



# The Victoria NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





# The Victoria NATURALIST

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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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# Contents

A Message from Your Board.....	4
Salish Sea Creatures: Blue Mud Shrimp <i>By Tina Kelly</i> .....	5
Field Trip Reports <i>By Agnes Lynn</i> .....	6
Swan Lake Updates <i>By Kathleen Burton</i> .....	8
Food is Where You Find It! <i>By Giff Calvert</i> .....	11
Habitat Acquisition Trust Seeking Input in Effort to Create Habitat Corridor Across the Region <i>By Page Erickson-McGee &amp; Ronna Woudstra</i> .....	12
Bird Families of the Victoria Area: Hummingbirds <i>By Val George</i> .....	15
Birding by Ear <i>By Naomi Mison</i> .....	16
Welcome to New Members .....	17
Book Review <i>By Michael Layland</i> .....	18
Bulletin Board .....	19
Calendar .....	20

*Cover Image:* One of the most colourful members of the jumping spider family in British Columbia: a male *Habronattus americanus*: the Red-And-White Ornamented Jumper. Sandy habitats like Island View Beach are among the best places to look for these handsome fellows. *Photo:* Thomas Barbin.

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I was a super-skeptic the first time I was exposed to iNaturalist. To be fair that was probably almost a decade ago, but my way of thinking about it did not change for years. I would curl up a lip in disdain and put the entire notion aside as ridiculous. Obviously I wouldn't be writing this if my mind hadn't changed, and here's why.

First I should send you to the website in case you haven't been exposed to the site yet: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

And now I can explain why I've come around to acceptance (and a willingness to admit it). Let's start with a few of the things we can probably all agree on:

1. As naturalists we are keen to learn as much as we can about nature.
2. Many people have a smartphone in their pocket.
3. Engaging people with the natural world (even through technology) is a step in the right direction.

iNaturalist may encourage people who wouldn't otherwise notice nature—now they can use their phone to upload an image and potentially learn what it was they were looking at through an online community of other nature enthusiasts.

Where it broke down for me at first was the ridiculous notion that everything is identifiable from a photograph, especially when it came to the sorts of animals I spend my time thinking a lot about—terrestrial invertebrates. But there is room for people to learn uncertainty. Anyone who wants to comment on an identification can indicate that the organism is not identifiable from the photo and the reasons why. This is a teachable moment, where the photographer can realize the challenges of taxonomy and the incredible diversity they may have never thought of before.

Birders seem to have embraced eBird and the resulting records database is an incredibly useful tool that goes far beyond life lists and rarities. iNaturalist can also provide this bigger picture look at the natural world as its usage increases and the more accurate the identifications become.

I'm excited about a resurgence of interest in natural history, however it comes about.

P.S. Thomas Barbin, VNHS member and the photographer of the coverboy spider, is a perfect example of how someone can contribute via iNaturalist- he has so many incredible photos on there, and not just spiders!

*Claudia (filling in for Gail)*



# A Message from Your Board

With summer ending, the fall schedule of evening talks are back up and running, so don't forget to check out the calendar for a great variety of topics to choose from. But why choose? Come to all of them and bring a friend or friends. Field trips gear up as well, with the return of waterfowl and the surprise appearances of fungi, licorice ferns, and other natural wonders. The summer slump is over and it is time to get out of your hammock and onto a trail.

Before we say our final goodbyes to summer 2019, here are a few of the things that happened while you were relaxing:

On June 2, the Society had a table at Oceans Day on the lawn in front of the Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea, staffed by Phil and Marilyn Lambert and Vicki Metcalfe. There was a brisk wind blowing so the tent had to be staked down, but the sun was shining and lots of people attended the various booths. We helped educate people with specimens of local marine life. Many were intrigued by the "Mermaid's Purse", the egg case of a skate, which looks like a piece of black plastic! We also gave out samples of our magazine and member application forms. One individual remarked that he had lived in the region for 30 years but did not know VNHS existed. That is one reason we attend these events! We are always looking for ideas and events to attend, and we need more help with table staffing. It can be very rewarding interacting with like-minded attendees, and you can learn a lot from partnering with an experienced "nature ambassador". If you think this is something you'd like to try, then please get in touch with Vicki Metcalfe - her contact information is on the inside cover of this magazine.

Speaking of Vicki, this dedicated board member represents the Society on the Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative (ELSI) and attended a meeting in late July. She reported that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (and volunteers) found 94 European Green Crabs earlier in the season but

none at all at the end of June, as part of a monitoring program that is underway.

Impacts from people on Esquimalt Lagoon are an even more frequent topic of discussion at these meetings: garbage, undisciplined dogs (i.e., dog owners), feeding birds, etc. Increasing urbanization and special events at the lagoon are jeopardizing the future of the lagoon, which is suffering from overuse. Among the solutions to this are outreach and education, and the Canadian Wildlife Service is coordinating with Colwood on interpretive signage to inform visitors about the special nature of the area. The Victoria Natural History Society was integral to the original signage created at the lagoon and it looks as though we will be able to offer some input on this latest iteration as well, so stay tuned for more on this.

On a completely different note, your Society collaborated with Pollinator Partnership Canada to submit a funding proposal to the Participatory Budget Steering Committee of the City of Victoria, and it and 15 other proposals were put to a public vote between June 17 and July 19. At the time of this writing, the final funded projects had not yet been announced, but you can read about all of them here: <https://cvyc.ca/pb/>. Ours was Our Future Flies on the Wings of Pollinators, where we proposed we would train and mentor youth to become pollinator advocates in Victoria, design and lead pollinator assessment, and do community outreach. Fingers crossed!

Finally, and most importantly, the annual BBQ extravaganza is once again being planned for après Hawk Watch (Saturday, September 28 (11 a.m. to 2 p.m.)—the event we co-sponsor with CRD Parks to celebrate the annual Turkey Vulture and raptor migration out at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Park. It is a beautiful location to enjoy an incredible spectacle, and the company afterwards is the perfect end to a great day. See ad below and pages 21–22 for more information and to RSVP: we need to know how many smokies to cook!

## VNHS SEPTEMBER SOCIAL

Saturday, September 28, 2019  
3:00 p.m. following Hawk Watch

You  
are  
invited!

