather dependent in order for the main attractions to put on a show. Once again, The Raptors from Duncan were in attendance, delighting all who watched with the antics and flights of their beautiful birds. Even though the weather could have been warmer and sunnier, everyone enjoyed socializing and cake! This year, more than 45 members attended.

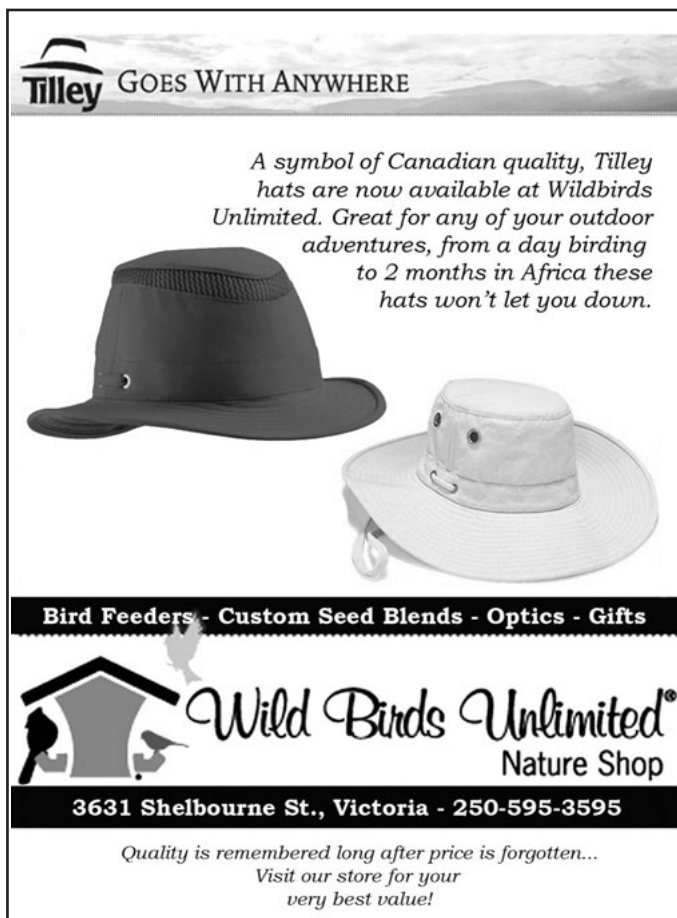
We are almost out of the current edition of the Society's book, *Nature Guide to the Victoria Region*, so we are going ahead with a reprint. Based on recommendations by several booksellers and the publishing staff at the museum, the retail price will increase to close to \$20 per book. The previous price of \$14.99 was based on the Society paying a significant portion of the printing cost so we could keep the

retail price low. We were told that this undervalued the book and somehow worked against people buying it, presuming it must not be very good because it was so inexpensive. A perfect example of human psychology getting in the way of us spreading the gospel about the natural world! So we will see what happens with this new price. Because we did not contribute to the cost of the printing this time, we are considering offering our own discount on the ones we sell directly.

The Society had a funding request from Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) for \$6000 to go towards the Fundraiser and Lead Educator positions. Many of our membership will remember that the Rocky Point banding began as a Society project and this led to the formation of the RPBO. What started out as migration monitoring has become much more, including a significant outreach and education component. Anyone who has held a live bird and looked closely at their exquisite beauty knows the power of this experience, so your board felt that we could fulfil this request to specifically support funding the position of Lead Educator, as it best meets our mandate.

A big project that is still in the works is scanning all the back issues of the magazine and getting them onto our website. We want them to be searchable by keyword and available to anyone who is interested. Board member Stephen Ruttan has been the lead on this project and has been looking into how best to get this done. There will be an expenditure of some amount required to complete this task, but the resulting treasure trove of historical information should make this an excellent addition to what we can offer.

At the time of this writing we had not yet had a member step forward to fill Bill's shoes in organizing the free school programs the Society offers. For anyone considering this role and feeling daunted, it is important to note that Bill intends to stay active in presenting the programs, he just no longer wants to handle the scheduling with the teachers, etc. So you would not be required to fill his role in educating, just the administration of the activities. This of course can be done from home, with just the internet and a phone, and a friendly, flexible demeanour. With this stripped down role in mind, we will hopefully have more success in recruiting someone for the task. The *Connecting Children With Nature* programs have been offered for many years with great success, and it would be a shame for them to be discontinued.



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VNHS Awards: Call for Nominations for 2019

VNHS members contribute to the Society in many ways: writing articles for the Naturalist, leading field trips, or serving on the board or committees. Some go out of their way to ensure other members can continue to be a part of Society activities by visiting shut-ins or driving others to Society functions. The Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors established the Distinguished Service Award in 1988. This prestigious award is meant to honour those members who have given freely of their time over a long period, in a variety of ways, for the Society. Any member of the Society can nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour. The VNHS Distinguished Service Award is given annually to members who have shown such dedication.

The Society may also bestow Honourary Life Membership on a member whose involvement with VNHS has been exceptionally long and dedicated. Please consider nominating a member, and send your nomination to the Society's address, or give it to one of the directors. Nominations should be forwarded by February 28, 2019. All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least two members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards.

