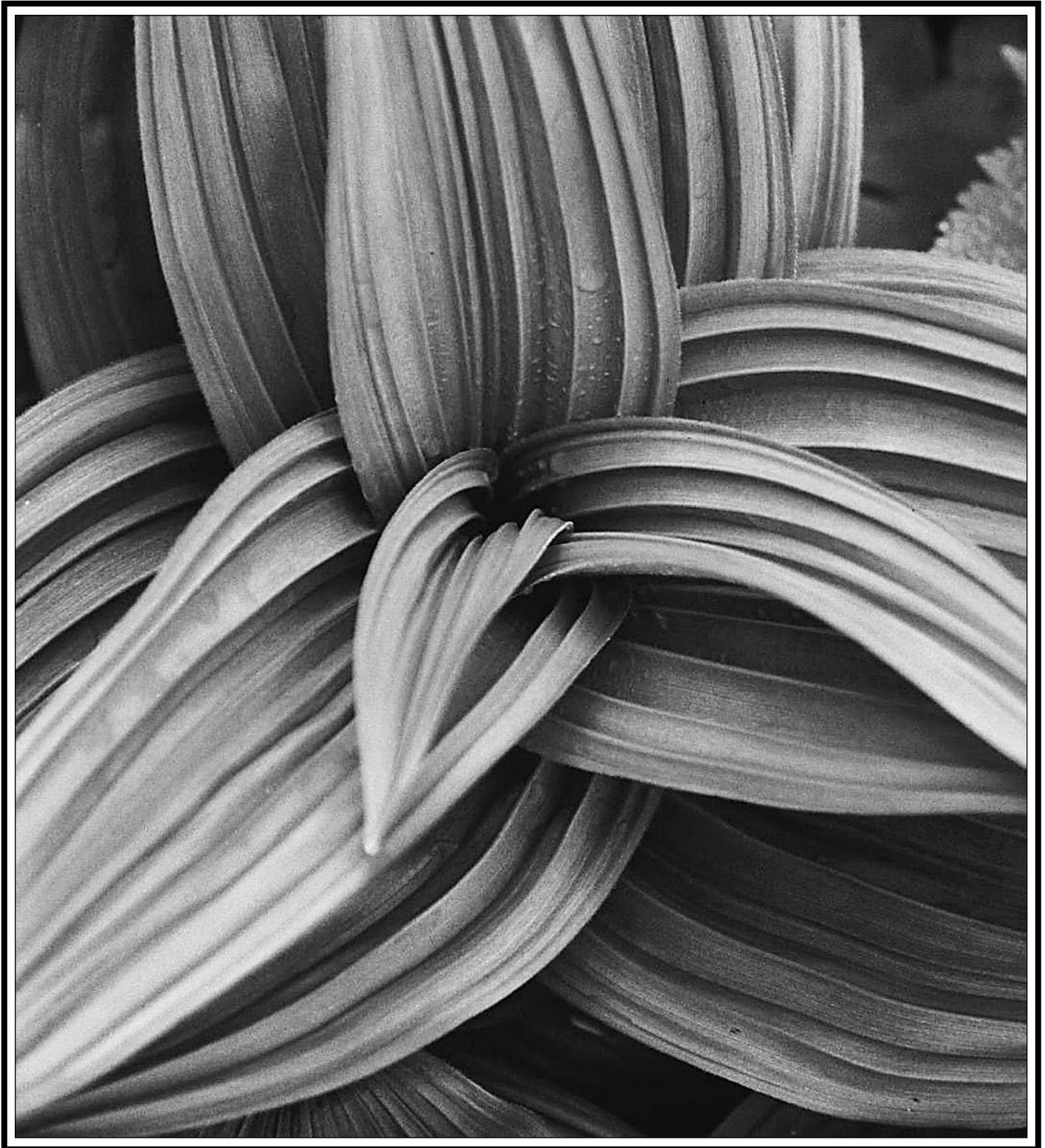




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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We request submission of typed, double-spaced copy in an IBM compatible word processing file on diskette, or by e-mail. Photos and slides, and diskettes submitted will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material. Digital images are welcome, but they need to be high resolution: a minimum of 1200 x 1550 pixels, or 300 dpi at the size of photos in the magazine.

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COVER PHOTO:
Green False Hellebore “Skookum Root” (*Veratrum viride*) is among the most violently poisonous plants on our coast, and yet still had many First Nations uses. Photo by Judy Burgess, a VNHS 60th Annivesary Photo Contest entry.

Newspaper headlines pronounced it. The radio and television stations covered it. Emails bounced around the planet. It made the news. Worldwide, people were captivated, astonished, and inspired by it (see poem, p.16). It gave us hope.

A concurrent report from BirdLife International told a very different story about birds: the total number considered to be threatened with extinction is now 1212. That number climbs to 2000, more than a fifth of the planet’s 9775 bird species, when the species that are “near threatened” are taken into account. The Critically Endangered category, the highest level of threat, contains 179 of these species.

Personally, I could not celebrate the return from the brink by one while knowing about the declines (see the Rocky Point bird report, p.11) or perhaps even complete loss of others (book review, p.14). My feelings were reinforced by a phone call I received while preparing this issue of the magazine. It was from a gentleman, living in the Gorge region of Victoria, expressing concern and disappointment regarding the lack of Violet-green Swallows in his neighbourhood. Having lived there for 50 years, he has witnessed an erosion of avian diversity. Gone are the chickadees, nuthatches, wrens, flickers, and now, swallows. His question was: “Why?” Since it is undoubtedly a combination of factors, I wasn’t sure where to begin: impacts of introduced species (House Sparrows, European Starlings, Eastern Grey Squirrel, two species of rat, etc.), the loss of contiguous habitat due to urbanization, outdoor cats, and, this year in particular, changes in weather patterns (long term = climate).

Solutions? Preserving significant habitats that remain or providing habitat (see p.6 and 17.) can be part of the solution, and Guy Dauncey provides us with others (see p.12). To a Society in which many people join first because of a love for birds, I say: Let’s be a part of the solution.

And now that I hopefully have your attention, I have an announcement and a correction to make. Agnes Lynn recommends you check our website regularly for updates on field trips because she’s concerned you might miss some! And in the last issue I mistakenly led you to believe that the juvenile eagle came in through a window into the Uplands home. He, in fact, came through a door – so civilized! But he did leave via the alleged window. With a helpful shove!