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

To RSVP, phone Phil: 250-477-5922 or email: [plambert@pacificcoast.net](mailto:plambert@pacificcoast.net) by **September 24, 2019**. A reply is only necessary if you plan to come—please specify number of smokies (regular or veggie).

# Salish Sea Creatures: Blue Mud Shrimp

By Tina Kelly

Photo by author



“**W**hoa, what is that?” The sight of a Blue Mud Shrimp (*Upogebia pugettensis*) stopped us in our mucky tracks. We found the shrimp on a mudflat but surprise: they’re not always blue. This large shrimp (15 cm) has a range of colours — whitish, tan-grey, or blue-grey. It has a well developed tail fan, that, when the tail is curled under, resembles a crayfish, but with its tail splayed out resembles a lobster. The mud shrimp lives in Y-shaped burrows up to a metre deep in the low intertidal zone of muddy bays and estuaries and feeds on detritus entering its burrow.

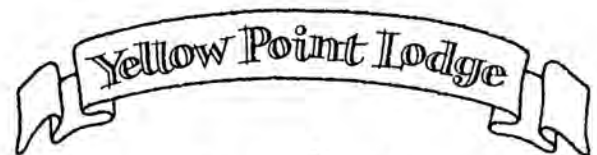
In some areas, there is concern over this shrimp’s impact on commercial oyster farms; the muddy sand displaced as the shrimps burrow smother the oysters.



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# Field Trip Reports

By Agnes Lynn

## June 30 High Jordan Ridge Bog

It only takes about two hours to drive up to the amazing sub-alpine meadow but the road is sometimes not great and one must be able to obtain a key to get through the locked gate. So about once a year, we make the trek. You can never see all the flowers in bloom at once so we aim for mid-season. But we see things there that are normally only seen in areas at least 300 metres higher in elevation. When walking through the grassy area, it's challenging not to get stuck in one of the deep holes!



Labrador Tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*).  
Photo: Val George.

## July 14 Olympics Trip—Klahhane Ridge and Switchbacks

We went over on the first Coho ferry and got picked up in a van and dropped off at the top of Hurricane Ridge to walk along Klahhane Ridge. There were phenomenal subalpine flowers on the Ridge and still more down the Switchbacks, ending in a delightful moist area where we were picked by the van. We enjoyed upward of 75 plant species in total. Highlight was the adventure of my pack, which someone was carrying for me. It got loose and accidentally rolled all the way down the very long steep incline. Thanks heavens for our hero Monica, who was agile enough to quickly scramble down and retrieve it.



Top: Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*).

Photo: Val George.

Middle: Spreading Phlox (*Phlox diffusa*). Photo: Dave Lynn.

Bottom: Tiger Lily (*Lilium columbianum*). Photo: Dave Lynn.





## July 21 Mount Washington—Paradise Meadows: Up the Chairlift and Butterflies

We drove up in the early morning to Paradise Meadows and walked the loop trail. It's hard to get the timing right for all the flowers to be in bloom but we managed to see more than 60 plant species, so we were happy. We also identified at least 10 butterfly species over the course of the day. After the loop, we split into two groups and one group stayed at the bottom of the chairlift and walked up part way on the rough road leading to the top of the chairlift in search for more butterflies. The others went up the chairlift to enjoy the view and see the flowers up there. The bonus was that several of us saw a Vancouver Island Marmot stretched out underneath the chairlift, enjoying a nap on a big hot rock.

*Top: Olympic Onion (*Allium crenulatum*). Photo: Dave Lynn.*

*Middle: Swamp Gentian (*Gentiana douglasii*). Photo: Val George.*

*Bottom: Steep hillside where pack fell down. Photo: Dave Lynn.*





# Swan Lake Updates

By Kathleen Burton, Executive Director of the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

## South Wharf at Swan Lake Sanctuary Closed Indefinitely

The South Wharf at Swan Lake, located on the far side of Swan Lake just below the Lochside Trail/Galloping Goose, has been closed while its viability and safety is assessed.

The decision to close the wharf was not made lightly by the Sanctuary's Ecosystems and Facilities Committee, and a final decision as to what to do with the wharf has not yet been made. The fate of the wharf will come through consultation with the staff, volunteers, the Board, our partners at Saanich, and the public.

The South Wharf is a very popular place for the public to enjoy a beautiful sunset, to bird watch, eat lunch, or enjoy a tranquil moment while taking a break from walking or riding on the Lochside Trail.

Unfortunately, the wharf is also a favourite place for taggers to paint graffiti and for partiers to toss their empty beer cans and chip bags. Some people have even gone to great effort to drag a recliner or a love seat down to the wharf so they could watch the sunset in comfort.

Site staff expect the aging wharf is beyond repair, similar to the previous floating boardwalk. Because the South Wharf is a favourite of the public and is even used regularly for Swan Lake's programming, any options and next steps the Sanctuary considers will have to factor in these interests.



## Nature Takes Precedence

The Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary recently partnered with the Saanich Pound to enforce the No Dog Bylaw on Sanctuary lands. Unlike a recreational park, the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary is a nature reserve and protected bird sanctuary, owned by the District of Saanich and operated by a non-profit society. The sanctuary's mission is to preserve its ecosystems and wildlife and to serve as a space for educating the public on native species while being immersed in a peaceful, natural setting. The presence of dogs and other pets poses a threat to the preservation of this natural environment and to the well-being of the wildlife that call the sanctuary home.

Many nature lovers in Victoria frequent the trails of Swan Lake and Christmas Hill. The Sanctuary is one of the few places where wildlife can rest and feed undisturbed. As the city expands, keeping these wild habitats free from the stress related to pet activity is valuable to sustaining nature. The sanctuary is appreciative of visitors to the park who understand and comply with these regulations.

For more information on the details of the District of Saanich 2004 Animals Bylaw, No. 8556, please visit: <https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local-Government/Documents/Bylaws-and-Policies/animals-bylaw-2004-no-8556.pdf>

## Fundraising For Signage Campaign at Swan Lake Officially Underway

In June of 2020, the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary will be celebrating 45 years of fostering the community's understanding and appreciation of nature through direct experience. With this exciting celebration comes a new capital project: the Interpretive and Way-Finding Signage Project.





Nature centres are engaging spaces that foster education and nurture interest and sensitivity for our natural environment while providing a framework for interactive learning. The Sanctuary is well-known for its educational exhibits that teach visitors about the natural wonders surrounding Swan Lake and Christmas Hill.

