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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





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COVER PHOTO: Chocolate lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*), just one of the wildflowers that crown Camas Hill. *Photo*: Kate Emmings While pulling together this issue of the magazine, I heard tree frogs beginning their annual chorus at our pond, and watched Indian Plum flowers burst bud in our front yard. My anticipation of spring is even greater this year then it has been in others, and I can tell by this issue of the magazine that I'm not the only one. Check out the calendar of events (p. 21, 22 and 23!) – there are a myriad of ways to enjoy the outdoors through Society field trips.

There are also plenty of other activities being promoted in this issue that would get you out of the house and into spring: try your hand at a "bioblitz" (p. 4), participate in this year's butterfly survey (p. 8), take a nature illustration course (p. 5) or a birding course (p. 16). March and April in the Parksville/Qualicum area also promise to be event-filled: check out the Brant Festival website, http://www. brantfestival.bc.ca/index.htm, for regular updates about this celebration of nature. And if you really enjoy planning ahead, sign up for the next Christmas Bird Count – count organizer Ann Nightingale has set a new goal for 2008 (p. 12).

See you outside!

Claudia

Who Do Humans Share Living Space With?

By Barbara Julian

Biodiversity in Victoria: the Role of the Citizen-Naturalist" is the title of a one-day workshop to be held at the Fairfield Community Place on March 31. The term "citizen-naturalist" is borrowed from E. O. Wilson's latest book, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life On Earth*, in which Wilson explains why biodiversity and habitat protection are essential to a healthy planet, and how ordinary nature-loving citizens can team up with biologists to do preservation work.

With climate change so much in the media at the moment, interest in the environment is going through one of its periodic upswings, When we talk about "the environment" however, we often forget that this is not a mere backdrop, a setting against which we live and build our cities. It is in fact the web of living things of which we are a part – one species among thousands.

What are these thousands of other species? Exactly which live with us here in Victoria? That is the question we'll examine at the biodiversity workshop. We can all name favourite creatures and common or endangered "poster" species, but what of the rest – what James Lovelock calls the "proletariat" of the living world? How do these thousands of insects, birds, mammals, trees, aquatic species, microorganisms, and fungi relate to each other and maintain the biosphere, recycling organic waste, replenishing the food chain, cleansing our air and water and cooling the atmosphere? How does their work, going on in what remains of unspoiled habitat, affect climate stability? How much and what sort of natural habitat do we need to set aside from development to maintain a healthy living environment?

Those are some of the questions which will be addressed at our workshop by speakers from the Sierra Club, HAT, and other conservation groups. After a morning of interactive



Biodiversity in Victoria The Role of the Citizen-Naturalist

A Non-Profit Workshop

Saturday, March 31st 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. 1330 Fairfield Road, Fairfield Community Place

\$25.00 Lunch, books, and other reading materials included Information or to pre-register: 1330 Fairfield Rd. 382-4604 (FCA) or 592-9340

There will be speakers from the Sierra Club, Habitat Acquisition Trust and other conservation groups as well as time for discussion. We will also do a species count in Porter Park (Garry oak park behind the Community Place): an inventory of all species we can find.

Join in the fun!

presentations we will break up into groups to discuss how species and habitat preservation (that indissoluble pairing) relate to growth, heritage, pollution control, and land use in our part of the world. We will take a little time to go outside and actually count the species we find hidden in soil, grass, bark, puddles and under stones in the park outside the Community Place.

The Fairfield Community Association hopes later this spring to sponsor a 24-hour "bio-blitz", a count taken by dozens (or hundreds?) of volunteers, of species in a given area (probably comprising Ross Bay and the Ross Bay Cemetery). A bio-blitz focuses attention on just how many living forms are out there, and how much we lose when we allow paving and development to erode our living surroundings inch by inch, field by field, and tree by tree.

Watch this space for more information on the upcoming bio-blitz. Meanwhile anyone wishing to attend our "Biodiversity in Victoria" Workshop is asked to preregister through the Community Place (382 4604). The cost of \$25.00 covers a book and other photocopied pre-reading material, a lunch, and the room rental. (This is a non-profit workshop – speakers and organizers are volunteers.) For more information please call Barbara at 592-9340. Please pre-register in person or by mail or phone: FCA, 1330 Fairfield Rd., Victoria, V8S 5J1; 382-4604.

Drawing in Nature - April 13 & 14, 2007

For naturalists who want to learn to draw! This course will introduce some practical drawing methods for indoors and outdoors. Participants can expect to improve their skills in sketching and field-book drawing in studio and in the field. The focus for this course will be on sketching birds, plants and insects.

Joanne Thomson is an accomplished artist in watercolour and illustration. She has earned a Master Degree in Adult Education and loves to open people's eyes to their own creative potential. Joanne has studied and understands both the barriers to learning visual expression and the ways to overcome or remove those barriers. Her classes are joyful, informative, safe places to learn and experiment.

Course Schedule:

Friday April 13 (7-9:30 p.m.)

Meet at Joanne's studio on Columbine Avenue for practice with the gesture, contour and blind contour drawing methods.