Claudia

President's Message

Each June, the VNHS Board meets for a “retreat” – a five or six hour gathering to discuss thoughts and plans for the next year. This year we talked about a couple of projects that were started last year, but that will be much more visible this year. The first is the viewing platform which will be installed at Viaduct Flats before the rainy weather returns in the fall. Blake Waters and Claudia Copley have put in a significant amount of time meeting with folks from the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific, engineers, contractors, and municipal officials to finally see this legacy in place later this year. The plans have changed several times to meet a variety of requirements, but we should find ourselves with a nearly indestructible structure for naturalists and school groups to use very soon. Thanks go out again to the Anne Adamson estate, and to the Municipality of Saanich for funding support for this project.

The second ongoing project that was discussed was our “Natural History in the Schools” program. VNHS is working with a University of Victoria co-op student, Laura McLeod, to develop strategies to get natural history included in as many school programs as possible. There are lots of ideas about how to make this happen, and we will be coming to our members to help us with a number of events to bring nature to the kids and the kids into nature. Darren Copley and David Newell are leading these efforts. Anne Adamson's estate is also making this project financially possible, while funding

for the co-op student is coming from a University of Victoria Service Learning Internship Program (SLIP) grant and RLC Enterprize (a local business).

As for new projects and objectives, we felt it was time once again to go to our membership to see what it is that you want VNHS to be doing. About six years ago, a membership survey was done which offered guidance we have been trying to follow since. This fall, we will also be going to our members for their input, but we will probably be using a slightly different strategy. Our list of questions will be shorter than the last time around, and we will be trying to reach everyone personally; likely by phone. The details will be worked out in the next few months and more information will be in the next issue of the *Naturalist*. Between now and then, though, I encourage you to think about VNHS and how it fits into the conservation and education picture. Consider what we do now that you would like us to continue to do and what we aren't doing that you think we should. Feel free to contact any board member if you have ideas that you want to discuss before we contact you.

It's time to chart our course for the next few years. VNHS has about 800 members and a 60-year history. With all that knowledge and experience, our future looks bright!

Ann Nightingale



Scenes from the Second Annual Picnic, May 29, 2005. Photos: Ann Nightingale

The Common and the Rare at Tower Point

The Second Annual VNHS Picnic

By Donna Ross

I had only been to Tower Point twice before and never at low tide. This amazing place is apparently not as well known or used as some of the other parks in our region, and I cannot see why. The sandy beach went on forever, with many families and small groups out sunning themselves and playing games. We could see young people 'surfing' in small pools, children running, couples walking hand-in-hand, and picnic baskets piled high with goodies. This was the setting for our joint VNHS/CRD Parks picnic at Tower Point in Witty's Lagoon Park on May 29th.

By the accompanying photos you can see we were a small but enthusiastic group. We found birds, plants, insects and intertidal life that charmed us while our tour guides taught us about these various wonders of our natural world. Tower Point itself is perhaps one of the best places in Victoria to see dozens of Harbour Seals sunning themselves on the rocks or, on higher tides, heads poking up out of the water, ever curious to see what is around them.

Starting the day off at 7 a.m., Marie O'Shaughnessy and Gordon Hart led the bird walk. In 2.5 hours of birding, they listed 32 species. The highlight was five Bald Eagles soaring overhead, enjoying the thermals. Another great bird on the wind was an Osprey that slowly glided by.

Then Agnes Lynn and Joy Finlay guided us to native plants. A list of 40 plants likely to be seen was given to all participants and we missed only two species. The highlights were the Harvest Brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*), and the large crop of Hooker's Onion (*Allium acuminatum*). We saw the rare *Triteleia howelli* (common name Howell's triteleia). According to an article in *The Canadian Field Naturalist* (Sept 2004), it is only known to occur at five sites on southern Vancouver Island. We also saw the Indian Consumption Plant (*Lomatium nudicaule*) and ample numbers of Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*), though not yet flowering.

After a picnic lunch, including hotdogs from the BBQ, (thank you to Rick Schortinghuis) James Miskelly found us a California Darner (*Rhionaeschna californica*), a lacewing, a Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*), 'spit' bugs, and a queen wasp setting up a colony. We found James' insect net to be faster than the eye, as he adeptly whipped it through the air in a flash. He then gently placed each captive in a magnified examining container so all could see as he explained something of its life cycle and habits.

Phil Lambert and CRD Naturalists had the largest crowd – around 40 people – to explore the intertidal area of Witty's Lagoon. The highlight for this part of the day was discovering a lot of Purple Sailors (*Velevella velevella*) that had



Top: Botany group. Below: Harvest Brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*). Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy

been washed in by the recent gales. Normally they are found out on the open ocean. They are a type of colonial jellyfish made up of a number of different blue polyps with a single vertical sail that catches the wind. See <http://biology.fullerton.edu/biol317/im/s03/ft2/ft09-38.html> for more information. Other marine life included a beautiful pale yellow tidepool snailfish (*Liparis florum*), which is not often seen, and a Mossy chiton (*Mopalia muscosa*), a good find considering the tide was not exceptionally low.

The day was fine: some blustery winds kept the sun from being too hot and we had a pleasant day of exploring the area. Thank you to all who came out and made our Second Annual Picnic an occasion to remember.

Ecologically Sensitive Areas

Identified by the Parks and Conservation Committee of the Victoria Natural History Society

By John Henigman

The Victoria Natural History Society has identified a list of locations, from Albert Head Lagoon to Wolf Island, as “Ecologically Sensitive Areas” (ESAs). Through the early 1990’s, a committed group of volunteers from the Society located and recorded information about a large number of ESAs so that we could better know about and monitor any changes.

During the 1990’s, before personal computers and the internet, there was no easy way to widely share the information and to call upon the support of others to contribute to the information known about the sites. For a few years the information languished in a filing cabinet, though not forgotten by the people who collected it. Now, with the assistance of volunteers who converted the information into a digital format, the ESA tables are available to see on the VNHS website at the click of a mouse.

Have a look on the VNHS website (<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/>) and open the new item on the main page called “Environmentally Sensitive Areas in and around Victoria”. A map of Greater Victoria located below an introduction to the information identifies the ESA areas by site number.

You will see that the summary information available for most of the ESAs is scant and dated from the early and mid 1990’s. We would like your help to update the information provided for each of the ESA locations. If you know some of listed ESA sites, we would welcome new information for the summary tables.