VNHS Distinguished Service Award Recipients

1989 Lyndis Davis, David Stirling, Katherine Sherman
1990 Anne Adamson, Charles Trotter, Robb Mackenzie-Grieve
1991 Ed Coffin, Mark Nyhof
1992 David Fraser, Margaret Mackenzie-Grieve
1993 Giff Calvert, Harold Pollock
1994 Kaye Suttill
1995 Bryan Gates, Bruce Whittington
1996 Gordon Devey
1997 Michael Carson
1998 No recipients
1999 Tony Embleton, Dorothy Henderson
2000 Tom Gillespie, Marilyn Lambert, David Pearce
2001 David Allinson, Beverly Glover, Hank Vander Pol
2002 Norm Mogensen
2003 Bob Chappell
2004 Oluna and Adolf Ceska
2005 Rick Schortinghuis

2006 Phil Lambert, Tom Burgess
2007 No recipients
2008 Ann Nightingale
2009 No recipients
2010 Gordon Hart, Agnes Lynn
2011 Claudia and Darren Copley
2012 Bill Dancer
2013 No recipients
2014 John Henigman, Jeremy Tatum
2015 Hans Roemer
2016 No recipients
2017 No recipients
2018 No recipients

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Mr. Bruce Whittington



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2018 Christmas Bird Count—Including CBC 4 Kids Team!

By Ann Nightingale

Photos by Kim Beardmore



Morning at Maber Flats.

Count	Date	Coordinators
Victoria	Sat, Dec 15, 2018	Ann Nightingale 250-514-6450 victoriacbc@naturevictoria.ca
CBC4Kids	Sat, Dec 15, 2018	Andrea Neumann 778-678-5691 cbc4kids@christmasbirdcount.ca
South Salt Spring Island/Sidney; North Salt Spring Island/Galiano; Pender Island	Sun, Dec 16, 2018	Daniel Donneck 250 744-5615 sidneycbc@naturevictoria.ca (South Salt Spring/Sidney); Tim Marchant tim@villagecobbler.ca (North Salt Spring); Mike Hoebel mhoebel@telus.net (Galiano Island); Gerald McKeating geraldmckeating@shaw.ca (Pender)
Sooke	Sun, Dec 30, 2018 (tentative)	TBA sookecbc@naturevictoria.ca
Duncan	Tue, Jan 1, 2019	Derrick Marven 250-748-8504; marven@shaw.ca

Last year's Christmas Bird count was a doozy! We seem to be seeing a trend of rarities and vagrants on Vancouver Island over the last few years, and they have definitely been boosting our totals. Victoria's final count of 84,517 in 2017 was the highest number of individuals reported in a decade. The species total of 144 was the top in Canada again this year, much to the chagrin of our friendly rivals in Ladner. Two new species, Great Egret and Chipping

Sparrow, both found in the Martindale area, were added to our cumulative list, and two other rarities (Tennessee Warbler and Lesser Goldfinch) weren't detected on the count day, but were definitely in the area.

Fifteen species hit record high totals last year. They were Canada Goose (7239/old record 6972), Wood Duck (234/219), Gadwall (307/170), Anna's Hummingbird (1139/1063), Surfbird (159/78), Great Egret (1/0), Barred Owl (16/13),

Northern Flicker (689/661), Steller's Jay (702/659), Common Raven (463/420), Common Redpoll (92/1), White-winged Crossbill (2/1), Chipping Sparrow (1/0), Savannah Sparrow (118/112), and White-crowned Sparrow (478/432). There were several significant misses though, including Tundra Swan and Eurasian Skylark, which may not be a regular CBC bird going forward.

In my mind, though, our greatest achievement is continuing to grow participation in the Christmas Bird Count. Last year's participation total of 265 was a new record and will keep Victoria among the largest field participant circles in the world when results come out next month. Thank you for everyone who comes out and contributes to our count!

CBC4Kids

This year, we will be partnering with Rocky Point Bird Observatory for a special Christmas Bird Count for Kids, in conjunction with our regular count day. This family-focused event is meant to encourage young birders to become engaged with citizen science, and we are delighted to include their observations in our official CBC results. The event will be held on Saturday, December 15, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at Beckwith Park in Saanich.

We'll be looking for a few adults to help out in the afternoon. If you are interested, please contact CBC4KIDS@christmasbirdcount.ca.



American Robin in snow.



California Gull.



Northern Shrike.

Feederwatchers Needed

The good news is that Victoria has so many field counters. The bad news is that we struggle to get feederwatchers to report their birds. If you are even the tiniest bit curious about what would be involved to coordinate the feederwatch, please give me a call at 250-514-6450. Ideally, I'd like to see a feederwatch organizing team to share the responsibility and success. If you'd like to participate in a feederwatch on the count day, a feederwatch list (with photos) and report form are posted at <http://christmasbirdcount.ca>.

Sooke is Looking for a New Coordinator

Special thanks to Matt Cameron for organizing the Sooke CBC for the last couple of years. Matt has recently become a pilot (congratulations!) and this no longer fits his schedule. If you are able to take this on, please send a note to christmasbirdbc@gmail.com. You'll get lots of help from experienced counters and the coordinators of the other count circles in the region.

Everyone is Welcome!

The Victoria Christmas Bird Count is on **Saturday, December 15** this year.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. I'd also be interested in recruiting some groups—walking groups, school groups, scout groups, or any other group that would like to support the activity. Anyone can help out by acting as a tally person or as a spotter. Most teams spend all of the daylight hours out in the field, but there is room for people who can only spend part of the day too. Come out for as long as you can! There are a few “keeners” who go out looking and listening for owls in the pre-dawn hours. There may be boats on the water again this year (weather permitting), so if that is your particular specialty, please let me know.

If you are curious, interested, would like to see lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, or just need more information, please check out our local CBC website



Song Sparrow on a frosty morning.

(christmasbirdcount.ca) and the official Christmas Bird Count site (birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count) If you have a preference to count in a specific area, you may contact the team leader for the area directly.

Feederwatchers don't have to register—just report your birds on the appropriate count day!

Post-Count Gathering— on the Move Again! (Bring Indoor Shoes!)

At the end of the day, as many people as can will attend our post-count gathering to total up the events of the day. We got scooped on last year's location—I'll book earlier next year!, This year will still be gathering pretty close to the center of the circle at the Royal Oak Women's Institute at 4516 West Saanich Rd. The hall just refinished their dance floor, so requests that we take special care not to bring in stones in our shoes. Indoor shoes or sock feet will be much appreciated. You can dance, if you'd like!