Saturday April 14 (9-11:30 a.m.): meet at Swan Lake Nature House for a morning of outdoor sketching, observing and recording.

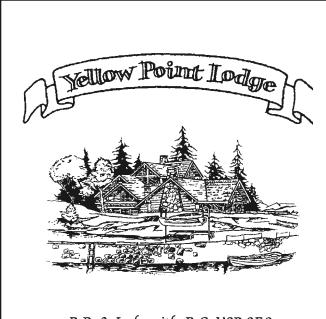
Saturday April 14 (1-3:30 p.m.): Back to Joanne's studio for some practice drawing from specimens, doing watercolour washes, and shading.

Limited to 7 participants.

Cost \$75.00 per person for 7.5 hours instruction.

If you are interested in this course, contact Donna Ross, hoshihana@shaw.ca or call 384-5327. You will be sent additional information on what to bring.





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Stormwater within Douglas Creek Watershed

By Kenneth Rankin, President of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

Douglas Creek is on the way to being restored as a fish-bearing stream. It emerges from culverts just off Robinwood Drive, and runs from there for 1.01 km through Mount Douglas Park into the sea. Currently more than 30% of the creek's watershed has been built over. This means that most of the rain collected within the watershed flows into the creek in uneven pulses for lack of filtering through natural permeable surfaces or vegetation. It is channeled instead from roof tops, driveways, and roads through storm drains bearing with it a potentially toxic cocktail of pollutants consisting largely of hydrocarbons and faecal matter.

If it were not for want of proper storm-water control within the built up area efforts within the past few years by the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society to restore the creek for fish habitat would now be in sight of sustainable success. Already coho and chum, which have been reared there from eggs or fingerlings, are returning to spawn in quite significant numbers. The danger, however, remains that at any instant at such times of return the fish will be wiped out



by polluted water. Some fish have already been killed in this way. Accordingly complete success in the restocking project now depends upon better management practices in the control of storm-water

There are a number of measures that should be taken as soon as possible. Downspout disconnection, wherever soil conditions and property contours permit, is one of these. This consists in allowing rainwater channeled from rooftops through downspouts to flow over the ground where it can be quickly absorbed, instead of being diverted underground into the public drainage system. The installation of rain barrels connected to downspouts is an alternative device. They allow householders to conserve rainwater for use in drier seasons. Other measures can be taken more directly by the municipality. The introduction of more bioswales or shallow depressions at roadsides or on open ground elsewhere, wherever possible, would allow water to pool and finally soak into the ground once rain has ceased. Also the uninterrupted curb line along streets might be broken at intervals with vegetated bulges out from the curb. These would absorb some of the water that would otherwise flow directly into the street catch basins and from there into the storm drains. They would also serve to some extent as traffic calming devices, make for safer street parking, and contribute to street-scaping.

Apart from their impact on fish-bearing streams all these devices would have an additional function if applied city wide. They would prevent or slow down the gradual lowering of the overall water table and the related effects of that lowering on temperature during the height of summer.



Photo: Angela Deering

Electrocution of Martindale Trumpeter Swans: We Need Your Help!

By David Newell

y sons Geoffrey and Jean, and I often go to Martindale Flats to bird the fields. In the past two winters we have seen three dead Trumpeter Swans (two adults and an immature) just below or next to a set of power lines. All three swans were found in the same vicinity and one person told us that they actually saw one of the swans fly into the lines and die. We investigated the corpses and did not see a single marking on them: two of their bodies were still in perfect shape, having just died, the third had landed into a barb-wire fence directly below the power lines and had been scavenged somewhat.

When I saw the first bird, which was whole, I thought that maybe it had died from lead poisoning, a problem known to happen in the Vancouver area. But where else have people been finding dead Trumpeter Swans in the Victoria area? I now believe that all three died from electrocution by flying into the power lines. Hunting of Canada geese is carried out in the same field from time to time and flying of model aeroplanes does take place next to where the Trumpeters feed, but the corpses showed no sign of gunshot wounds, nor did they show any indication of having been struck by a model plane. They were in perfect shape and very healthy looking, being fat and heavy.

The power line that the swans have been hitting stretches about 200 yards from McIntyre Road southwest to a white pump-house next to an irrigation ditch that runs from Island View Beach Road to Martindale Road. The pump-house is out in the middle of the fields, about 400 yards east of Lochside Drive, at the foot of the hillside.

As a result of our realization, we contacted BC Hydro Ecologist Dr. Scott Harrison who immediately came from Vancouver and inspected the site. He and I would like you to help us to identify any other areas on Martindale Flats in which you have seen other birds come down. There are not only Trumpeters, but other birds such as blue-listed Greater White-fronted Geese and Tundra Swans in danger of electrocution. We have seen anywhere from 20 to 320 Trumpeters using these fields in the wintertime. If you think you have found an electrocuted bird or witness an electrocution, please contact me at my home (598-0158) or through my e-mail address, dnewell@sd61.bc.ca.

In the meantime, linesmen in the Martindale area have been notified of the situation and will put up line bird deflectors as soon as the flats have dried out in the spring. The deflectors, which dangle down, can only be put up once the ground is dry as the lines are live and crews are in danger of being electrocuted themselves.