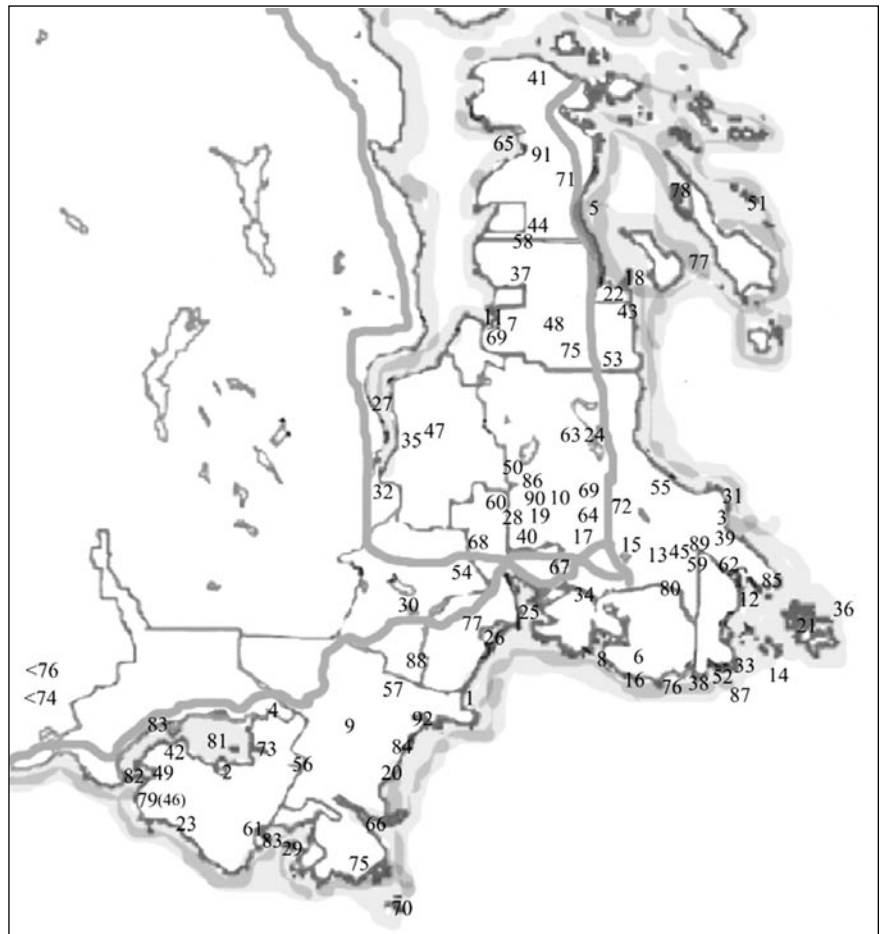
In order to ensure the privacy of the people who originally collected the information found in the ESA tables, we have removed their names and contact information. This information is still held by the VNHS. If you are an original information source for sites in this list and would prefer to have your name re-entered in the table, please contact us. If you submit new information we will discuss with you if you wish to have your name included with the published information.

Possibly there are other sites that should be added to the ESA list. Please let us know of new sites that you would propose as ecologically

Ecologically Sensitive Areas tables are available to see on the VNHS website at the click of a mouse

sensitive and offer a brief summary of the location using the table headings. If you have a question about the ESA sites or new information to contribute, please send it to John Henigman at henigman@highspeedplus.com.

Thanks for your help!



Bewick's Wren Nesting Early

By Mary Hampson

It was March 1st, 2005 and I had just unloaded the clothes dryer and folded the garments before going outside to pick some Swiss chard, which was growing well after surviving the frosty nights earlier in the year.

The chard was in a bed below the dryer vent on the west side of the house, and I suddenly realized that there was a bunch of twigs and dead grass hanging out of the vent. I pulled out a fistful, and reached in for more – then decided to tackle the problem from inside the house.

Disconnecting the vent hose carefully, I pulled out handful after handful of material and placed it in a plastic dishpan. Finally the hose was empty and the 12 inch diameter pan was full. The flapper valve on the vent was stuck open with bits of lint which had collected there, even though I clean the lint filter after each load! Taking the pan of nest materials over to the window I saw that there were many skeleton holly leaves (gathered from the ground under a big old holly tree near the house) a few tiny bits of flimsy plastic bags, many thin fir twigs, long strands of coarse dry grass, and bits of lint from the dryer. But what I had not noticed as I pulled stuff out were two tiny pinkish brown eggs with speckles of darker brown in a tiny cup lined with fine dry grass.

Bewick's Wrens are frequent visitors to my suet cake feeder, but since they always come in singly I was not sure if there was more than one individual coming. I had heard a male singing in the willows on our bank down to the beach, so he must have attracted a mate.

On checking in the *Birds of British Columbia* (Campbell *et al.*, 2001) I noted that the earliest record for eggs for a Bewick's Wren in Victoria is March 17th, so these eggs were over two weeks earlier. Because this is an important record, I gave the nest and eggs to the Royal British Columbia Museum as a specimen for their collection.

Oh yes, I finally got the Swiss chard picked – quite a bit later than I had intended; and I won't forget to check the flapper valve from time to time to make sure it is closed when the dryer is not in use!

Literature Cited

Campbell, R.W., N.K. Dawe, I. McTaggart-Cowan, J.M. Cooper, G.W. Kaiser, A.C. Stewart, and M.C.E. McNall. 2001. *Birds of British Columbia, Volume 4, Passerines*. UBC Press, Vancouver.



Bees for Beginners

By John Defayette

“Whither must I wander

*Spring shall come, come again, calling up the
moorfowl,*

*Spring shall bring the sun and the rain, bring the
bees and the flowers”*

and the poem ends with: *“But I go forever and
come again no more”*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

What if the bees did not appear, if not by severe drought or natural disaster then possibly by some human-caused one. What then? Well, it would not take long for the available honey supplies to be depleted. So? Many forage crops would fail including fruit and vegetables. Millions would be lost initially, and gradually livestock would starve, to say nothing of humans.

Yes, that is the impact an insect such as a bee has on our world economy. Perhaps this is the reason municipal, provincial, and federal governments look at and treat beekeepers favourably. For instance, the city of Victoria (where I live) does not require a license for hives on your property and the government only requires a no-fee registration and inspection of your bee colonies. This is the same in most countries; bees and beekeepers are encouraged, with funds available for electrical (small shock) fencing to keep out bears.

How do you become a beekeeper? The obvious answer you would say is to obtain bees – not. First you need to have a home ready for them. You need a hive which should be elevated off the ground, most beekeepers have a bottom board with an adjustable entrance. Inside the hive box are frames which have wax foundation sheets to assist your bees initially before they make their own wax. It is best to have an inner cover with a centre vent for ventilation and, of course, a sturdy roof. Most of these items are available from supply houses or can easily be constructed. After your bees are settled you will also require a couple of boxes for honey storage. You could also suggest to your neighbours that they avoid using insecticides because they are so harmful.