While some of the exhibits have been updated over time, they are lacking a consistent approach, and the existing exhibit space and message is outdated. An overall redesign and thematic development is required to make the visitor experience more effective. This fundraising campaign is underway to replace, upgrade, and expand the Sanctuary's educational benefit to the community.

With more than 200 bird species, 14.5 hectares of land, and 4km in public trails, it is easy to see why there's a need for thoughtful and interactive signage around the Sanctuary. It's important to share information about the region and the many species that call it home.

The Interpretive and Way-Finding Signage Project suggests a 'Slow Tech' approach to exhibits and most interactive elements. Like the Slow Food movement, Slow Tech takes us back to basics. Slow Tech relies on interaction with tangible objects, rather than High-Tech touch screens and computers.

While there is a place for creative use of electronic media, the Society will focus on giving visitors something on site that they cannot create on their computers. Interacting with actual objects—whether real artifacts or reproductions—creates a unique experience that rewards the visitor for leaving their house.

Please consider a donation to help the Society with this important project; be part of the Way-Finding and Interpretive

Campaign. Your gift today can provide new signage for the Sanctuary to nurture nature for future generations to come.

You can donate in person at the Nature House, by phone at 250-479-0211, or online at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org).



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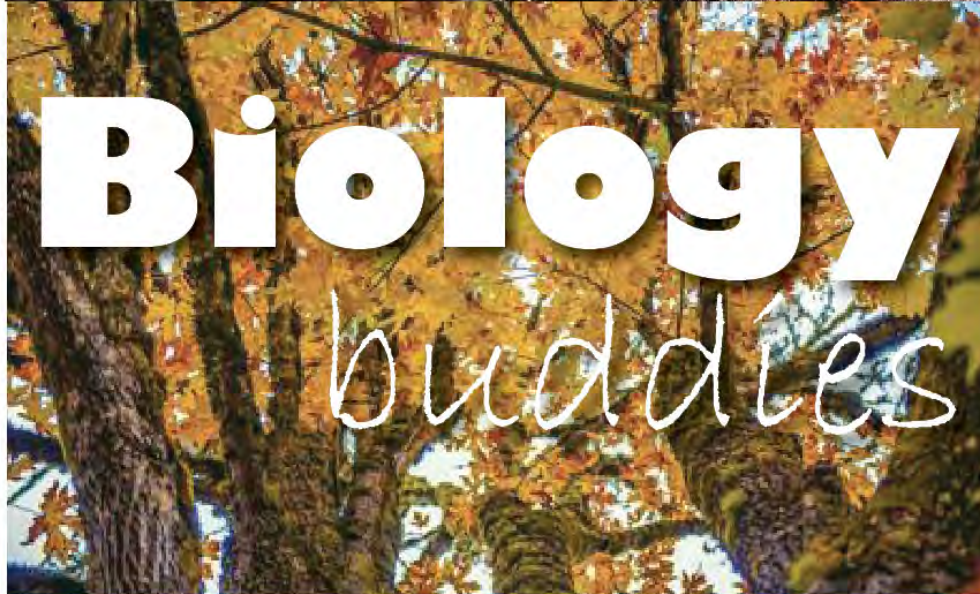




Photo Rob Bowen



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Kids belong outside! Our Biology Buddies nature classes focus on the natural wonders around Swan Lake. Each class has a different nature theme, which we interpret through games, stories, crafts and an outside ramble. A joyful nature experience is always our goal. Themes TBD.

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                 **Non-Members: \$80/session**

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or stop by the Nature House to register in person.



3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria, B.C. Canada, V8X 3W1 | [www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca) | 250-479-0211





# Food is Where You Find It!

By Giff Calvert

[Excerpted from The Victoria Naturalist October 1974, v.31, no. 2 (with minor edits)]

National Geographic had an article about a Green Heron that had learned, on its own, to use artificial fish-food pellets to attract food. Not only that, but he was also apparently teaching a brother to do likewise!

This made me think of some other unusual techniques used by birds to get food. For example, the Egyptian Vulture's use of stones to crack open Ostrich eggs; or the habit of Britain's Blue Tit which, on the introduction of milk bottles with cardboard caps in that country, almost immediately learned to pry up these lids to get at the bream beneath.

There are many such instances of the adaptability of birds and mammals but I came across two new ones (new to me at least) in the past year.

One evening a Common Raven was heard making an unusual amount of aggravating noises, even for a raven. We found him perched on a branch above a wasp's nest and at first thought he had been stung. Which may have been so but after only a brief rest, he took off and flew straight away from the nest for about 15 metres, where he wheeled and returned at top speed striking the nest and dislodging a large chunk of

it. The chunk fell to the ground with the raven in hot pursuit. Landing beside the piece of nest he began picking the wasp larvae from their cells. After a few such attacks, the nest was a total loss. Examination of the pieces on the ground revealed that the comb had been picked clean of larvae.

The second instance involved a pair of Steller's Jays.

Behind our house is a large moss-covered expanse of rock which, in late summer, was used by grasshoppers as a feeding and sunning place. The moss was brown and the grasshoppers well-camouflaged and difficult to see except when disturbed or flying. It was apparently for this reason that the jays would slowly walk onto the rock where one of them would suddenly leap up about a metre, disturbing the grasshoppers in the process and making it easy for both jays to pounce on at least one grasshopper at each performance.

Such observations may not have great scientific import but they are interesting and often amusing.

*Tell us YOUR interesting and unusual observations of animal behavior—not just birds. We'd love to hear about them!*



Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*).  
Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy.

# Habitat Acquisition Trust Seeking Input in Effort to Create Habitat Corridor Across the Region



By Paige Erickson-McGee and Ronna Woudstra

Six hundred households located from East Sooke to the Sooke Hills Regional Wilderness Park have received an opportunity to participate in an important citizen science feedback form about wildlife activity in their neighbourhood.

Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) is looking for input from residents as a part of the Wildwood Wetland Wildlife Corridor Good Neighbours Project. The short, confidential survey is designed to help HAT better understand resident values about natural spaces in selected portions of East Sooke, the District of Sooke, and the District of Metchosin.