Trumpeter Swans. Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy



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2006 Butterfly Count Report

By James Miskelly

The 2006 butterfly season started with a bang, then a snarl, then an extended whimper. Early warm weather gave spring species a wake up call, but it was just a tease. The spring stopped and started repeatedly, and never really took hold. Most early-emerging species were late and reduced in numbers. Anglewings, elfins, and blues all had low counts in 2006. At the same time, Sara's orangetip was recorded in normal numbers. Clearly, environmental conditions affect all species differently.

One happy story of the spring was the apparent return of Sara's orangetip, Propertius duskywing, and Moss' elfin to Mt. Douglas, where they were not recorded in 2005. Their apparent absence in 2005 was the result of a Ministry of Forests pesticide application in 2004. It now appears that they were not actually eliminated, just temporarily reduced to undetectable levels. While these species have not yet returned to their pre-2004 levels, it is heartening to see that they did survive the spraying.

Species	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Total
Propertius Duskywing	9	0	1	0	0	0	10
Two-banded Checkered Skipper	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
European Skipper	0	0	36	38	0	0	74
Woodland Skipper	0	0	0	30	389	0	419
Clodious Parnassian	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Anise Swallowtail	17	2	34	14	8	0	75
Western Tiger Swallowtail	21	6	145	54	1	1	228
Pale Swallowtail	1	5	19	3	2	0	30
Pine White	0	0	0	17	8	0	25
Cabbage Butterfly	164	51	158	201	77	18	669
Sara's Orangetip	77	5	0	0	0	0	82
Purplish Copper	5	4	5	76	2	3	95
Cedar Hairstreak	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Brown Elfin	9	2	0	0	0	0	11
Moss' Elfin	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Grey Hairstreak	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Western Spring Azure	183	26	10	0	4	0	223
Silvery Blue	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
Satyr Comma	31	0	2	0	0	0	33
Green Comma	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
California Tortoiseshell	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Mourning Cloak	10	2	0	1	0	0	13
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Painted Lady	0	0	7	1	0	0	8
Westcoast Lady	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Admiral	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Mylitta Crescent	0	5	4	0	0	0	9
Lorquin's Admiral	2	0	90	93	11	0	196
Common Ringlet	0	0	39	12	69	1	121
Common Woodnymph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Arctic	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	545	113	561	542	571	23	2355

As the summer progressed, butterfolk waited eagerly for the progeny of 2005's huge crop of painted ladies to make their return. Well, they never did show up. In fact, all migratory species were scarce; only two red admirals were recorded, and no westcoast ladies. A few closely related species were also very reduced, such as mourning cloak, California tortoiseshell, and Milbert's tortoiseshell (which was not recorded at all on the 2006 counts). Another species absent from the 2006 counts was the common woodnymph, which has been making inroads in our count area for the last few years.

Certainly one of the contributing factors to low numbers in 2006 was the low participation in the counts. However, this cannot be the only factor, as species that are related in taxonomy or ecology seemed to be reduced proportionately. For my part, I will do my best to improve the 2007 counts by harassing the volunteer counters a bit more to increase participation.

The most exciting addition to the 2006 count was the great arctic. This species was recorded on the Victoria Butterfly Counts only once previously, in the mid 1990's, and even that was not a definite record. In 2006 two individuals were unequivocally identified at the summit of Mt. Wells during our June count period. Like many arctics, this butterfly is unusual in having a two-year life cycle. Almost all low elevation records from Vancouver Island are from even numbered years. The great arctic was once known from many



Great Arctic. Photo: James Miskelly

local hilltops, such as Little Saanich Moutain, Mt. Douglas, and Seymour Hill, but most recent records come from montane and alpine areas further up the island. It's nice to know that there are still places to see the great arctic that are as accessible as Mt. Wells. Let's hope the ease of access doesn't ruin the spectacular natural features of this hill.

The Victoria Butterfly Counts always have a use for more volunteer counters. If you would like to participate, please write to jmiskelly@telus.net or call 477-0490.



Restoration of Wetlands Key to Reducing Future Threats of Avian Flu Investments in 'Ecosystem' Health Likely to Pay Dividends in War Against Infectious Diseases

Editor's Note: This was a media release (April 11, 2006) from the United Nations Environment Programme. During the time this issue was being put together, Britain was reporting their first cases of the avian flu in domestic turkey flocks.

estoring tens of thousands of lost and degraded wetlands could go a long way towards reducing the threat of avian flu pandemics a new report today says. The loss of wetlands around the globe is forcing many wild birds onto alternative sites like farm ponds and paddy fields, bringing them into direct contact with chickens, ducks, geese, and other domesticated fowl. Close contact of wild birds and poultry species is believed to be a major cause behind the spread of avian influenza. Clearing intensive poultry rearing units from the "flyways" of migratory birds would also be prudent. "Intensive poultry operations along migratory wild bird routes are incompatible with protecting the health of ecosystems that birds depend upon. They also increase the risks of transfer of pathogens between migrating birds and domestic fowl," says the study.