Now you are ready to buy your bees. Where do you go? It would be best to check if there is a local beekeepers' club and to become a member. You might enroll in a class to learn first hand from the seasoned beekeepers, or check out the library and the internet for information. Bees may arrive in a 'free' swarm to your hive, but most likely you will buy



a “nuc” or nucleus. It will include 3-5 frames of bees with a fertile queen and should have eggs already in the brood cells with pollen and nectar (or possibly honey) available. Spring is the best time to obtain your bees, but you may have to wait until bees are available, as they tend to be in short supply.

You now have your bee colony. You can relax and simply collect the honey – maybe. First you should place your hive facing in an south-easterly direction. Bees react to the sun and work from sunrise to sunset. They live and work inside a dark environment waiting for a sunny day to perform their tasks. On a very hot day it is wise to provide a continual source of water. Bees are very efficient at ventilating the hive by means of fanning their wings in or outside the hive, but the top cover should be slightly raised at the back to assist in ventilation. Watch out for robber bees, if your colony is weak, other bees find out and will take away the honey.

Your bee colony is a very interesting social community: the queen is the central figure and has a retinue that feeds and grooms her as long as she is actively laying eggs. She is fertilized by males, called drones, at a distance away from the colony while on a mating flight. After the drones have mated with her they die. Drones otherwise have few tasks in the colony, and in the late fall they are ousted and usually starve to death. The colony consists mainly of females, with a myriad of tasks. Initially, the workers take care of the eggs which the queen has laid, feed the young larvae, and assist the emerging pupae. They usually have three weeks of hive duties.

Bees may then become foragers, gathering nectar, pollen, or water, which they pass on to others for immediate use or storage. If they find a particularly good source then they do a dance to inform others. The location is in relation to the hive by the direction of the sun. If your colony becomes overcrowded, watch out as scout bees may return to the colony with a better home than yours; resulting in a swarm and you lose your bees.



Above: Tending the honey bees. *Photo provided by John Defayette.* Below and previous page: Native pollinators you can also watch for in your garden. *Photos: Darren Copley*

The colony consists mainly of females, with a myriad of tasks.

When many people think of bees, the first thought is a fearful “They sting!” It is true, as the bee response is one of protecting the colony from a potential aggressor. However, if you walk away slowly and remain calm without swatting or waving your arms, there is a good chance of no harm being done. Quite a few beekeepers work the hive without gear, including not wearing gloves. It is not to the bee’s advantage to sting, as they usually die, unlike wasps which can sting many times. If you do get stung, it is best to scrape the stinger off in a sideways motion. Do not pull the stinger directly out as the venom will be injected faster. You can apply ice and expect a pimple or swollen area, followed by an itching sensation in a few hours. Some people have an allergic reaction and, if severe, should seek medical attention. Panicking may worsen the problem. It is only a pin prick, so be calm, relax as best as you can, and avoid a confrontation. Bees will usually give you a warning buzz, so walk away.

As a beekeeper, you are a naturalist assisting nature instead of destroying it. You could inform others of the benefits of eating honey. Many claims are made about honey alleviating allergies as it contains pollen which can be an allergen; others suggest that bee stings assist in arthritis control. Regardless, a spoonful of honey is a treat!



Building your beehive. *Photos provided by John Defayette*

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Tale of an Old Chickadee

By David Allinson, Past-president/Vice-president RPBO

No doubt many of you are familiar with news of the many rarities and banding highlights from the Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) every year. The RPBO checklist now stands at an impressive (and ever-growing) 294 species. However, our program is not really about rare or unusual birds (as exciting and rewarding as they are). Instead, as we accumulate and analyze our data from the nearly 28,000 birds we've banded at RPBO since 1994, some interesting trends for common species are becoming apparent. Our banding numbers have shown increases in capture rates for some species (in particular over the last three fall seasons, and in spite of the same daily effort). Nevertheless, it is not all 'good news' for our coastal bird populations. For example, Katie Christie recently completed a comprehensive data analysis of banding data from RPBO. Her work confirmed many of our empirical suspicions: notable declines for Lincoln's Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, and especially Savannah Sparrow are now evident. Furthermore, these trends are consistent with data from other British Columbia migration monitoring stations (e.g. Mackenzie Nature Observatory).

Related to this data trend analysis, there remain many 'back-burner' projects in the works for yours truly – maintaining all bird records for the site, pelagic bird movements in nearby Juan de Fuca Strait, diurnal raptor migration, warbler and sparrow sub-species identification, and mapping habitat at the site. However, I am also keen to analyze the 3000+ recapture records that we have now amassed. Every year, in addition to the 3500-4000 birds RPBO bands, we also recapture anywhere from 300-400 of our "own" birds from both the same year and previous seasons. These recaptures indicate the importance of Rocky Point to both breeding resident passerines and also neotropical migrants as they return to the same site year after year (site fidelity). The recapture data also reveals tight migration windows, breeding and migration survival rates, and indices for population studies. Finally, and most importantly, these recaptures also establish important information about bird longevity.

At RPBO, between July and October 2004, we processed 370 recaptured birds of 39 species, including 37 birds from previous years. However, two recapture records stand out in particular. On September 9, we recovered a Chestnut-backed Chickadee that had originally been banded on June 4 at our Royal Roads University 'Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship' (MAPS) banding site! Who says that Chestnut-backed Chickadees do not "migrate", or at least disperse over a large area, as this is a distance of approximately 13 kilometres? However, it is perhaps appropriate for a hatching-year bird to disperse after fledging in search of its own territory. The recapture highlight of the year was on September 18: a Chestnut-backed Chickadee that was originally

banded as an After-Hatch Year at RPBO on August 2, 1997 by the late Beverley Glover (band number 2120-06883). This record is now among the oldest on file for this species in North America at 8 years, 3 months. To confirm this, we checked our own records and the files at the Bird Banding Lab (BBL) at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland (the main repository for all of North American banding data). As well, this bird has now been recaptured at RPBO a total of 7 times, but interestingly, not since 2001. The BBL arbitrarily uses June 1st as all birds' "birthday", as we cannot know for certain its exact birthday. In other words, it was *at least* 1 year, 2 months old when originally caught. Note the current record Chestnut-backed Chickadee on file at the BBL is 9 years, 6 months. Other "old" birds of note recorded at RPBO include a 6-year, 2-month old Wilson's Warbler (last captured August 2003); a 6 year, 2-month old Orange-crowned Warbler (last captured June 2004); and a 7-year old Red-winged Blackbird (last captured June 2003). Anyone interested in learning more about known ages for wild birds should visit the Bird Banding Lab's longevity pages: ww.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/longvlst.htm. And don't forget to also visit the Rocky Point Bird Observatory website at: www.islandnet.com/~rpbo.