“As wildlife habitat becomes more fragmented, connectivity between these protected areas is threatened and human-wildlife conflict increases,” said Paige Erickson-McGee, Stewardship Coordinator at HAT. “We have been working to connect these natural spaces thanks to residents who have committed to be stewards of the wildlife on their land. By contributing to a wildlife corridor, you and your land would be helping animals reach the food and shelter they need, and protecting the amazing biodiversity of Southern Vancouver Island.”

The focus area for the next two years is within the arrowed area highlighted in the map. To see the full colour version of this map please visit: <https://www.hat.bc.ca/good-neighbours-projects/wildwood-wetland-watershed-good-neighbours-project>

You may have noticed “Habitat Steward” signs in the region. These are residents who are already involved with HAT’s Good Neighbours Project. The goal of this project is to help residents find solutions to issues on their property like invasive weeds or pests, and to promote community stewardship of natural habitats that are important to you and your neighbours.

This project is for residents with natural features on their land who want to maintain landscapes that work with nature, rather than against it. These ‘naturescapes’ use native plants that are functional and attractive, and usually require less water and maintenance, saving you money and time. HAT can help you achieve your land use goals without compromising water quality and other natural values.

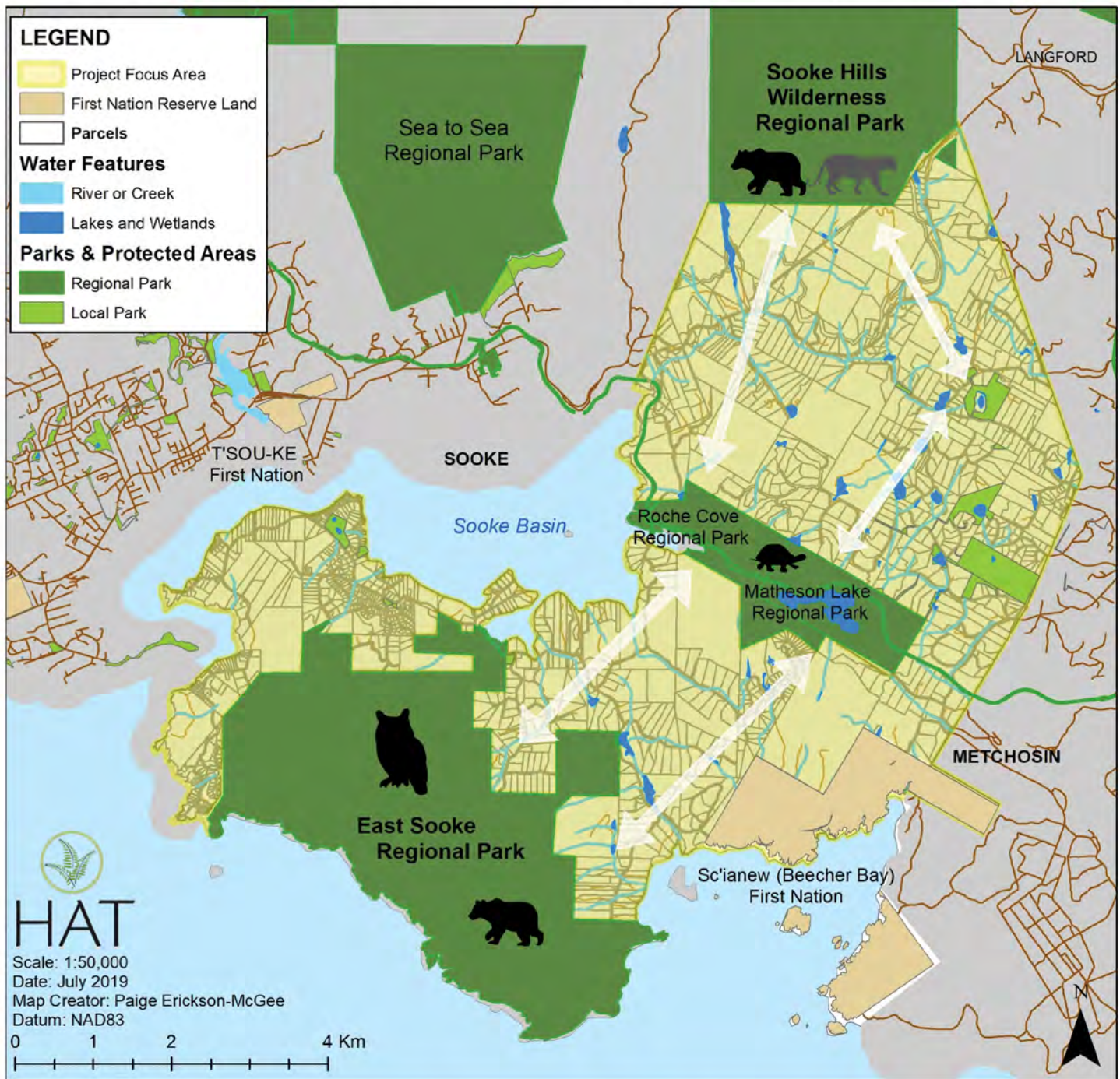
We are fortunate to live in a diverse and rich region of the world, but only some animals and plants are able to thrive



*From left to right: Emily Rudderham, John Potter, Andy MacKinnon, and Paige Erickson-McGee. Photo: Maude Rivard Haustrate.*



# HAT Good Neighbours Wildlife Corridor Stewardship Project 2018-21



**Wildlife Corridor:** is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activity or structures such as homes, roads, fences, etc.

*This land is within the territory of several member nations in the Te'mexw Treaty Association., including First Nations Sc'ianew [Beecher Bay], Malahat, Snaw-naw-AS [Nanose], Songhees, and T'Sou-ke [Sooke]. Te'mexw has overlapping and/or shared territory with its First Nation neighbours: Esquimalt, K'ómoks, Saanich, Sechelt, Qualicum, Snuneymuxw, Pacheedaht, We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, Kwiahah, Tla'amin, and some of the Nuw-chah-nulth and Hul'qumi'num First Nations.*



in both urban and natural spaces, and very few understand a fence that divides a park from your backyard. Residents living near greenspaces frequently observe wildlife that move through or live permanently in the neighbourhood. From bear to owl, cougar to turtle, we all see wildlife attempting to survive in an increasingly urbanized landscape. Residents can help our local wildlife by providing safe passage or habitat that has been lost across the region

Until 2021, HAT is offering interested and qualified residents in the focus area:

- Land Care Visits and Site Plans on topics like native plant gardening, wildlife habitat enhancement, soil erosion, pests, water quality, composting, and invasive species.
- Resources and Tools on how to remove invasive plants safely and effectively and sources for native plants and installation to qualified landowners.
- Guidance and Recognition to longer term residents already pursuing stewardship goals.