The report has been commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from a team led by leading Canadian academic Dr. David Rapport. It focuses on

the environmental factors underpinning the re-emergence of old diseases and which are likely to be triggering the rise of new ones like highly virulent avian influenza or H5N1. The report's preliminary findings, announced at a scientific seminar on avian influenza taking place at UNEP's headquarters in Nairobi, concludes that current "heroic efforts" focusing on "isolation, quarantine, culls and medications" are likely to be quick fixes offering limited short term benefits. It recommends that governments, the United Nations and public health experts back environmental measures in order to counter the spread of diseases like H5N1 over the medium and long term.

Other possibly more controversial suggestions, aimed at reducing contact between wild birds and poultry, include shifting livestock production away from humans and other mammals such as pigs. The report accepts that in some parts of the world, like South East Asia, separating poultry from people is at odds with generational cultural traditions and practices. "As unpalatable as this may be, where it is clearly in the interest of preventing future pandemics with potentially catastrophic global effects, it can and should be undertaken," argues Dr. Rapport, Honorary Professor of the Ecosystem Health Programme, Faculty of Medicine, University of Western Ontario, and a member of the firm Eco-

Health Consulting of Salt Spring Island, British Columbia.

Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP's Deputy Executive Director and Officer in Charge, said: "These thought-provoking findings will need to be looked at in detail by all those involved in fighting current and future threatened pandemics. However, what this research underlines is that the link between a healthy environment and disease prevention is no marginal topic, but an important component in public health policy particularly in a globalized world". He said: "There are numerous pressing reasons for conserving and restoring degraded ecosystems like wetlands". The services they provide for humankind are vital and of great economic importance. Wetlands are natural water storage features: they filter pollution, help absorb floods and are home to numerous species

A rarely-seen Tufted Duck at King's Pond. Photo taken Ferbruary 1, 2007: Marie O'Shaughnessy



including fish. "Their ability to disperse and keep wild birds away from domestic ones is now yet another compelling argument for conserving and rehabilitating them," added Mr. Kakakhel.

The two day avian flu seminar, organized by UNEP, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the African Eurasian Water Bird Agreement (AEWA), has brought together experts from across the world. The seminar builds on the work of the international Scientific Task Force on avian influenza established by CMS last August which now comprises experts from 13 UN Bodies, treaty organizations and non governmental organizations. It was preceded on Sunday by the first World Migratory Bird Day where the main celebrations were organized by internationally renowned author Kuki Gallmann and the Great Rift Valley Trust at the Laikipia Conservancy in Kenya. The report also comes in the wake of an expert workshop held in Curitiba. Brazil organized by the UNEP Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The experts in Brazil concluded that a far wider range of species including rare and endangered ones may be affected by highly virulent avian flu than has previously been supposed. These include big cats like leopards and tigers, small cats such as civets, and other mammals like martens, weasels, badgers, and otters.

The CBD workshop also concluded that over 80 per cent of known bird species, including migratory and non migratory ones may also be at risk with members of the crow family and vultures of particular concern. The experts are also worried that the impact of the highly virulent virus may extend far beyond direct infection of species, including on livelihoods and trade as countries take measures to combat the problem. Culling of poultry, especially in developing countries where chicken is a key source of protein, may lead to local people turning to 'bushmeat' as an alternative. This may put new and unacceptable pressure on a wide range of wild living creatures from wild pigs up to endangered species like chimpanzees, gorillas and other great apes.

The CBD experts also expressed concern over the development of a genetic mono-culture of domestic poultry claiming that this makes many domestic fowl less disease resistant. In late 2005, more than 120 governments endorsed resolutions at a meeting of three key wildlife treaties – AEWA, CMS and the wetlands treaty Ramsar – which recommend strengthening biosecurity in farming; improving global surveillance and research on avian influenza; developing early warning systems and avoiding ineffective or counter-productive 'quick fixes' such as culling migratory birds or destroying their wetland habitats.

For more information please contact:

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Results of the 2006 Christmas Bird Count

By Ann Nightingale

F our years of good weather on a Christmas Bird Count must be some kind of a record! Once again, Victoria CBC counters managed to get through the day with no rain, and except for a few exposed areas, very little wind. The Sooke and Saltspring Island/Sidney counts were also blessed with great days, weatherwise. This year, the exception was the Duncan Christmas Bird Count, held on one of the rainiest New Year's Days in recent memory.

The weather leading up to the counts had caused some concerns. Record winds toppled many trees, record rainfall turned a lot of areas into swamps or mud, and just a couple of weeks before the count, Victoria had a pretty good dump of snow. No doubt this barrage of wild weather had an effect on some of our numbers.

The Victoria count had 167 field counters this year, and just over 50 observers at their feeders. Many thanks to those who take the time out of their busy pre-holiday schedules to help out with this important event. We will likely have the highest number of field counters in Canada again this year, a trend that I would love for us to continue. Last year, we had the fourth highest number of field participants in North America.

Our feederwatcher numbers are still much lower that we would expect, and we have some ideas on how to boost them next year. I could use some help with this. If you are interested in helping coordinate the feederwatch, please contact me, and we can work out a strategy.