For those who knew Beverley Glover, and as she was a co-founder of RPBO, it is fitting that her contributions live on with the birds of Rocky Point...



Savannah Sparrow. One of the species showing significant population declines throughout its range.
Photo: Darren Copley

Sustainable Energy: Why Does it Matter?

By Guy Dauncey

On Salt Spring Island, when students in the Gulf Islands Secondary School need to keep warm in winter, they don't use oil, gas, or wood stoves. They use heat that comes from under their own playing field, supplied by the sun.

Across the Saanich Inlet, in Mill Bay, students who are practicing drama or music in Brentwood College's new Performing Arts Building don't use oil, gas, or wood either. They use heat from the cold water of the ocean: liquid sunshine, stored in the water.

Across the Rockies, in Alberta, in the small town of Okotoks, outside Calgary, fifty two families will soon be heating their homes through the cold Alberta winter with solar hot water which they gather on their garage roofs during summer, store underground, and retrieve to use in winter.

These students and families are pioneers of a sea-change in the way we use energy. You could call it the third energy revolution.

The first revolution started thousands of years ago in Africa, when our ancestors learned how to make fire. From then on, firewood was our constant companion through dark and dangerous nights.

The second revolution started when Europe's firewood began to run out, in the 12th century. That's when we began to burn fossil fuels, in the form of coal. Our use of oil (starting in the 1850's) and gas (in the 1890's) were a continuation of the same idea.

Today, we face a twofold dilemma. Our use of fossil fuels, slowly laid down over millions of years, is causing global temperatures and sea levels to rise. Climatologists are becoming increasingly alarmed. "The debate about whether or not there is a global-warming signal here and now is over, at least for rational people," says Tim Barnett from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

In January of 2004, a global team of conservation biology experts based at the University of Leeds, in Britain, released the results of a major four year study in which they analyzed the vulnerability of land-based animals and plants to rising temperatures around the world. The results were awful. They found that within 45 years, climate change looks set to drive a quarter of all land-based animals and plants into extinction, including plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, butterflies and other invertebrates, unless our yearly emissions of greenhouse gases are drastically reduced. Between 15% and 37% of all land-based species.

A study by the World Wildlife Fund in 2000 found that the impact of climate change in the Canadian arctic could halve the numbers of species that occur there. As the climate warms, the tree line is moving north, with forests replacing

the tundra where millions of birds breed. Further north, the warming air is melting the Arctic ice, threatening the polar bear with extinction.

On our planet, we cannot burn fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) and have polar bears: it is a contradiction. Burning fossil fuels melts ice, while polar bears need ice. We have to choose. We cannot have both.

In Britain's North Sea, a crisis has already hit the Arctic Terns, kittiwakes, guillemots and Great Skuas. In the seas off Shetland, north of Scotland, the sand eels, which the birds depend on for food, have vanished. The likely explanation is that the eels, and the plankton they depend on, have moved further north to cooler waters as the ocean has warmed, leaving the seabirds unable to feed their chicks.

As the climate warms, the tree line is moving north, with forests replacing the tundra where millions of birds breed. Further north, the warming air is melting the Arctic ice, threatening the polar bear with extinction.

Meanwhile, there's a huge second crisis brewing. We are about half way through the world's oil supply of approximately two trillion barrels. The situation is similar for North America's natural gas. There's plenty left, but as we pass the half-way mark, likely between now and 2010, the world's increasing demand will run into a shrinking supply, sending prices through the roof.

As a world, we consume 80 million barrels of oil a day (30 billion barrels a year). The oil-sands in Alberta only produce 1 million barrels a day, so they are not going to make much difference. The entire oil-sands, at 300 billion barrels, are only ten year's global supply. The 10 billion barrels of oil in the hotly disputed Arctic National Wildlife Reserve are just 4 months of global supply. BC's much vaunted offshore oil supply is just 33 days of global supply.

It is no surprise, then, that attention is turning to the third energy revolution: clean, renewable, sustainable energy that flows without limit from the sun, the wind, the oceans, the rivers, and the earth.



Left: Photovoltaic panels on a home in Victoria. Right: Electric vehicles can be powered by the sun and wind. *Photos provided by Guy Dauncey*

In Kelowna, Ed Beggs runs his diesel-powered 'Sunmobile' on biodiesel fuel which he makes himself from locally collected sunflower seeds.

In Fort Nelson, in BC's Peace region, students at the Fort Nelson Secondary School will soon be gathering solar electricity from their roof. So will students at Fulton Secondary School in Vernon. It's expensive, but the price is falling as demand increases.

On the northern tip of Vancouver Island, a company is planning to gather a significant amount of energy from the wind; BC's often stormy coastline has some of the best wind resources in the world. Other companies are planning to harvest tidal energy from the ocean currents and geothermal energy from deep below the earth's surface.

The concern about birds being killed by wind turbines no longer applies to the large, new turbines that turn more slowly. The evidence from studies is that, on average, there is just one bird death per turbine per year. If we want to prevent bird deaths, we need to turn off the lights in office blocks at night.

The third energy revolution also concerns transport, industry, and home heating. How will we travel when there is no more oil? How will we heat our homes when the gas is gone? Can we use biofuels, and hydrogen? Can we redesign our towns and cities to make it much easier to walk, and use bicycles? Can we redesign our homes, cars, and equipment so that they are more efficient, and use much less energy?

The BC Sustainable Energy Association was launched in 2004 as a direct response to this dual crisis. Our goal is a British Columbia which derives all of its energy from sustainable sources, without any use of fossil fuels. We have 475 members around the province, and seven Chapters, including a very active group in Victoria which has

If we want to save Earth's wildlife and wild spaces, we must address global climate change, both in our politics and in our personal lifestyles.

regular speakers, exhibits and field trips. We welcome your membership.

The challenge is not so much with the technology, as with the political will to make the changes that are needed. If we want to save Earth's wildlife and wild spaces, we must address global climate change, both in our politics and in our personal lifestyles.