We'll be meeting up at around 5 pm on count day to warm up, share stories and find out how the day went. You are welcome to join us, even if you don't come out on the count itself. If you can bring a plate of goodies, so much the better! We'll be all done by 7:30 pm for those who want to get home relatively early after a long day in the field.

If you've counted with us recently, and we have an email address for you, you will get some instructions soon. Otherwise, if you'd like to be a bird counter this year, please contact the leader for the zone you'd like or register at christmasbirdcount.ca. The updated leader list and meeting times and places will be posted on the website. Feel free to invite a friend!

	Area Name	Leader	Phone	Email
1	Butchart Gardens–N. Highlands	Warren Drinnan	250-652-9618	cbc1@naturevictoria.ca
2	Central Highlands	Warren Lee	250-478-7317	cbc2@naturevictoria.ca
3	Goldstream–Finlayson Arm	Robin Robinson	250-391-5995	cbc3@naturevictoria.ca
4	Thetis Lake–Hastings Flat	Jessie Fanucchi	250-818-1226	cbc4@naturevictoria.ca
5	Langford Lake	Barbara Lake	250-652-3358	cbc5@naturevictoria.ca
6	Albert Head–Triangle Mountain	TBA	250-514-6450	cbc6@naturevictoria.ca
7	Esquimalt Lagoon–Mill Hill	Rick Schortinghuis	250-885-2454	cbc7@naturevictoria.ca
8	Esquimalt Harbour	Don Kramer	250-995-9369	cbc8@naturevictoria.ca
9	Portage Inlet–The Gorge	TBA	250-514-6450	cbc9@naturevictoria.ca
10	Victoria Harbour	John and Donna de Haan	778-265-9817	cbc10@naturevictoria.ca
11	Beacon Hill Park	Mary Robichaud	250-507-8760	cbc11@naturevictoria.ca
12	Oak Bay	Geoffrey Newell	250-598-0158	cbc12@naturevictoria.ca
13	University–Cadboro Bay	Val George	250-208-0825	cbc13@naturevictoria.ca
14	Ten Mile Point–Arbutus Rd	Agnes Lynn	250-721-0634	cbc14@naturevictoria.ca
15	Gordon Head–Mt. Douglas	Margie Shepherd	250-477-5280	cbc15@naturevictoria.ca
16	Swan Lake–Cedar Hill	Bill Dancer	250-721-5273	cbc16@naturevictoria.ca
17	Blenkinsop Lake–Panama Flats	Carl Hughes	778-679-9224	cbc17@naturevictoria.ca
18	Elk Lake–Cordova Bay	Mike McGrenere	250-658-8624	cbc18@naturevictoria.ca
19	Prospect Lake–Quick's Bottom	Dave Fraser	250-479-0016	cbc19@naturevictoria.ca
20	Martindale–Bear Hill	Ian Cruickshank	250-382-1652	cbc20@naturevictoria.ca
21	Zero Rock (ocean)	TBA	250-514-6450	cbc21@naturevictoria.ca
22	Chain Islets (ocean)	Marilyn Lambert	250-477-5922	cbc22@naturevictoria.ca
23	Juan de Fuca (ocean)	Ross Dawson	250-652-6450	cbc23@naturevictoria.ca

A Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) in coastal British Columbia

By Luke R. Halpin¹, Moira Galbraith², Ken H. Morgan³, and Gavin Hanke⁴

When you think Swordfish, you don't think of British Columbia. Few people know that on August 8th, 1983, a Swordfish was caught as bycatch by the M/V Tomi Maru at 47°36'N, 131°03'W (Sloan 1984, Peden and Jamieson 1988). The rostrum and tail were preserved by the Royal British Columbia Museum (BCPM 983-1730-001)—the more edible bits in between probably went for human consumption. The 1983 specimen was caught just inside BC's Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) is a large and distinctive animal, easily distinguished from other pelagic fishes. Its upper jaw is elongated into a sword-like rostrum, and the body is long and cylindrical, tapering from the falcate dorsal fin toward two large anal fins and the crescentic caudal fin (Nakamura 1985).

Swordfishes are found in tropical, subtropical and temperate oceans from the surface to at least 600 meters depth, usually

above the thermocline in temperatures of 18–24°C (Taylor and Murphy 1992). Swordfish make daily movements from deeper waters during the day, into mixed surface water at night as they track potential prey (Holts 2001) and their geographic range changes with the seasons. In the eastern Pacific, swordfish range from about 50°N to 35°S (Lobell 1947, Nakamura 1985) in summer, but retreat to warmer waters and lower latitudes in winter.

While out on a pelagic seabird/marine mammal survey September 5, 2017, aboard the Canadian Coast Guard Ship, John P. Tully, Luke Halpin took this photo of a Swordfish cruising slowly against the current at the surface, approximately 37 km west of Brooks Peninsula, Vancouver Island (Figure 2). Sea surface temperature was 16.9°C (at 4.5 meters depth), with an average water temperature of 16.5°C in September 2017 in the upper 10 meters where the fish was spotted (LaPerouse Zooplankton Monitoring Program: cruise