Our bird numbers this year were up quite a bit over last year. Our total of 94,659 individual birds is our best total in the past five years. Interestingly, a significant number of these birds were on the ocean, possibly blown in by the strong winds of the week before the count.

Overall, though, our bird count trend is downward from the heyday of the 1990s. In the chart below, you can see how our counts were building from the inception of the count circle in 1958 to the late 1980s. Things really took off then for several years, but since the peak in 1993, we have been moving downward. This is especially disconcerting given that our participant numbers remain high, and we have had the advantage of good birding weather for several years. The dip you can see on the chart in 2000 was a truly awful birding day, a rival to this year's Duncan count!

Among the 144 species seen this year, two new species were added to the Victoria CBC Checklist: Ruddy Turnstone and Common Yellowthroat. These are both excellent winter sightings for the area. Other unusual birds included a Brown Pelican, aTundra Swan, 3 Brant, a Common Redpoll (only the second for our area), Cassin's Auklet, Least Sandpiper and an American Black Duck. Although they don't count as separate species, there were also a Slate-coloured Junco and Common (Eurasian) Teal reported.

It seems that most years, there are a few unusual birds around that don't get included in the count. Two that escaped detection on the count day were the American Bittern at Swan Lake, and the Rock Wren at Island View Beach. Both birds have been observed by many birders, but they were not to be found on the day of our count.

This year, a few species did produce record highs: Wood Ducks continue to prosper at Mystic Pond and Bow Park, four Spotted Sandpipers put in appearances, Common Murres covered the offshore area (possibly blown closer to shore by the winds), and in the bushes, Bewick's Wrens and Fox Sparrows hit new highs. Many people wondered how the Anna's Hummingbirds would fare during the unusually rough weather, and if the CBC results are an indication, they did not do so well. The count of these little powerhouses was the lowest in four years, dropping from 391 last year to 323 in 2006. Still, the fact that the majority of them seemed to make it through the meteorological challenges attests to their fortitude!

If you are interested in reviewing Christmas Bird Count data, historical information and trends for any of these areas, they can be seen online at http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/.

Next year's Victoria Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, December 15, and it's going to be a special one! It's time to go for another record. To the best of our knowledge, there hasn't been a CBC in Canada with more than 200 field participants. We're going to make that a goal for next year. There will be more news to come about the 2007 CBC (possibly even including food!) in the coming months. Stay tuned!

Participant List, Victoria CBC 2006

Dave Aldcroft Arnold Aldkirchner David Allinson Tracy Anderson Mary Andrews Tom Austin Ian Barclay Debra Barr Jacklyn Barrs Lonny Bate Ron Bates Brent Beach Barb Begg Louise Beinhauer Mike Bentley Janice Brown Cathy Brown Martha Burd Barry Byers Cynthia Callahan Carolyn Callahan David Campbell Muriel Carlson Bob Carroll Dannie Carsen Beverley Catrall David Cattral Bob Chappell Barbara Chouinard Darren Copley Claudia Copley Elizabeth Cross Bill Dancer Laura Darling Isobel Dawson Fiep DeBie Brent Diakow Neal Donegani Warren Drinnan

Don Eastman Mike Edgell Ros Eldridge Chris Engelstoft Sue Ennis Jane Ferris Cam Finlay Maiya Finvers Dave Fraser Jeff Gaskin Bryan Gates Jeremy Gatten Tom Gillespie Heather Glass Sharon Godkin Rob Gowan Mitchell Grant Joe Gray Frances Gundry Wendy Gzowski Robert Hadley Poul Hansen Andrew Harcombe Bruce Hardy Chris Harris Gordon Hart Phyllis Henderson John Henigman Bob Houston Geoff Huber Edith Hunsberger Gaileen Irwin Susan Karens Jim Kirby Barb Kirby Linda Knox Adrian Koolman Bob Lake Barbara Lake Marilyn Lambert Warren Lee Shelagh Levey John Levey

Veronica Druce

Kitty Lloyd David Luxford David Lvnn Agnes Lynn Cheryl Mackie Pat MacLeod Alan MacLeod Hannah Main-van der Kamp Mark Malleson Morwyn Marshall Jeanne S. Martin Derrick Marven Denise Mason Margie Mayfield Mike McGrenere Barb McGrenere Marilyn Miller Gail Mireau Marilvn Misner Judy Moores Glen Moores Mary Morris Sheila Mosher Judy Muir Trev Neufeld Geoffrey Newell David Newell Ann Nightingale Brian Nyberg Mark Nyhof Hennie Nyhof Colleen O'Brien Marie O'Shaughnessy Patti Parish Dorothy Parker Ed Pellizzon Olwen Rambo Leah Ramsav Cory Rauborn Cathy Reader David Reidell Wayne Robertson

Dave Robichaud Donna Ross Janice Sacks David Sacks Chris Saunders Ann Scarfe Rick Schortinghuis Margaret Scott Margie Shephard Norma Smith Camilla Smith Jane Spackman Hilary Stead Tom Stevens Margaret Stevens Ann Stewart Andy Stewart David Stirling Jack Sutherland Ken Sutill Jacquie Taylor Adam Tavlor Judith Terry Mike Toochin Gail Tupper Ed Tupper Allister Urquhart Mutang Urud Ben van Drimmelen Leo Vezina Joyce Vezina Ted Walker Fern Walker Sharon White Bruce Whittington Jean- Anne Wightman Harvey Williams Lorna Wood Genie Wright Doris Young Mark Yunker