It is during our watch on planet Earth that this is happening: we are the ones who will have to answer to the future. There is an urgency to this which affects all of us.



Guy Dauncey is author of *Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change* (New Society Publishers, 2001), Editor of *EcoNews*, and President of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org). His personal website is www.earthfuture.com

Book Reviews

By John Defayette

Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet by Mary Mudd Ruth is a story with its beginning in 1778 and extending to the present. It is a poignant account of a disappearing species. The author describes the Pacific Northwest environment from Alaska to California; an area sometimes threatening in its enormity and one that used to resemble the ancient Carmanah Valley in its aspect.

The Marbled Murrelet nests here, in some of the largest trees on earth. The bird travels many kilometers from the ocean to its forest nest. As an alcid, it spends most of its life on the ocean. And its nesting habits were a mystery up until only very recently.

Only 7% of the world population of Marbled Murrelet exist in B.C., 91% are in Alaska and the remaining 2% in California, Oregon, and Washington. The old trees are still being logged, with the result that their nesting sites are rapidly diminishing. Ocean oil spills and fishing (drag nets) are also having a disastrous effect on the birds. The Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet's days are numbered unless naturalists express their concern and changes are implemented. *Rare Bird* is a must read for those who care.

Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet is published by Rodale books, \$23.95, 304 pages.

In the Wilds of Western Canada by Tyrone Danlock is really a collection of suspenseful short stories. They make a wonderful read during the warm days of summer. The reader has a choice of commencing to read from different sections: Southern BC, Eastern BC and Western Alberta or Northern BC and the Yukon. There are a number of colourful photographs as well as a profile of the author.

All of the stories are events in Tyrone's life over a 31 year span, up until 1999. It is obvious that he enjoys nature

and he is a true naturalist. The stories almost always have a pattern of an unexpected happening as he traveled while working for the Canadian National Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, MacMillan-Bloedel and the Ministry of Highways. Part of the time, Tyrone also worked picking edible wild mushrooms. He encountered many species of animals and birds, including bears, cougars, coyotes, elk, and moose, to name a few.

Many times birds alerted him to the presence of another animal visitor (or more often of his visiting their domain). Different stories suggest we should try to control the natural response of flight and remain cool and non-threatening while the animal assesses whether we are dangerous. He also reminds us that a black bear can, and will, climb trees, so that avenue may not be the correct solution. To that end, there are a few scary bear encounters when the only protection that he had was a canister of bear spray. By following his own advice and remaining absolutely still, he did not have to use the spray.

In the Wilds of Western Canada is published by Trafford Publishing, a Victoria-based publisher, \$37.00, 190 pages.

Welcome to New Members

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Tragedy Strikes Willows Beach Eagles

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

Sadly, the two 4 week old eaglets that were thriving down at the Willows beach nest met with an untimely end. A gust of wind off the water loosened the front end of their already unstable nest and the eaglets plunged to their death.

The winds that have blown from the west lately have caused a number of nest failures this season. The storm of May 21st brought with it the big 'blow', so that the waterfront in the Oak Bay area took the full brunt. When I visited that day I felt some real concern as I watched the female trying to stay with her nest. The little eaglets were well down in the nest bowl. The winds kept up for hours and battered the nest that day, and made the front end rather unstable. For the next three days, the downy eaglets were positioned at the front of their nest. I know the view is particularly delightful from that vantage point but it was not the scenery which kept the eaglets so close to the edge. I believe a substantial branch must have fallen across the nest, during the storm, blocking them from reaching a sturdier spot in the nest. Each day they "hung-out" at the front end; until eventually their weight and another gust of wind from the water on Thursday May 26th, released the front third of the nest. This was witnessed by two photographers, who were stunned to see what was happening. They were dismayed to see the lifeless eaglets on the rocks. The female apparently flew around the nest tree several times but didn't go to the rocks below.

This rather stormy weather brought down another eagle's nest in the Victoria region. The eaglets had only just

hatched when the entire nest descended, and the two hatchlings perished. Other nests in the region have been affected by several factors, so it appears that this year is certainly not 'The Year of the Eagle'.

Fortunately I was not at the beach to witness the Willows eagle nest tragedy, but phone calls and e-mail messages alerted me to the situation. I was greatly saddened on hearing the news. The effort expended by these wonderful birds during a breeding season makes an event like this all the more heart-wrenching.

For many hours following the death of her young, I observed the female as she stood despondently on her favourite rock on Mary Todd Island. She maintained the same position, with her head down, throughout a 25-36 hour period. She seemed such a pathetic looking eagle. I am convinced that the larger birds do indeed suffer some emotion. Perhaps a deep sense of sadness, one might say. With relief I found that, by the Saturday morning, the female was back out on the channel markers hunting for food with her mate.

Since that day, I have seen this pair soaring together, sky dancing, and perching comfortably in the nest tree. Today at noon, they were busy shredding another unfortunate gull right at the nest. This past week they have been seen flying with sticks in their talons. Normal behaviour for these two eagles is returning. The local waterfront trees are now being harvested for their good wood. Are we to see a new nest take shape in the lofty branches above our heads, or is this activity just a repair of the old nest? Only time will tell.



Right: Brentwood hatchlings. *Photos provided by Marie O'Shaughnessy*

Homage

By Hum

We thought you were gone
You knew you were not
When the guns fell silent in '45
We hadn't seen you for a year
The razing of the southern bottomland forests,
your home for ages,
was under way
But as few of you as there were
knew in your marrow
to stay out of sight
of the exterminator ape and his works,
to somehow, somewhere find a refuge,
though your world had come crashing down
Where did you go?
How did you do it?
You're a genius,
Need is a genius
Survival is a genius
Carrying on,
getting by,
making do
is a genius
For sixty-one years of woodpecker generations
Maybe somebody had seen you and hadn't recognized you
or had and wasn't telling,
or told and wasn't believed
Maybe they thought you
were some big pileated woodpecker,
a bit fancy, but that happens
At least the exterminator ape
didn't give you or your niche
a second glance of his beady eye
Then some odd Abel of the Cain of apes,
an appreciator of animals,
was drifting in his canoe through the bayou
with a camcorder mounted on the prow,

taking in the trees along the banks,
and he thought he heard your *rip-rap*,
caught a glimpse of you,
and when he played back the video
there you were,
in the corner, of a shot,
for just an instant,
flitting out from a cypress,
flashing the white patch on the back of your wing,
the lightning bolt down your back,
your flame crest,
your ivory bill
then vanishing back into the leafy shadows
And he knew you
were no big, fancy pileated woodpecker,
but the *Lord God bird*,
the *Ivory-billed Woodpecker*
It was like seeing a passenger pigeon
(gone extinct on the verge of the First World War)
But you, unlike her, have been,
a canny passenger of time
and are still here
What it took from you
and gave to you,
we can never know in detail,
but in our marrow we may know,
when we too have been presumed long gone,
and have found a way to still be here
be wiser to be
And at this confirmed sight of you
He fell to his knees and wept
The exterminator ape wept
Unredeemed
But dipped in wonder and thanksgiving
That you are, we may yet be,
may yet become us