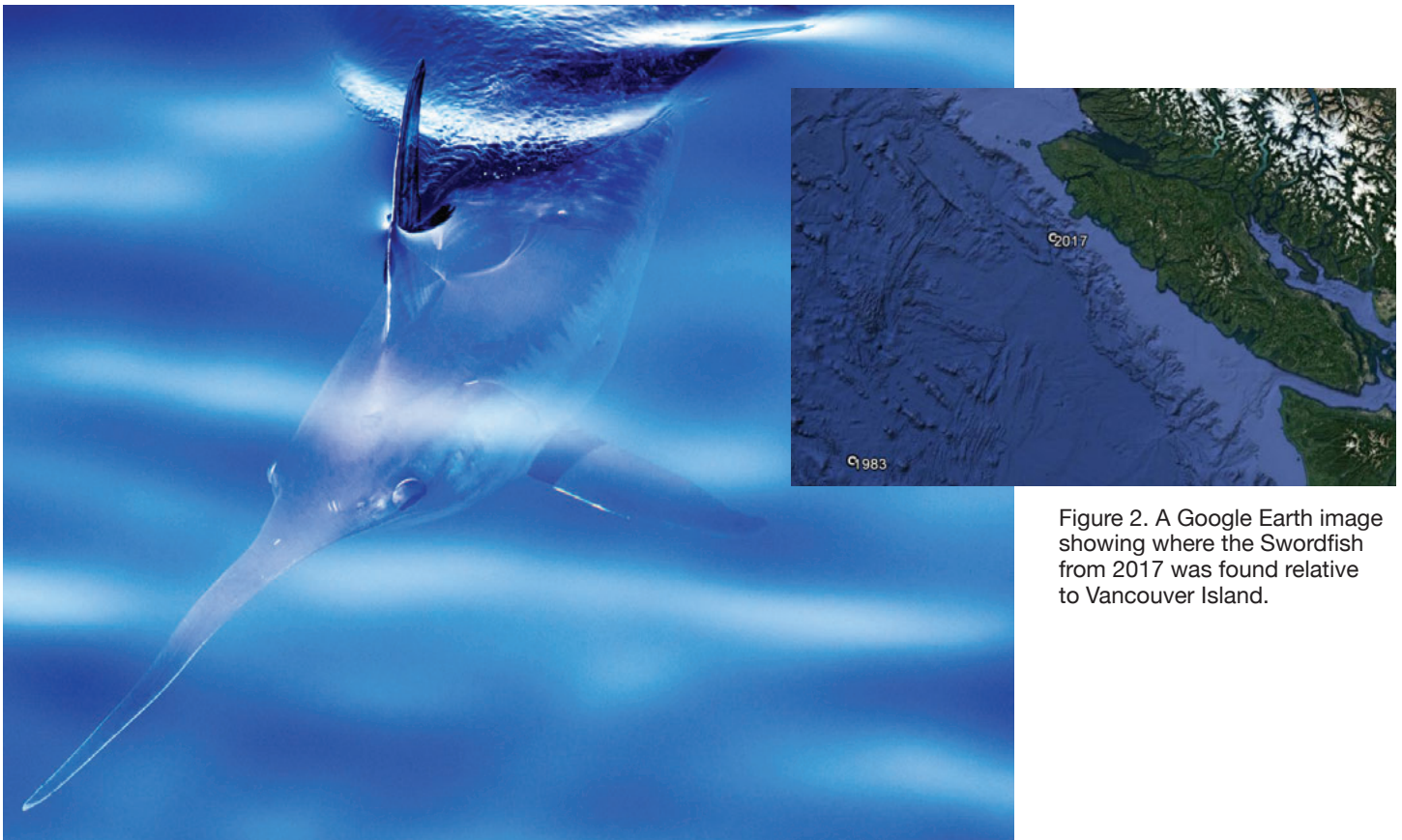


Figure 1. Photograph of the Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) found west of Brooks Peninsula, Vancouver Island, September 5, 2017. Photo: Luke Halpin.

Figure 2. A Google Earth image showing where the Swordfish from 2017 was found relative to Vancouver Island.

2017-09). The region's warm temperature was confined to the upper 20 m, below that, temperatures dropped rapidly. The swordfish probably was intentionally travelling in the warm upper surface waters.

You can read the official account in the spring issue of the *Northwestern Naturalist* (Halpin et al. 2018). This is the first Swordfish to be found close to our coastline and as far as we know, it did not end up on anyone's dinner table. It joins the Louvar (*Luvarus imperialis*) found near Masset, and Finescale Triggerfish (*Balistes polylepis*) from Vancouver Island (see Brooks et al. 2016) as strays into warm BC waters. What will be next?

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Kathleen Burton with *The Lost Words*, in Munro's Books.

Book Review

The Lost Words

By Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

The *Lost Words* is authored by Robert Macfarlane and illustrated by Jackie Morris. It is a book combining acrostic spell-poems with exquisite illustrations intended to restore the relevance of words from nature to ensure they are not lost at all but instead lovingly remain for future generations of children for years to come.

"I was at a loss for words when I learned about a beautifully illustrated book which told the story of common nature words made extinct from the print version of the Oxford Junior Dictionary," said Kathleen Burton, executive director of Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. "The book illustrates words that are not only far from being extinct; but words, several of which can be found at the Sanctuary if you were to visit the Nature House today."

Burton describes words like:

- * Acorn—currently falling from the sky as the crisp fall air settles over Saanich and Greater Victoria.
- * Fern—it takes only seconds to spot a licorice fern when you stepping on the Sanctuary grounds.
- * Heron—perhaps the one most disturbing to Burton, a majestic icon that visitors have grown to appreciate as an everyday occurrence when they walk around the lake.

The book showcases these everyday words of the natural world in a beautiful protest of their disappearance from the Oxford Junior Dictionary in 2007 when they were deemed to no longer reflect the current relevance and frequency of words in daily language of children.

"This is just a small sample of the many important words that play an important part in a Naturalist's tool kit as Sanctuary educators teach about the importance of flora, fauna and the various animals and ecosystems one can find

at the Sanctuary", remarked Burton. "I understand that new words need to be introduced, but at what cost? To remove integral words from nature only to replace them with words like "broadband", "bullet-point" and "cut-and-paste" seems a sad depiction of how the modernized world of computers and handheld devices not only takes us away from nature, it ironically removes nature from it all together."