Mary Robichaud

2006 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

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2006 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

** indicates new record in 2006	Prev High	incl above	30	62	79	8	25	15	14	1712	282	370	96	04	1st record	370	202	67	e	57	960	37	5004	16375	130	288	18	16794	6589	**7831	260	290	6401	113	1198	21	9	44	11	2	391	71	12	152	07	51	1	659
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ssərA inuoO	Species	Bald Eagle (unknown age)	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	American Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	Virginia Rail	American Coot	Black-bellied Plover	Killdeer	Black Oystercatcher	Greater Vellowlers	Creater Lenowiego Ruddy Turnstone	Black Turnstone	Surfbird	Sanderling	Least Sandpiper	Rock Sandpiper	Dunlin	Wilson's Snipe	Bonaparte's Gull	Mew Gull	California Gull	Herring Gull Thaver's Gull	Western Gull	Glaucous-winged Gull	Unidentified Gull	Common Murre	Pigeon Guillemot.	Marbled Murrelet	Ancient Murrelet	Cassin's Auklet Phinocerous Auklet	Rock Pineon	Mourning Dove	Barn Owl	Great Horned Owl	Barred Owl	Short-eared Owl	Anna's Hummingbird	Belted Kingfisher	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Downy Woodpecker	Hairy woodpecker	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Shrike	Steller's Jay

2006 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

** indicates new record in 2006	Prev High	10002	420	125	2312	2522	558	171	**324	569	11	4000	402	51	14327	1200	18183	272	600	9	C7	t 1ct record	949	112	**695	937	89	10	376	1124	3423	2160	126	1377	22	26	282	19/3	9386	240	187	2975	125518	154
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asərA fnuoO	Species	Northwestern Crow	Common Raven	Sky Lark	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Bushtit	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Brown Creeper	Bewick's Wren	Winter Wren	American Dipper	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Hermit Thrush	American Robin	Varied Thrush	European Starling	American Pipit	Cedar Waxwing	Orange-crowned Warbler	Y ellow-rumped vvarbler Townsend's Wischler	Common Vallowthroat	Spotted Towhee	Savannah Sparrow	Fox Sparrow	Song Sparrow	Lincoln's Sparrow	Swamp Sparrow	Willte-tilloated Sparrow	Golden-crowned Sparrow	Dark-eyed Junco	Red-winged Blackbird	Western Meadowlark	Brewer's Blackbird	Brown-headed Cowbird	Pine Grosbeak		House Finch	Common Reapon Pine Siskin	American Goldfinch	Trening Grosbeak	House Sparrow	Count Totals	Species Totals

Wasp Nest

By Barbara Begg

This wasp nest was built on a utility wire near Wain road in North Saanich and was the first paper nest I can recall seeing attached to a hydro or telephone wire. There were yellow and black, compact-shaped wasps working on the nest and coming and going. Eventually the nest fell or was knocked down. I tried, unsuccessfully, to find some wasps on the ground, but did pick up a sample of the nest and would welcome any feedback as to species or if this was an unusual site.

Wasps are very efficient predators of other insects, helping to control harmful garden pests and are also important pollinators, although not as efficient as bees. Unless nests are situated in a dangerous location, they and the occupants should not be destroyed.

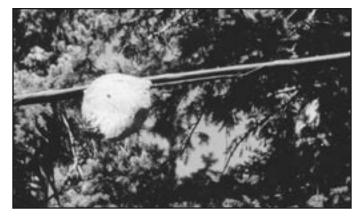


Photo: Barbara Begg

Wasps are territorial creatures. I have found that a fake wasp nest hung close to my sundeck table allows me some relief from pesky wasps in late summer when I want to take my meals outside. I use a brown paper bag stuffed with paper and I understand that plastic ones are available in some stores and maybe even more realistic and effective.



2007 Natural History Courses



Here's a chance to support the society while learning a bit more about natural history. These programs will be taught by experienced VNHS trip leaders who have volunteered their time. The proceeds will support VNHS conservation and education activities. Please note the lower prices for members (yet another reason to join!). We are interested in offering other courses but require more leaders to come forward. Please call Darren Copley at 479-6622 if you have any suggestions.



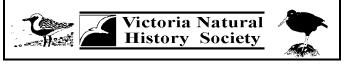
An easy introduction to the pursuit of birding for those with little or no previous experience. The emphasis will be on bird identification in the field. We will start with an illustrated lecture on March 8, 2007 and 6 Saturday morning field trips from March 10th to April 21st. The cost will be \$75 for non-members and \$45 for members.

Take the next step beyond the basics of identification. Our group of local VNHS experts places an emphasis on birding by ear and the identifying field marks of those difficult groups and species. This course includes 8 very diverse field sessions around Victoria led by 8 different leaders. Sessions run on Sunday mornings beginning on April 22, 2007. The cost is \$95.00 for non-members and \$65.00 for members. The course is limited to fifteen participants.