This project is funded by EcoAction Community Fund, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Sitka Foundation, Public Conservation Assistance Fund, and private donations.


All information is collected in compliance with the Local Government Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

For more information on the Good Neighbours Program, visit: [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca). If you would like to speak directly with the Stewardship Program Coordinator, you can email [paige@hat.bc.ca](mailto:paige@hat.bc.ca). For upcoming events and how you can get involved, e-mail [hatmail@hat.bc.ca](mailto:hatmail@hat.bc.ca), call (250) 995-2428 or visit our website [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca). If you would like to learn more about stewardship, we welcome all residents and landowners to join us at the following public event:

## Metchosin Day—Community Mapping Station (Public Event)—All ages

Sunday, September 8, 2019 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (Metchosin)

Stop by the HAT info table, and participate in the Community Mapping Station—map areas that are important to you, important spaces for your family, wildlife sightings, wildlife trees, restoration sites, and any other natural community spaces you would want future generations to enjoy.




**Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)**  
**Landowner Survey: Habitat Stewardship**

Work with us to meet your land use goals while protecting some of our most important natural areas

*HAT is the only regional land trust for your region, the Capital Regional District. Although we operate independently of government, we partner at varying levels on specific projects to achieve common goals.*

*We have initiated a Wildlife Stewardship Corridor Project to work with landowners like you to connect natural areas across the region for both residents and local wildlife to thrive and meet your land use needs.*





Habitat Acquisition Trust, PO Box 8552, Victoria, BC, V8W 3S2 | Office at #202-661 Burnside Rd E

Cover of HAT  
Landowner Survey



# Bird Families of the Victoria Area: Hummingbirds

By Val George

Photo by author

The Hummingbird family (*Trochilidae*) is one of the largest avian families with more than 300 species, and all of these are restricted to the western hemisphere. The highest diversity is found in Central America and the northern regions of South America, but hummingbirds occur in all parts of the Americas from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

The members of this family are some of the smallest birds in the world. In fact, the Bee Hummingbird, a Cuban endemic, is the smallest bird in the world—being not much larger than the largest bees.

Hummingbirds exhibit some amazing behaviours. For example, their flying abilities are unmatched by other birds insofar as they can fly in all directions and can hover in one place for extended periods. They can also fly at considerable speeds for such small birds, more than 50 km/hr for some species. Their endurance flying ability is also impressive: the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, common east of the Rockies, migrates non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico - a distance of about 800 km.

Hummingbirds feed on nectar and insects. The high energy nectar they obtain from flowers and increasingly from sugar in feeders put out by humans, is needed to maintain their frenetic life styles and support their supercharged metabolisms. Hummingbird heart rates can be as high as 1200 beats/min when flying and their breathing rates can be more than 200 breaths/min.

In the Victoria area, two species are regularly found: Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) and Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*).

Anna's Hummingbird is the more common, but that certainly hasn't always been the case. The species first appeared in B.C. in the 1950s, a result of a massive range expansion from California and northern Baja. Now it's one of the common birds encountered on any bird outing at any time of the year; recent Christmas Bird Counts have recorded over a thousand. Regarding this latter comment, the reason Anna's Hummingbirds are around at Christmas time is because the species is generally non-migratory, although birds may disperse locally after breeding.

The Anna's Hummingbird is one of our earliest breeders. Nests have been found in mid-winter, and this early breeding allows for more than one brood in a season.

Anna's Hummingbirds are by hummingbird standards fairly drab in colour. Not so the Rufous Hummingbird. Males are bright orange-rufous with an iridescent red throat or gorget; females - as with most hummingbird species - are much less colourful than the males, more closely resembling the mainly green Anna's Hummingbirds except for rufous flanks.

Rufous Hummingbirds are migratory, leaving us to winter in Mexico. This species is the northernmost breeding member of the hummingbird family, with a range to southern Alaska. Alaskan birds have to travel 6000–7000 km, making their migratory feats some of the most impressive for any bird, considering their small size.

When the birds return in the spring, the males arrive first and set up territories to attract the later-arriving females. The males may then mate with several females, after which—as for other hummingbird species—they play no part in nest building, incubating the eggs, or rearing the young. Normal egg clutch size is two.

Two other species of hummingbird are on the Victoria checklist: Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus calliope*) and Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*). The former species is normally found in B.C. in the southern interior and is more closely related to the Rufous Hummingbird (same genus) and the latter is a bird of the southwestern States and Mexico that is more closely related to the Anna's Hummingbird. Both are very rare in our area.

Hummingbirds are some of our most delightful birds to have around, and they're also beneficial because they are pollinating as they dart from flower to flower in our gardens and agricultural fields.



Male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*).

# Birding By Ear

By Naomi Mison

We don't just see nature, we hear it: the breezes blowing, leaves rustling, crickets chirping - and birds singing! Each bird species has a unique song, but in some cases it requires superb hearing to be able to distinguish between species. As we age, our physical and sensory functions begin to decline, including our hearing. According to National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 30 percent of people over the age of 65 report having hearing loss. That figure climbs to 50 percent after the age of 75.

The insidious thing about hearing loss is that it sneaks up on you slowly, and you may grow accustomed to it. At first symptoms are mild, but if left untreated, hearing loss can become more severe or permanent. Intervention during the early stages of hearing loss can have a dramatic impact on your future hearing health. Hearing loss should not be ignored.

Tragically, hearing is often taken for granted, but it shouldn't be, as it is the one sense that necessarily involves

others. Whether at work or during everyday conversations, hearing loss can impact relationships.

So, what do birds and everyday speech have in common? They both exhibit treble: high-pitched sounds. Birders require the ability to acutely hear these high frequencies so they can find the birds they are searching for.

To understand the distinction between low and high-pitched sounds, first press your fingers to your throat and hum; you'll feel the vibration. While keeping your fingers in place, now say the vowels a, e, i, o, and u. Those are generally low-pitched, bass sounds, and they are relatively loud, which makes them easy to hear. Vowels tell you that a word is being said.