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Society applauds Macfarlane and Morris for a job well done and thanks Munro's Books for sharing the book with nature lovers. It is a gorgeous, big book that will be both heavy in your hands and on your heart while at the same time open up a world of wonder and amazement in the beauty of nature and leave the reader at a loss for words as it did Burton.

The book restores and celebrates the words in the spirit and nature *The Lost Words* intended. It is a fabulous read on your own but perhaps even better when read by an adult to a child, encouraging quality time and inspiring personal action toward nature.

When *The Lost Words* is purchased at Munro's Books before December 31, 2018, \$8.00 from every book sold will benefit Educational Programing at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary where the words are far from forgotten and, Naturalists use them to inspire the young and young at heart to steward the natural world daily.

Plans are currently being developed with Munro's Books to also sell the books at the Nature Sanctuary as part of the promotion.



Salish Sea Creatures

By Tina Kelly

Photo by author

A clam with three names—Butter Clam, *Saxidomus gigantea* and SOXE. Did that last one put a furrow to your brow? SOXE is the name given to this species by the W?SÁNE? and Hul'qumi'num peoples.

Butter clams were one of the key bivalve species grown and harvested in clam gardens. A substantial amount of meat is provided by this large clam species. They grow up to 12 cm and have heavy thick shells. These clams are easy to identify; shells are oval to squared-off and feature only concentric rings, no radiating lines. Sandy and gravelly beaches are their preferred habitat where they live burrowed 15-30 cm below the surface.

Butter clams are considered the best clam for chowder and are commercially important. However, this species is also known to harbour paralytic shellfish poisoning. This image was taken on Russell Island while exploring with Parks Canada Clam Garden team members. To learn more about clam garden restoration in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, and many other locations, visit clamgarden.com

HAT's Habitat Management Benefits Natural Areas in the CRD

By Jennifer Lotz



Mt. Matheson - Restoration Day
September 23, 2018



THANK YOU
Volunteers



Photos and collage: Wendy Tyrell, Habitat Management Coordinator at Habitat Acquisition Trust.

Southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands are home to some of the most beautiful and rare ecosystems in Canada. Garry oak meadows, Douglas-fir forests, streams, and sweeping shorelines define our region. The region's population is growing, and land use changes are resulting in clearing of natural areas and threatening of the wildlife relying on them.

Landowners in the Capital Region can make a lasting

difference to our environment by protecting natural areas on their property. Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) works with landowners to protect natural areas by applying creative tools for conservation, following best practices and strategies using HAT's **Land Protection Program (LPP)**. This program conserves nature by permanently protecting natural areas through covenants, and working to ensure those natural areas remain resilient and intact forever. HAT also protects natural

landscapes through the acquisition of fee-simple land title.

Once HAT has secured a property, our work is far from over. An essential component of HAT's work is our **Habitat Management Program**, which works in tandem with our Land Protection Program. HAT's Habitat Management Program involves caring for the natural diversity of habitats and species that occur through the region, on both natural and modified landscapes. It is our duty to not only protect the land, but also to ensure that the land we acquire maintains its ecological integrity through specific restoration and management plans that are developed uniquely for each covenant. Ecological baseline studies are performed at registration in order to develop a better understanding of the existing flora and fauna at a site. On HAT's protected lands, we monitor wildlife, host community restoration events, engage with landowners and local community members, identify species at risk, and establish monitoring plans and goals that will allow the present and surrounding ecosystems to flourish.

The main functions of HAT's Habitat Management Program are to:

1. **Maintain** and improve the ecological function and habitat values of lands that HAT has a legal interest in protecting.
2. **Support** landowner efforts to protect, restore and manage habitat.
3. **Encourage and support** efforts to restore and maintain habitats on public and private lands, utilizing community volunteers and partnerships.

Our efforts and accomplishments are many. So far this year, HAT has coordinated 11 community restoration events, with five more planned for the remainder of the year. These community restoration events included three ecological Bioblitz events, with 10 local volunteer experts working together to catalogue all species present at each site in one day. One of these Bioblitz events included the discovery of a rare plant: common bluecup (*Githopsis specularioides*). These restoration events took place on nine different conservation covenants, with 107 volunteers contributing over 4400 hours of volunteer time! We planted over 400 native wildflowers, shrubs and trees, and removed 75 cubic meters of invasive plant material - no small feat considering the season for restoration efforts has only just begun.

Restoration Success Story (If we had to choose one!)

Mt. Matheson, September 23, 2018

HAT partnered with the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT) for a community restoration event held near Mt. Matheson in East Sooke, on September 23, 2018. This event marked the second partnership between HAT and the GVGT, with future opportunities to partner on local community restoration events remaining a likely prospect. HAT is very grateful for this partnership with the GVGT. Not unlike HAT, the GVGT encourages the community to care for nature,

and in particular, this volunteer group enhances, protects, and conserves parks and habitat throughout Greater Victoria.

There were 16 community members and one partnering organization, contributing to 80 volunteer hours and resulting in the removal of 4 cubic meters of invasive plants, planting of 400 native plants and bulbs, and the seeding of over 1500 native wildflower seeds throughout the planting area. Our dedicated volunteers and work crew accomplished all of this extraordinary work in a mere five hours!

At the Mt. Matheson covenant property, we removed Scotch broom from over the entire rocky outcrop area; however, there is still some remaining along the northern part of the open area. The planting covered about a third of the rock outcrop; we hope that funding will allow for planting on the other two-thirds over the next few years.

This is just one example of many, of the wonderful conservation opportunities that have been allowed to thrive over time through land protection, conservation, management, and enhancement. The ongoing management of places like Mt. Matheson is possible because of people like you.

To contribute to the conservation of Mt. Matheson and other significant local places, make a gift to HAT's Habitat Management program today at hat.bc.ca/donate, by calling in to 250-995-2428, or by cheque in the mail to PO Box 8552, Victoria BC V8W 3S2.