Letters

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to you for your very generous donation towards my University of Victoria education fees. I was chosen to receive the UVic Bursary Fund and The Samuel Simco Bursary this year, and I was absolutely thrilled and extremely grateful to receive my award notification letter. It is an honour to be recognized for my hard work and receiving this award gives me the motivation to continue striving for top marks. The award has relieved some financial stresses and therefore allows me to worry less about

the bills and concentrate more on excelling in school.

My goal is to attain a PhD in marine biology and your generosity has profoundly impacted my life and has enabled me to continue with my studies with less concern about going into tremendous debt from educational fees.

Thank you once again for your contributions to the University of Victoria awards program.

Sincerely,
Deborah Faust



HAT Tricks

Habitat Acquisition Trust
Creating a Conservation Legacy

The Colquitz River is one of the last salmon-bearing urban creeks in the world, supporting spawning populations of salmon (coho and chum) and cut-throat trout. In 1967, a particularly far-sighted engineer rejected a District of Saanich proposal to bury the entire length of the Colquitz River. Noting that “the stream is a distinct asset to the community at large and should be preserved if at all possible”, he proposed instead that the city purchase and protect creek-front properties and the idea of a Colquitz Linear Park was born. Although the District of Saanich has acquired and protected many parts of the Colquitz over the past 40 years, much of the area remains in private hands.

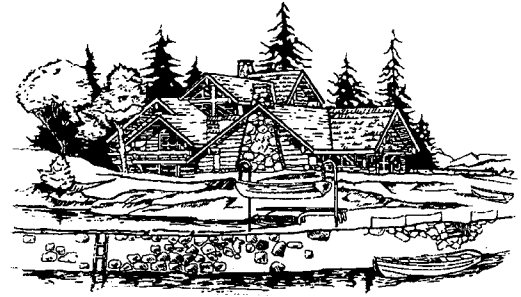
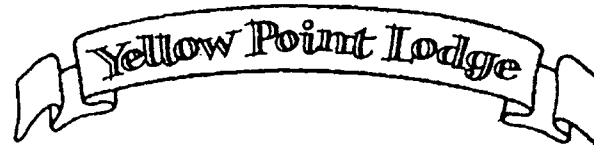
Enter Todd Carnahan and Kathryn Martell, HAT’s Stewardship Team. This year, we’re bringing HAT’s award-winning *Good Neighbours* project to landowners along the Colquitz River. From Quick’s Bottom to Portage Inlet, from farmer’s fields to the suburbs, we’re helping residents reduce negative impacts and improve water quality.

There are many threats to the health of the Colquitz River, including contaminated run-off from lawns, mowing right to the water’s edge, and garbage dumped in natural areas. Landowners who are “Good Neighbours” of the creek maintain buffer zones of native plants on their property and create other habitat for wildlife.

This summer we are visiting landowners along the Colquitz Linear Park system, providing them with the information and guidance to be environmental stewards. We have seen trampling and vegetation removal along the shoreline, and some serious blackberry and ivy invasions. We’re working with a number of landowners to remove these weeds, and to restore native creek-side vegetation – not only does a healthy riparian buffer protect water quality, provide critical habitat, and prevent erosion, it also reduces time and energy spent maintaining a lawn! HAT provides people and funding to help landowners plant native species on their properties.

Over the next several months, we’ll be working our way downstream, spreading stewardship as we go. We’re also organising several community events, including workshops, plantings, and a Colquitz River clean-up day. Perhaps the Colquitz River can’t be restored immediately as a place of swimming holes, plentiful salmon, ample water, and good trout fishing; but by encouraging landowners to take stewardship into their own hands, HAT is working hard to get there!

Please phone 995-2428, email hatmail@hat.bc.ca, or visit www.hat.bc.ca for more information.



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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 Nature Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.); **Natural History Presentations:** the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., in Murray and Anne Fraser 159, University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre; **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser 159, University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre. Locations are given in the calendar listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>, and is updated regularly.

JULY

Saturday, July 16 and Sunday, July 17

Victoria Butterfly Count

We are always looking for keen eyed volunteers, so get out your field guides. Call **James Miskelly** (count coordinator) at 477-0490 if you would like to help out.

Sunday, July 17

Hurricane Ridge

This trip, a VNHS tradition, is timed to catch the beautiful summer alpine flowers on Hurricane Ridge in Washington's Olympic National Park. Bird from the ferry and look for high elevation species in the mountains. There are facilities in the park, but a lunch and something to drink are highly recommended. Be prepared for cold temperatures and/or rain and wear sturdy hiking boots. Meet at the Black Ball ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. (allow time to park) for the 6:10 sailing of the M.V. Coho. Ferry cost is \$24.90 (CDN) return. You will require two pieces of ID (one with a picture – ideally a passport) for going through customs. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$28.00 (CDN). We will return on the 5:15 sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing time). There is room for 38 participants plus the leaders. This trip always fills, so reserve early by calling the Goldstream Park Nature House at 478-9414, where you can pay with a credit card. VNHS members will be given priority. Leaders TBA. Call Rick at 652-3326 if you need more information.

Sunday, July 24

Adventure to the Centre of Rithet's Bog

Join **Sharon Hartwell** for this rare opportunity to investigate the inside of Rithet's Bog, where the large pine trees grow in a unique habitat. Let Sharon show us why it is important not to venture into this area unless accompanied by a member of the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society. Group size is strictly limited, so call to reserve your spot. Further details provided when registering. No pets please. Call Agnes at 721-0634 for more information or to register.

Saturday July 30 to Monday August 1

Mountain Adventure

The tentative plans are to go high enough to find some interesting wildflowers. A trip to Mount Arrowsmith (off Parksville – Alberni Highway) and Mount Washington are the goals, but due to the early flowering season and possible fire closures, details will not be firm until closer to the dates. Some strenuous hiking may be involved, but at a slow pace. Intent is to either car camp or stay in reasonably priced accommodation. No pets please. Call Agnes at 721-0634 for more information or to register. This trip is with **Hans Roemer** and **Agnes Lynn**, and is a VNHS/VIRAGS combined trip.