Now, while holding your fingers to your throat, make the sounds s, f, th, k, ch, sh. There's no vibration because these are the softer treble, high-pitched sounds of speech. Finally, think of words that rhyme, for instance, cat, fat, bat, sat. Each of these words has the vowel "a" in them, but it's the high-pitched consonants that really define what the words are.

In terms of hearing loss, the most common form is called presbycusis. Presbycusis simply means one cannot hear soft sounds, and commonly affects people in their 60s. It usually entails trouble hearing treble, the defining consonant sounds of speech, as well as birds, bees buzzing, crickets, and breezes through the trees. The cause of presbycusis is damage to tiny hair cells in the cochlea, the curled organ in our ears about the size of the tip of your finger and filled with fluid.

The fluid vibrates with sound and the hair cells transmit that sound to the brain. In birds, these cells die but regrow, meaning birds always have perfect hearing. Humans, however, do not replace damaged or dead hair cells. The only treatment for presbycusis is hearing aids.

The outer ear constitutes the flap on the side of your head and the ear canal, up to the eardrum. The middle ear is the little room that contains the smallest bones of the body; the hammer, anvil and stirrup. The outer and middle ears mainly serve to get sound to the inner ear. Problems with the outer and middle ears can often be fixed with medical treatment, but this is not the case with the inner ear.

To get a better understanding of hearing loss, let's compare it to vision loss. Most vision problems are quite simple; the eyeball is too long





or too short, and so light coming into the eye is not focused properly on to the back of the eye; namely, the retina. The retina literally changes light into electricity, and electricity is the language the brain understands. So, you wear glasses to refocus light properly on the retina.

Presbycusis is entirely different. The tiny hair cells inside the cochlea or inner ear are arranged in rows like keys on a piano, with treble hair cells at the entry of the cochlea, while bass hair cells are at the far end. When you walk into a room, you always go through the doorway. That's why the carpet gets worn out there first. You can think of treble hair cells that way; all hearing action must pass by them to get anywhere inside the cochlea. As a result, higher frequencies disappear first, which directly impacts birders since a lot of birds sing in that range.

Fortunately, hearing aids can be a great intervention when loss of hearing occurs. Hearing aids are made to amplify soft sounds more than they amplify loud sounds. As the sounds around you get louder, the hearing aids back off. They are like amplifiers that are constantly - and instantly - changing the volume control. They react almost instantaneously to changes in incoming sounds. They also take the strain off from listening because they all use background noise reduction. They are geared to especially enhance speech and high-pitched sounds.

Hearing aids can help or aid, but they don't replace the real thing. Knowing the limitations of hearing aids helps create realistic expectations. Luckily, today's hearing aids are all digital, and the technology inside them is truly remarkable.

They are programmed on a computer to your individual hearing levels for bass versus treble.

Being fitted for hearing aids is truly a unique process and usually takes a few visits and adjustments. A good hearing health care professional understands this and takes the time to explain things along the way.

For those who still enjoy "birding by ear", next time you find yourself walking in the countryside or sitting on your back porch, grab binoculars - but don't forget your aids! Don't miss out on the wonderful birdsong.

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## Welcome to New VNHS Members

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

**Adam Duncan**  
Victoria

**Marnie Latour**  
Victoria

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# Don't miss out on the sounds of life.



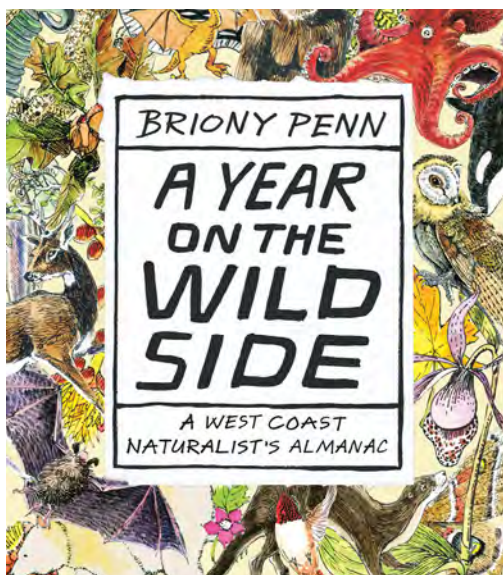
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## Book Review

By Michael Layland

### **A Year on the Wild Side— a West Coast Naturalist's Almanac**

By Briony Penn  
TouchWood Editions, March 2019 \$26.00

**B**riony Penn, already well known and highly regarded as a journalist, TV presenter, and environmental activist, has once again produced a remarkable book. Following her award-winning biography of Ian McTaggart Cowan comes a new collection of her articles, one that confirms her profound love for, and wide-ranging knowledge of, our local natural history.

A Year on the Wild Side is a revised, enlarged, and now delightfully illustrated compilation of 95 pieces from her long-running columns for Monday and Focus magazines. The author organizes them as an almanac, to be read throughout the year, highlighting common things to be found each month in the natural world. For the purposes of this book, Penn limits that world to the Salish Sea, nestled within Wrangellia. These names, now officially recognized, were once the subject of her vigorous advocacy. Another has been to raise awareness of the significance of our Garry Oak ecosystem.

The pieces in her new book range from Sea Otters, Spirit Bears, and marmots, through scarce butterflies, bumblebees, garter snakes, and nudibranchs. From Orchard Mason Bees, tent caterpillars and tachinid flies, Calypso Orchids and Chocolate Lilies, through to lichens and Lion's Mane Sea Jellies - there is something here to enchant and inform anyone interested in the natural wonders that surround us, whether expert or neophyte. The book deserves a place among everyone's bedside reading or for gifts to encourage the young in this fascinating pursuit.

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## BULLETIN BOARD

### **Birders' Night coffee-making volunteer needed!**

Victoria Natural History Society is looking for a volunteer to take over the Birders' Night coffee-making duty. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Marilyn Lambert (250-477-5922) for instructions and equipment. Thank you!