If you are interested in volunteering for local community restoration projects please send a message to volunteers@hat.bc.ca. We'd love to hear from you!



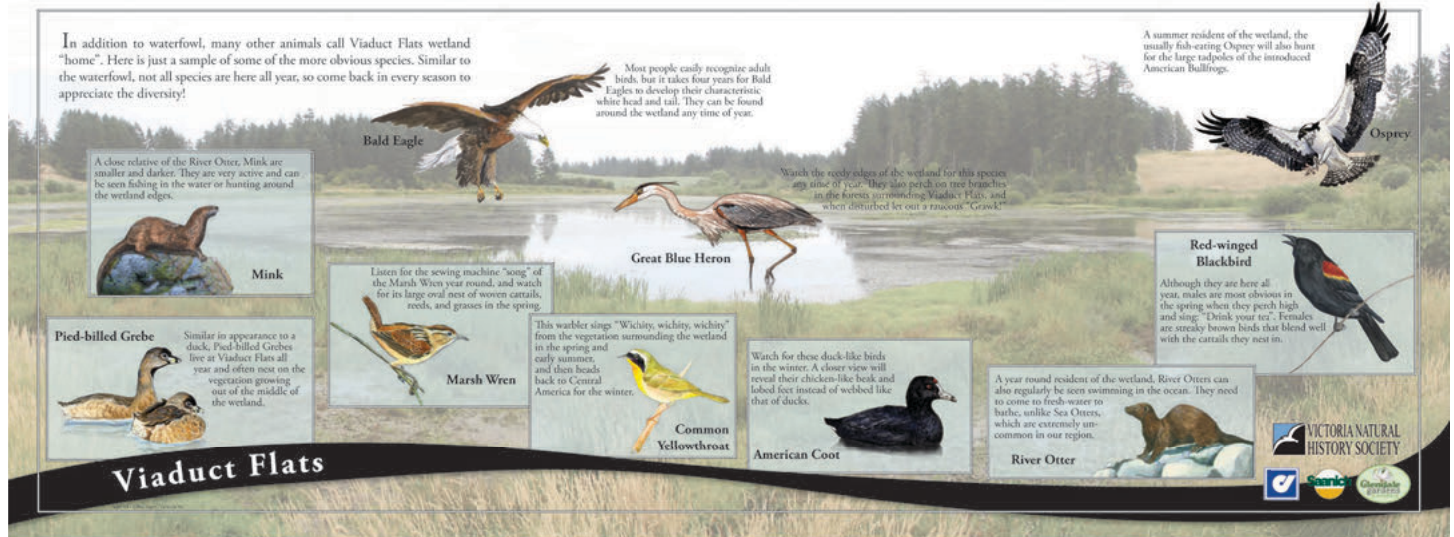
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Viaduct Flats Wetland Update

By Claudia Copley



One of two interpretive signs funded by the Victoria Natural History Society for the wetland viewing stations at Viaduct Flats.

For those of you who visit the Viaduct Flats wetland, you may have noticed a recent trail closure. In 2010, registered professional biologist Shona Lawson authored a report about the trail along the immediate edge of the wetland. Shona's report indicated that dog-walkers, horses, and cyclists were using the trail despite the stated restriction to pedestrian traffic only. She provided evidence of this through photographs. Some in the birding community will remember when there was an active Bald Eagle nest in the forest near the trail, and others may have even longer memories to the active Red-tailed Hawk nest in that same patch of woods. These animals no longer nest in this forested remnant, and the trail use and misuse is likely a contributing factor. In fact, the construction of the trail was too close to the Bald Eagle nest, which are protected year-round in B.C. by the Wildlife Act, Subsection 34 (b).

Another issue associated with the trail was the chronic disturbance it allowed to waterfowl and other wetland-inhabiting species. Migratory bird nest disturbance is a violation of the 1994 Migratory Birds Convention Act, and the trail was constructed too close to the water's edge, violating the streamside protection area in the District of Saanich's Watercourse Bylaw (#27 Streamside Development Permit Area).

The Viaduct Flats Committee has finally succeeded in implementing the recommendations of the report this fall, which included the trail closure to mitigate wildlife disturbance. The Committee, made up of two Saanich staff, two VNHS members, and two representatives of the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific, meets relatively

infrequently and requires consensus, hence the delay. Currently one of the Saanich staff is from the parks department, so the trail closure and explanatory signage was able to be completed by parks staff, rather than relying on volunteers from the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific.

The Victoria Natural History Society has once again stepped up to fund the reprinting and installation of interpretive signage at Viaduct Flats – one for each of the viewpoints of the wetland that result from the trail closure. These signs are the same as those attached to the VNHS's viewing platform at the Interurban Road access. We had the originals designed for the site many years ago and realized that not everyone can use the viewing platform because of the stairs. These new locations will hopefully reach a fresh audience.

There is a conservation covenant on the site, and it is the reason for the formation of the Viaduct Flats Committee in the early 1990s. Committee members and interests have varied a great deal over the years, but ultimately our role is to protect the wildlife that use the area and to improve the habitat quality for them. This honours the efforts by VNHS's Michael Carson that were needed to establish the protective covenant in the first place. Wildlife need areas where there are no people or their pets. Providing a "quiet zone" along the wetland edge is an excellent step towards achieving that, and we hope that visitors will respect the closure. A five-year plan will soon be submitted to Saanich mayor and council, outlining some of the current and future work planned for the area. If anyone would like more information, please be in touch with the author.

LETTERS

Pollinator Partnership Canada values your continued collaboration and support as a member of the Island Pollinator Initiative, and looks forward to continuing this partnership working towards pollinator conservation in our regions.

Kind regards,

Pollinator Partnership Canada

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 32 new members since the last issue. Only the following has agreed to have their name published in this Welcome section.