If you have any questions, or would like to register, please call the Goldstream Nature House: 478-9414. More detailed brochures will be available in the new year.

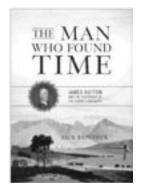


The Man Who Found Time Book Review by Bill Merilees

A Great Read!

Every once in a while a book comes along that is unquestionably remarkable and irresistible. "The Man Who Found Time" is one such book that I unconditionally recommend, even if geology is not "your cup of tea".

"On a sunny June afternoon in 1788, three gentlemen from Edinburgh boarded a boat on a desolate Scottish beach.... The men were in



search of a rock exposure on the battered cliffs that would prove one of the most stunning claims in the history of science – that the Earth was ancient beyond calculation". Their findings would propel its proponent, James Hutton, a scientific visionary, into the ranks alongside Copernicus, Galileo and Charles Darwin; four men whose contributions helped free science from the straightjacket of theology. Hutton has largely been overlooked, even though his findings had a considerable impact in supporting Darwin's theory on evolution. Hutton's story and that of the Scottish Enlightenment are quite fascinating!

"The Man Who Found Time", by Jack Repcheck is well written and easily understood. Munro's Books had copies of this book (listed at \$40.00 Can) on sale for \$5.99 – a bargain to anyone with a Scot's pension for being thrifty! Copies are on order at the sale price.

A Birder from Out of Town

By Fiep Debie (fiepdebie@gmail.com)

n June 26, 2006 my partner and I left Prince Edward Island to start our one year adventure to travel across Canada by camper van. Hans is on sabbatical from the Atlantic Veterinary College visiting various schools and clinics and I, as a wildlife/field technician, try to learn as much as possible from volunteering in wildlife rehabilitation facilities across the country.

In P.E.I. I usually participate in four Christmas bird counts and thought it would be wonderful to experience the Victoria count on December 16. Ann Nightingale suggested that I would join Camilla's Esquimalt Harbour group. The weather was a bit damp and cool when we started our count at the Juan de Fuca golf course, but seeing the many wigeons in the pond and nice company made up for that. I had a delightful day with Camilla, Mary and Fran.

Besides picking up new birds that we don't see at the East coast, (Golden-crowned Sparrows, Spotted Towhees, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, and a Pileated Woodpecker) it was very nice to be introduced to beautiful Victoria. We could still see the remnants of the violent wind storm. Most of the Golden-crowned Kinglets were foraging on the ground.

That evening I went to the potluck to listen to an upbeat Ann and team leaders giving us the count results. It was very nice to meet and converse with other birders. Some people asked me about the P.E.I. counts and the number of birds we see. I could not give an exact number at the time, but thanks to Dan McAskill, CBC coordinator in P.E.I., I can provide you with some bird count information. The count circles have a diameter of 24 km. However, we also have a significant area that is water out of sight of land. Generally there are from five to nine groups of field counters working on specific assigned areas. In recent years, our species counts usually run between 45 and 55 species on the count day with between one and four or more species being added during count week (the three days before and after). In 2005, the P.E.I. National Park had 50 species on count day, Hillsborough 52 species, and 57 on the unregistered Montague count. In total, 83 species were seen on the three counts. This year the numbers were 39, 48, and 53 respectively.

I met Bill Dancer that night and heard about his Tuesday morning birding group, which I joined the following week. Bill always likes to pick up his first 20 species in the Bowker Avenue area. in which we succeeded. We; Ross, Gwen, Edith, Bill and John, then went to Cattle Point and I was very happy to see Black Turnstones on the rocks. At Swan Lake we saw pretty Anna's Hummingbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds and then Bill spotted the elusive bittern! Needless to say, we had a great birding morning. The following week we went to Cedar Hill Golf course, another nice walk and lots of good birds. Gwen found my last new species for the year, a beautiful Eurasian Wigeon. Ken let me have a good look at it through his scope.

On January 1 I had the pleasure of participating in the Duncan Count with Agnes Lynn, Jack, Ken and our dedicated driver David (who had to put up with our "stop", "back up", and "a bit forward" demands). At our first stop we were overwhelmed by the number of Bald Eagles we spotted. So much, that by the end of the day, while looking for other species we complacently mentioned: oh, it's just an eagle! The weather didn't let up, but this didn't discourage Agnes from standing in the pouring rain with poncho and scope to add more species to our list. In addition to Bald Eagles, we saw large groups of Trumpeter Swans, Canada Geese and American Wigeons. It was another successful and enjoyable birding day.

My last outing with the VNHS was with Rick Schortinghuis's Saturday morning birding group. We met under blue skies at Witty's Lagoon in Metchosin. It was nice to see some familiar faces; Bill, Ken, Jack, Agnes, Rick and also to meet Dave, Liz, Graham and Jim. We were impressed by the force of water at the waterfall from all the rain. The ten of us vigorously added new species to the list. At the ocean, a Western Grebe, Horned Grebe, Western Gull, and Common Loon were found. Then we chased a flock of shorebirds with Surfbirds, Oystercatcher and Black Turnstone. Thanks to Bill, we saw two Spotted Sandpipers. All together we ended up with 74 bird species!