### **South Vancouver Island Mycological Society**

(SVIMS) is the local mushroom club. Autumn is our busiest season for mushroom events. We have monthly meetings the first Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 Burnside Road. Our next meeting is Thursday September 5, with guest speaker Juliet Pendray. Other events include monthly forays, our 2019 "Introduction to Mushroom Identification" workshop (September 28-29), our Cowichan Lake foray (October 25-27); and our annual SVIMS Mushroom Show (November 3). For more information, please visit our website <https://svims.club/>

### **Outerbridge Park Sunday Bird Walks**

September 8 and October 13 at 9:00 a.m. Rocky Point Bird Observatory hosts guided bird walks at Outerbridge Park in Saanich on the 2nd Sunday of each month. These 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)

### **Hawk Watch 2019**

Saturday, September 28

The VNHS Saturday Birding Group will join the combined VNHS and CRD Hawk Watch event at East Sooke Park for a raptor watch at the vantage point above Beechey Head, live raptor demonstrations and other activities. 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!). Full details in the calendar.

### **Birds of Beechey Head CRD walk with Geoffrey Newell**

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2019 9:00-12:00 (and beyond if weather permits). Join expert birder Geoffrey Newell for a second opportunity to observe raptors and other birds during the fall migration at the Hawk Watch lookout in East Sooke Park, on Saturday, Oct. 5. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the kiosk at Aylard Farm, in East Sooke Park.

### **Pedder Bay Bird Walks**

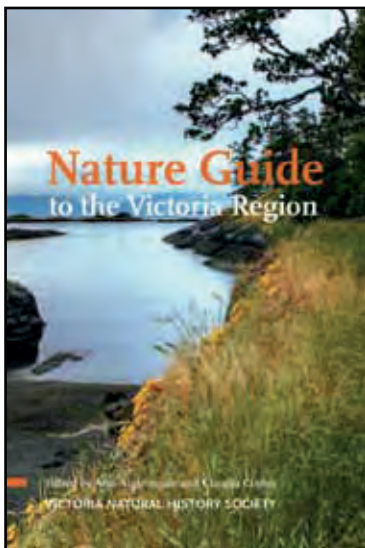
Rocky Point Bird Observatory runs a bird migration monitoring station near Pedder Bay Marina, and every Thursday and Sunday from July 25 to October 17th, offers guided bird walks near the banding station and through the resort property. Join us for a leisurely walk and stop in to see what the banding team is doing. You never know, you might even be able to release a bird!

### **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/programs/adult-programs-2/> Download the sanctuary bird checklist: <http://tinyurl.com/birdchecklist>

### **Know your bird sounds...not just their songs!**

Consider buying yourself or a birder friend 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. For information or purchase (discount for RPBO members), contact [rpbo@rpbo.org](mailto:rpbo@rpbo.org)



## Nature Guide to the Victoria Region

Edited by Ann Nightingale and Claudia Copley

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

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

Available at Society evening presentations. Look for them in your local bookstores!

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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, one block south of the foot of Bowker Ave on the waterfront (off Beach Drive) at 9:00 a.m. or at the foot of Bowker Ave at 9:30 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

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### Sunday, September 1

#### 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 7

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Waterfront Birding*

This is a good time to check out the waterfront for birds. Meet leader **Marie O'Shaughnessy** at Cattle Point (Beach Drive between Rutland Road and Dorset Road) 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 Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.



## **Sunday, September 8**

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

#### ***Urban Forest Walk - Swan Lake***

We usually go around Swan Lake looking at birds but instead this walk's focus is to remind us that areas such as this are important to the Urban Forest. It is rare that an area almost completely surrounded by city streets consists mostly of native trees and shrubs with just a few introduced plants. As we wander, we'll talk about why trees are important. The nature sanctuary includes the lake, adjacent marshy lowlands, and the rocky Garry Oak forested hilltop of Christmas Hill. Bring binoculars if you wish but resist looking at the birds! Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the parking lot on Swan Lake Road (off Ralph Street). Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

## **Tuesday, September 10**

### **NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT**

#### ***The Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and What We Can Do About It***

This presentation, by naturalist and science educator **David Denning**, will look at the climate and biodiversity emergencies and explore personal actions in response to them. There is a simple solution to the Climate Emergency—get ourselves off of fossil fuels. And while it sounds simple at one level, how can that be done? And how will the transition from fossil fuel energy to efficiency, electrical energy, and reduced consumption affect our lives? In this talk, we discuss steps to examine and reduce our carbon footprints and we how each of us can begin to create an individual and social action plan for reaching the goals of low carbon (60% reduction) by 2030 and net zero by 2050. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone is welcome.

## **Saturday, September 14**

### **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 Road and watch for a left on to Pedder Bay Road. 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 at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

## **Sunday September 15**

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

#### ***Koksilah Trees Worth Saving***

You probably have heard about the big old growth Douglas fir trees along the Koksilah River in the Shawnigan Lake area. Warrick Whitehead is one of a dedicated group trying to save these trees from being logged. He will lead us into the area and show us why this stand is unique and must be saved. To find out more about these trees, check out koksilah.blogspot.com (slightly outdated). Meet at 9:15 a.m. at

Helmcken Park & Ride to car-pool to Shawnigan. Dress for the weather as it could be colder up there. Hiking boots and a stick will help you safely traverse the rough terrain as we will not be on groomed trails. Bring a lunch, snacks and lots to drink for the all-day outing. Please reserve your spot with Agnes before Sep 8. Indicate whether you can drive or need a ride. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 to reserve your spot or for more information.

## **Tuesday, September 17**

### **BOTANY NIGHT**

#### ***Portraits of Endophytes: The Cryptic Lives of Fungi within the Leaves of Trees***

Virtually all healthy leaves are colonized by fungi that are collectively called endophytes. These fungi are very diverse and include species with complex life histories and a bewildering range of plant hosts. Similar to the human microbiome, endophytes may have a profound effect on plant health, influencing resistance to a variety of stresses such as drought, soil toxicity, and even insect and pathogen attack. This meandering presentation by **Joey Tanney** will provide insight into the identification and natural history of these ubiquitous yet mysterious fungi — and guarantee that your walks in the forest will never be the same. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

## **Wednesday, September 25**

### **BIRDERS' NIGHT**

#### ***A 10,000 km Pelagic Trip from Japan to Vancouver***

Last May, 16 birders made their way to Yokohama, Japan to board a cruise ship headed to Vancouver. **Jim Cosgrove, Rob Gowan, and Ann Nightingale** will present on behalf of the group, sharing slides and stories from Japan, Russia, the north Pacific, Alaska and the Inside Passage. The 15-day cruise stopped in Otaru (Japan), Petropavlovsk (Russia), Seward, Juneau, Icy Strait Point and Ketchikan (Alaska) before reaching Vancouver. 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.