Louise Benckhuys

Victoria

Botany, ecology, conservation, restoration

Susan Macartney

Victoria

Hiking, conservation, education

Robin Weber

Sidney

Birding, botany

Kim Harrison

Victoria

Birdwatching, hiking, flora & fauna walks, local history speakers

Maury Swoveland

Victoria

Joseph Connors

Victoria

Birding, kayaking, hiking

Chris Beck and Jane King

Victoria

Birding, botany, and natural history

Amelita Kucher

Victoria

Restoration, environmental education, native plants, and Life!

Sarah and Kelly Brewer

Victoria

Monica Nugent

New Westminster

Birding

Patricia Spencer

Victoria

Birdwatching, hiking, kayaking, general natural history



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*In the end you're either endowed...
or extinct.*



**BEQUESTS,
SECURITIES,
LIFE
INSURANCE,
and
RETIREMENT
PLAN
DESIGNATIONS**

To discuss the possibility of leaving a planned gift to Swan Lake, please contact kburton@swanlake.bc.ca or phone: 250.479.0211 today.

BULLETIN BOARD

Birder's Night Coffee-Making Volunteer Needed!

Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) is looking for a volunteer to take over the Birder's Night coffee-making duty. Two members have stepped up for October and November, but we hope someone will take over the January to April slot. Mary Robichaud has been assisting and has kindly offered to stay on in that role. What we need is someone to take on the main responsibility. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Marilyn Lambert (250-477-5922) for instructions and equipment. Thank you.

Photography Exhibition

October 28 – November 10, 2018

The Metchosin Arts and Cultural Centre Association and the Metchosin Foundation are partnering to bring you Metchosin, Naturally! Seasons through the Lens, a photographic contest and exhibition. The exhibition will be at the Arts Centre and the Old School Gallery, 4495 Happy Valley Road, from October 28 to November 10, 2018. The exhibition displays the results of the photography contest, when photographers were challenged to represent the biodiversity of Metchosin through their photographic skills. Over the last six years, several local photographers have accompanied Metchosin bioblitz teams while they found and identified over 2400 local species and working with these photographers has made the bioblitz organizers aware how important artistic depiction can be as a tool to expand local awareness of the District's unique environmental setting. For more information, go to http://metchosinbiodiversity.com/menu_photocontest.php

CRD's Holiday Bird Count Training

Saturday December 8, 2018

Geoffrey Newell will help you brush up on your birding just in time for the Christmas Bird Counts in the area. From 9-11 a.m.

at Island View Beach. Meet at the grassy area adjacent to the picnic shelter off Homathko Road.

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 November 11 and December 9 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

Get Yours Now! Great Gift for Christmas...

A Guide to Bird Calls of Southern Vancouver Island (CD/booklet set) by Rocky Point Bird Observatory

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



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
or call 604-924-9771 or 1-866-288-7878

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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.

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 4

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Pelagic Birding on the MV Coho

Mike McGrenere will lead this trip on the MV Coho on its usual sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. He has been doing this trip for about ten years now and he says this is the best opportunity to see bird species that are usually found further out to sea, including shearwaters, fulmars and phalaropes. The crossing takes 90 minutes. We will be birding from the bow of the boat so dress warmly. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10:00 a.m. for the 10:30 a.m. sailing. We will return on the 2:00 p.m. sailing. Allow time to park

and purchase your ferry ticket. Street parking is free on Sundays. You must check in with Mike inside the terminal before buying your ticket. Return ferry fare is \$37 US (about \$50 Ca). You will require a Passport or enhanced driver's license to go through US Customs. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

Saturday, November 10

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Fungi Observations in John Dean Park

Mycologist **Bryce Kendrick** (www.mycolog.com) will lead us on an informative nature walk through the Park. Mushrooms are only one of the types of organisms that he will show us. We will learn how molds and slime molds differ from the mushrooms. You might also ask him why fungi are more like animals than plants. As this is a park, there will be no collecting. However a

few selected specimens may be chosen by the leader for closer examination. We will meet at 1:00 p.m. at the far end of Carmanah Terrace. Follow East Saanich Rd to Dean Park Rd and right on Carmanah Terrace to the end. Although we will not cover a large distance, the ground will be uneven and occasionally steep. Contact Agnes Lynn at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, November 11

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Mushrooms at Metchosin Wilderness Park

We will do a mushroom foray at a new location this year. This area has a diverse selection of mushrooms so it is always a great place to wander around. A member of both South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (www.svims.ca) and VNHS, **Kem Luther** will lead us, assisting us in identifying what we see. Bring your favourite field guide and we will help you at learning more about these mysterious fungi of the forest. Please note this is an observation trip, not intended for collecting. However, a few selected specimens will be chosen by the leader for closer examination. Meet at 1:00 p.m. There is a sign indicating the entrance to the park just past 940 Clapham Drive which is off Rocky Point Road. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, November 13

NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

The Peace River Valley: A Treasure Trove of Natural History

The Peace River Valley in northeast B.C. is a living laboratory for scientists to study outlier species like prickly pear cacti. But now this rare low-elevation valley and migratory bird corridor is under threat, and scientists are rushing to document its biodiversity and search for new and unexpected species before they are forever lost to science. In this presentation, award-winning journalist **Sarah Cox** tells the story of the Peace River Valley's astonishing natural wealth and shares insights from her new book *Breaching the Peace: The Site C Dam and a Valley's Stand Against Big Hydro*. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Please feel free to bring a friend. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Saturday, November 17

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Snow Geese at Reifel Bird Sanctuary

Come and see the annual Snow Goose spectacle at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Every November, thousands of Snow Geese stop-over in this part of the Fraser River delta. There is normally time to visit Boundary Bay or another site as well. Past trips have produced up to 80 species of birds for the day. Bring a lunch and drinks as we will not be stopping for refreshments. Dress warmly as it can be windy near the water. We go rain or shine. Participants will carpool from in front of the Elk-Beaver Lake Regional Park Sign on Elk Lake Drive at 5:45 a.m. for the 7:00 a.m. ferry sailing. We plan to return on the 5:00 p.m. sailing. You must pre-register by contacting Agnes. First 8 people to sign up have the option of coming in her van. Others to carpool by pre-arrangement as number of cars are limited. Cost to come in the van or carpool with others will be about \$70 for the day from Victoria plus \$5.00 entry fee to Reifel. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 to confirm attendance.