Sunday, July 31

Birding Sidney Island

We will travel to Sidney Island by ferry to take in the southbound migration of shorebirds. We will also check out the passerines and other birds along the way. You can return on any Sidney Island Ferry sailing on the half hour. Bring a lunch and something to drink. Cost is \$11.00 per person (includes the return ferry fare from Sidney Island). Meet at the ferry dock at the foot of Beacon Avenue in Sidney at 9:40 a.m. for the 10:00 a.m. sailing. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 652-3326 if you need more information. Leader TBA.

AUGUST

Sunday, August 7

Dragonflies for Beginners, by Beginners

As Dennis Paulson says in his book, *Dragonflies of Washington*, "Perhaps even more than butterflies, dragonflies are birdwatchers' insects." Meet **Darren and Claudia Copley** at the Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds at 10:00 a.m. (another advantage over birding) and we'll see what we can find. We'll look at what field guides are available, some tricks to catching dragonflies, and even how to key out the difficult ones. Bring binoculars, an insect net (if you have one), and hope for sunny weather.

Sunday, August 7

Discovery Island & Chain Islands Ecological Reserve – Bird Watchers Kayak Tour

If you are a bird watcher or someone who likes to explore, this five hour tour is for you. Once home to First Nations people and lighthouse keepers; Discovery Island is now a Provincial Marine Park. A Mecca for bird watchers and nature enthusiasts, the area presents many opportunities for viewing wildlife, including eagles, oyster catchers, Harlequin Ducks, river otters, harbor seals, anemones, star fish, and much more. The tour will also explore the nearby Chain Islands which are protected bird sanctuaries and seal rookeries. No experience is necessary. Any age, any ability is welcome! Meet at the Oak Bay Marina in the parking lot to the right of the whale statue at 8:45 a.m. This will be a five hour trip. Please bring a lunch, beverage and a rain jacket. Cost: \$69.00 per person. There will be a 10% discount if we get more than four people for the trip. There is a maximum of 16 people. Please register before July 24. Then we will know if a second trip needs to be organized. For more information or to register contact the Vancouver Island Canoe and Kayak Centre. Visit their website: www.gotpaddle.net, Phone: 361-9365 or toll free: 1-877-921-9365, or email: tours@gotpaddle.net

Sunday, August 14

Tufted Puffins, Sealions and Archaeological Museum

Join us for a field trip on the Olympic Peninsula to Cape Flattery and the First Nations Cultural Center. Cape Flattery is the most northern point on the west coast of the continental United States and is one of the closest locations to Victoria where you will see Tufted Puffins. Islands off the point are home to thousands of seabirds throughout the year. In 1970 tidal erosion uncovered an ancient whaling village at Ozette, parts of which had been covered by mudslides hundreds of years ago. The artifacts that were subsequently found have now classified Ozette as one of the most significant archaeological discoveries ever made in North America! In 1979 the cultural and research center opened to the public in order to share this great archaeological find. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal at 5:45 a.m. (Allow time to park) for the 6:10 sailing of the M.V. Coho. Ferry cost is \$24.90 (CDN) return. You will require two pieces of ID (one with a picture – ideally a passport) for going through customs. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the museum is \$35.00 (CDN). We will return to Victoria on the 9:30 sailing (90 minute crossing time). Bring a lunch and something to drink; we will have dinner in Port Angeles. There is room for 38 participants plus three leaders. This trip always fills, so reserve your spot early by calling the Goldstream Park Nature House at 479-9414. VNHS members will be given priority. Leaders are **Rick Schortinghuis** and **Marilyn Lambert**. Call Rick at 652-3326 if you need more information.

Saturday, August 20 and Sunday August, 21

Victoria Butterfly Count

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers, so get out your field guide. Call **James Miskelly** (count coordinator) at 477-0490 if you would like to help out.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 4

Shorebirding from Victoria to Sooke

Meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 7:30 a.m. to car pool. We will be going to Esquimalt Lagoon, Albert Head Lagoon, Witty's Lagoon, Ayum Creek and Whiffin Spit. Bring a lunch. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 652-3326 if you need more information.

Wednesday, September 28

BIRDERS NIGHT

High Seas to High Sierra

Birds and Botany of Baja California Sur For the past 15 winters **Bryan Gates**, our Birders' Night host, has visited and worked in Baja California, Mexico. He will take us from the spectacular beaches and islands of the Gulf of California to almost 5000 feet above sea level in the Sierra de La Laguna, the highest mountains in the southern peninsula. Birds, plants and geology of this desert community will be featured. Everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m., Fraser 159, UVic. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

BULLETIN BOARD

Coastal Vesper Sparrow

The Coastal Vesper Sparrow is once again breeding at the Nanaimo Airport in Cassidy, but no other breeding sites are currently known for this rare subspecies in BC. Researchers are colour banding adults and nestlings at the airport in an effort to get a more accurate population estimate and to learn more about the movements and habitat requirements of these birds. Birders are requested to please contact **Suzanne Beauchesne** (250-954-1870) with any observations of Vesper Sparrow on Vancouver Island. A reward is offered for the first record of one of our colour-banded birds found off of the airport property!

For Sale

Two matching concrete bird baths for sale, probably 50 years old, in good shape. Asking \$40 for the pair, delivered in Victoria. Call 598-3621.

Are you going on one of the VNHS field trips?

Willing to pick up a VNHS member in James Bay? If yes, then please telephone 384-7553. Thank you for your consideration.

The Goldstream Artshow (September 17 to October 10, 2005)

"*The Nature of Island Artists*" is held at the Visitor Centre in Goldstream Provincial Park every second year and showcases artists from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Each exhibit, members of the Victoria Natural History Society have volunteered their time to make the show a success. These tireless efforts go towards supporting the salmon run school programs. If you can support this great cause, please leave a message at Goldstream (478-9414) for our volunteer Volunteer Coordinator, **Judith Parish**.

CRD Parks

To check out what field trips are going on at CRD parks, go to their web site: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks/>

Bird Walks at Swan Lake

There are regular guided bird walks at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary on Wednesdays and Sundays. Meet at the main parking lot at 9:00 a.m.



Maples and Sword Fern Acrylic Painting by Mark Hobson

The Nature of Island Artists

September 17 - October 10, 2005

Goldstream Provincial Park Visitor Centre
Victoria, B.C.