## **Saturday, September 28**

### **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 Road at 9:30 a.m. (earlier than when the crowds appear!). **Rick Schortinghuis** will lead the way up to the lookout although the route will be marked if you wish to come later. Rick and others will be available up there to help you find those elusive raptors among the vultures until approximately 2 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 a.m. there

will also be live raptor demonstrations and other activities and displays right near the parking. You may wish to stay for the BBQ for VNHS members following the main event at 3 p.m. 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.

## **Monday, September 30**

### **MARINE NIGHT**

#### ***The Whales in our Waters***

**Sarah Patton** is a Research Biologist with Ocean Wise's Marine Mammal Research Program, and Coordinator of its Southern Vancouver Island Cetacean Research Initiative (SVICRI). Come and join us as she talks about the whales in our waters. Sarah will introduce you to BC's common cetacean species and the threats they face, and talk about Ocean Wise's research and conservation efforts to mitigate these threats. She will also provide a short course on cetacean ID, equipping you to participate in cetacean conservation as a citizen observer for the BC Cetacean Sightings Network while out on your next coastal adventure. After this talk, you will have all the tools you need to jump in and do your part to protect BC's cetaceans! We meet at 7:30 pm in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome.

## **OCTOBER**

### **Sunday, October 6**

#### **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 who 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 \$75.00 per person for VNHS members, \$95.00 for non-members. The trip is 5 hours (9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.). Please book as soon as possible, by Sunday September 29 at the latest. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay online (details when you register) or you can pay by cheque (address when you register). 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.

### **Tuesday, October 8**

#### **NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT**

##### ***In Nature's Realm:***

##### ***Early Naturalists Explore Vancouver Island***

**Michael Layland** will introduce his third book delving into the progression of European knowledge of Vancouver Island. The book celebrates how the diverse local flora and fauna captured the interest of naturalists among the explorers, settlers, and visitors. As a life-long amateur naturalist, Michael has combined this interest with his researches into the history of exploration and cartography of our island and its surrounding waters. Trained as a map maker and officer in the Royal Engineers, he has worked on many mapping-related projects. Copies of his books will be available for sale and signing. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone is welcome.

### **Saturday October 12**

#### **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 who 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 \$75.00 per person for VNHS members, \$95.00 for non-members. The trip is 5 hours (9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.). Please book as soon as possible, by Saturday October 5 at the latest. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay online (details when you register) or you can pay by cheque (address when you register). 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.

### **Tuesday, October 15**

#### **BOTANY NIGHT**

##### ***The Curious World of Broomrapes***

*Orobanches* and their close relatives are holoparasitic plants. The species found in BC are mostly seen as curiosities. Elsewhere in the world, however, they can be crop pests. Perhaps their ecological role is underestimated. Join **Matt Fairbarns** at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. to learn more about these unusual plants. Everyone welcome.

### **Thursday, October 10**

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

##### ***Visit to UVic Observatory***

**Dr. Karun Thanjavur** will lead us on a private tour of University of Victoria's Observatory, located on the main campus



in the Bob Wright Centre, starting at 7:00 p.m. and lasting 1.5 to 2 hours. He will begin by discussing astronomy and some of the topics will include how telescopes work, what work the University is presently engaged in and astronomical topics you may have seen in the news. You will be able to look through some of the smaller telescopes as well as the 80 cm one. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions. You must reserve before October 3 as there are a limited number of spaces available. We will meet in the lobby of the Bob Wright Centre (by the main entrance on the Ring Road side). Dress appropriately as we will be outside for part of the tour to look through the telescopes. Parking with a fee of \$3.50 in lot 1 or some space in lot B or come by bus. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

### **Saturday, October 19**

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

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

Come join the VNHS Saturday Birding Group at Viaduct Flats. Some 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 Road and Viaduct Avenue. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

### **Wednesday, October 23**

#### **BIRDERS' NIGHT**

##### ***Marine-fuelled Birds of the Great Bear Rainforest***

Join **John Reynolds** from Simon Fraser University to learn about how nutrients from salmon, river otters and beached kelp find their way into songbirds. Much of this information comes from the 100 Islands Project of the Hakai Institute, where researchers are looking at how nutrients from the sea are affecting the ecology and interactions of plants, birds, mammals, and insects. 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.

### **Monday, October 28**

#### **MARINE NIGHT**

##### ***Deep-Sea Discoveries: Exploring the Underwater Volcanoes offshore of British Columbia***

**Dr. Cherisse Du Preez** and **Tammy Norgard** will speak about underwater volcanic mountains that are home to a wealth of marine life, from tiny corals to giant whales. These deep-sea oases are prominent features in Canada's Pacific waters. Over the last two years, in a unique and collaborative scientific effort, Fisheries and Oceans Canada scientists from Vancouver Island have led oceanic expeditions to map and explore these seamounts. The teams have used large ships, submersible vehicles, and underwater cameras to document habitats thousands of metres below the waves—filming a hidden world and its alien-like animals, including many species that are new to science. Join us at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome.

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Sunday, November 3**

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

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

You may wish to attend the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society's 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 probably 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)



## **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

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## **VICTORIA HARBOUR MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY**

ESTABLISHED OCTOBER 27, 1923, THE OLDEST ON CANADA'S PACIFIC COAST

### **Victoria's Owl-clover** ENDANGERED PLANT



Myrna Germaine-Brown, colours, dyes and pastels on cut cloth, 2014

An outstanding assemblage of rare plants occurs in the sanctuary. It includes Victoria's Owl-clover, a newly described species which favours seasonally wet microhabitats in maritime meadows. These meadows, on the Trial Islands, which are also an Ecological Reserve, possibly support 90% of the global population of Victoria's Owl-clover. They also feature Golden Paintbrush, Bear's-foot Sanicle and Macoun's Meadowfoam. Other rare plants elsewhere include Yellow Sand-verbena on a sandy beach at Willows Beach and Fleshy Jaumea in a tidal marsh along Enterprise Channel. These rare plants are among the least obvious and most interesting wildlife species in the bird sanctuary.

#### **A LOT MORE THAN BIRDS**

Brought to you by Friends of the Bird Sanctuary, 2016, centennial of the Migratory Bird Convention.