Tuesday, November 20th

BOTANY NIGHT

Plants of Western Australia

Western Australia is an enormous and diverse area with a diverse flora to match. The ancient soils and millennia of stable climate have allowed evolution to run wild. Today many genera of plants contain hundreds of species. Orchids in their thousands of species are, perhaps, the best known of the plants but other groups that are less familiar are equally of interest. In addition to photographs of the plants this talk by **Ron Long** contains details of pollination strategies that are hard to believe. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Sunday, November 25

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Urban Forest Walk – Dominion Brook Park

This will be another one in a series of walks to areas where the cover of vegetation consists of both native and introduced trees and shrubs. We need to be reminded that these areas of Urban Forest are very important to our wild creatures and to us. As we wander, we'll talk about why trees are important. This trip will be to Dominion Brook Park which has trees and shrubs which date back many years as part of the federal government facility which once was used as a testing ground for trees and shrubs which were considered to be hardy in this area. Wear good walking shoes and bring binoculars if you wish. Meet at 10:00 a.m. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Monday, November 26

MARINE NIGHT

Hydroid biodiversity in the Northeast Pacific: taxonomic perspectives and challenges

Hydroids are mostly marine, often colonial, gelatinous animals related to corals, anemones, and jellyfish. You may have seen hydroid colonies growing on the sides of floating docks like small bushy plants. They come in many different forms but these colonies are just one stage in their complex life cycle.

Dr. Henry Choong, Curator of Invertebrate Zoology at the Royal BC Museum, specializes in the taxonomy of hydroids. He will present an overview of hydroid diversity in the Northeast Pacific and highlight some of his most recent work on the biogeography and long-distance dispersal of hydroids. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Wednesday, Nov 28

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Call of the Western Screech-owl: Using Audio Recording Units and callback surveys to find owls on south Vancouver Island

Habitat Acquisition Trust's Contracting Biologist **Tania Tripp** and HAT's resident bird-nerd and Community and Development Coordinator, **Ashlea Veldhoen** share findings from recent surveys for Western Screech-owls. The quest for owls is a volunteer-based project which focused on using Audio Recording Units and specialized software to determine the presence of Western Screech-owls in habitats across the CRD. We meet in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic at 7:30 p.m. Come early to socialize! Presentation begins after VNHS announcements and coffee. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 1

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Langford Lake Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at Langford Lanes parking lot on Langford Parkway at 8:30 a.m. for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the area around Langford Lake. Bring your walking shoes, field guide and note-pad. This is a regular Saturday Birding Group outing but it is also a great opportunity for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters to get in some practice. **Ann Nightingale** will be your leader. Contact Ann at (250) 514-6450 or motmot at shaw.ca if you need more information.

Saturday, December 8

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Esquimalt Lagoon Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at the bridge at Esquimalt Lagoon at 8:00 a.m. for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the ocean birds along the lagoon and will go into the fields back behind the lagoon to provide a variety of birds. Bring your walking shoes, field guide and note-pad. This is a regular Saturday Birding Group outing but it is also a great opportunity for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters to get in some practice. Check the web site close to the date as details may change for this trip. Contact Agnes Lynn at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, December 11

NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

Keeping the Peace: Maintaining Habitat Connectivity in BC's Northeast

The Mighty Peace—it is where the Boreal Plains meet the Northern Boreal Mountains; where the Rocky Mountain's Hart Range intersects with the cool waters of the Peace River. It's a place where Grizzly Bear roam and Woodland Caribou graze; where sweeping vistas give way to wetlands, aspen forests and rolling grass lands. This key connection is under great pressure. Oil and gas development, coal and coalbed methane development, forestry, mining, and wind energy development, as well as the recently approved Site C hydro dam, act as barriers to wildlife movement and threaten the integrity of the landscape. Join Y2Y's Peace Regional Coordinator **Tim Burkhart** for a journey across this incredible landscape, including footage and photos from a 2018 expedition into the Wild Hart Ranges with the Royal BC Museum, and learn about how you can help keep the Peace. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Note: Uvic parking is \$3.

Tuesday, December 18th

BOTANY NIGHT

Members Night: Botany Night Holiday Party

Join us for informal gathering to share pictures, stories, and snacks. Bring along photos you'd like to show off or photos you'd like identified. Treats are appreciated but not required. If you have something to present, please contact james.miskelly@gmail.com (250-544-0455). Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.



Science and Nature Courses at Uvic Continuing Studies:

Rainwater Harvesting: Building Natural Processes

Dates: Tuesdays, Nov. 6–13, 7:00–9:00 pm

Location: UVic Campus

Fee: \$48.00 plus GST

Conservation and Restoration in the Gulf Islands

Date: Saturday, Nov. 3, 2:00–4:00 pm

Location: UVic Campus

Fee: \$28.00 plus GST

Traditional Plant Cultivation on the Coast: Indigenous Estuary Root Gardens

Date: Thursday, Nov. 8, 7:00–8:30 pm

Location: UVic Campus

Fee: \$21.00 plus GST

Conservation at the Interface: Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Science

Dates: Wednesdays, Nov. 14–28, 6:30–8:30 pm

Location: UVic Campus

Fee: \$70.00 plus GST

To learn more, visit:

continuingstudies.uvic.ca/ECO



University
of Victoria



Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). VNHS Photo contest winner, Birds category. *Photo: Gordon Hart.*