It has been a tremendous birding year with a wonderful "grand finale" in Victoria. I added 14 new species to my life list. Most importantly, I've met a number of enthusiastic and active VNHS members. Being past secretary and member of the P.E.I Natural History Society, I am inspired by the dedication of the individual members.

I would like to thank everyone I have met at the VNHS events. You truly made my visit to Victoria special.

P.S. I apologize if I have misspelled or left names out.

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 15 members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our "welcome" column:

Marian

Henry and

Summerfield

birdwatching

Persimmon Place

Laura Jordison

Pheasant Lane

birds, marine,

photography

Kenneth Hedman Fifth Street

Mary Nelson McKinstry Road *birds*

Phyllis Becker Wickheim Road *birds, travel* Mark and Ingrid Taylor Patrick Place *birds*

HAT Tricks

Beyond Stewardship: Camas Hill Landowners Leave a Conservation Legacy



By Kate Emmings, Land Officer, Habitat Acquisition Trust

It was early morning and pockets of mist dotted the landscape the first time I saw Camas Hill. Rocky outcrops and Douglas-fir jutted out through grassy meadows that held the promise of carpets of spring flowers. The landscape had the feeling of a sleepy giant rising to meet the day, chuckling at me and my fellow humans as we whizzed by in our vehicles thinking of everything but the splendour that lay just a stone's throw from the asphalt.

When I visit the properties of people who want to covenant their land, I am humbled by their care for the life that exists around them; similarly, I am in awe of the work that they willingly undertake to protect their land. My visits with Moralea Milne and John Webb, the owners of a large portion of Camas Hill in Metchosin, have had this effect on me.

Moralea Milne is a VNHS member who has a passionate interest in preserving the natural environment. She is a graduate of the Restoration of Natural Systems program at UVic, editor of the Native Plant Study Group newsletter and long-time member of the Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee. Her husband, John Webb, is



The view from the crest of Camas Hill. Photos provided by author

a Metchosin councillor who ran and won his position even while declaring himself an environmentalist. He works as an executive director with Network BC. John and Moralea both feel honoured to leave such a precious legacy to their community and future generations while still being able to protect their children's inheritance.

The Camas Hill covenant is approximately five hectares (12 acres) and ranges in elevation from approximately 100 m to 260 m above sea level. The entire area is classified as sensitive under the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory and it contains the uncommon arbutus-shorepine-manzanita plant association interspersed with Douglas-fir/rock outcrop ecosystems. Most notable about the area is its list of rare species including the provincially blue-listed branded skipper (*Hesperia colorado oregonia*) and the red-listed Sharp-tailed snake (*Contia tenuis*).

A conservation covenant will protect the natural beauty of Camas Hill while allowing Moralea and John to live on their property, pass it on to their children or sell it. The covenant is a voluntary legal contract signed by the landowner and the covenant holders (usually two organizations - land trusts or in some cases, local or regional governments) and prevents current and future landowners from destroying native vegetation, removing soil, disturbing watercourses, and using harsh chemicals on the land. The agreement is attached to the title of the land and is designed to protect the natural features of the property in perpetuity. The integrity of the covenant is ensured by the production of a detailed baseline report, which describes and maps the property's vegetation communities. This report is used as a reference for annual monitoring done by the covenant holders in consultation with the landowner.

Covenants are a unique tool for conservation because they allow for habitat protection while maintaining the rights of landowners to coexist with nature on the land. In most instances they are the most financially viable mechanism for habitat protection, especially in areas like the Capital Regional District where property values are high. However, they do require funding for legal fees, surveying, covenant negotiation and baseline reports. Like land acquisition, they also require ongoing funds for monitoring, either in the form of a monitoring endowment or annual donations.

Currently, HAT is fundraising for the protection of Camas Hill and other properties in the Capital Regional District. We are hopeful that, through tools like conservation covenants, the promise of carpets of spring flowers and mist enshrouded rock outcrops in areas like Camas Hill will continue to be a part of the landscapes of Southern Vancouver Island.

Habitat Acquisition Trust would like to thank the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team (GOERT), Michael McIlvaney, BC Land Surveyor and the generous donors who have contributed to the protection of this property to date. If you would like to support the protection of the Camas Hill property and similar properties, or if you would like to learn more about protecting your land, please contact Kate Emmings, Habitat Acquisition Trust at 250-995-2428, or via email at kate@hat.bc.ca . Donations can also be sent directly to Habitat Acquisition Trust, PO Box 8552, Victoria, B.C., V8W 3S2. Please put "for covenant acquisition" in the memo line of cheques and correspondence.



Moralea Milne and husband John Webb, recent donors of the Camas Hill covenant.



The blue-listed Branded Skipper (Hesperia colorado oregonia).

Letters

To whom it may concern:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution of the Alice M. Hay Scholarship to my Ph.D. program in Biology at the University of Victoria.

The Alice M. Hay Scholarship was awarded to me on the basis of species and habitat conservation. A major factor that drives my research is my concern with the preservation of old-growth temperate rainforest on Vancouver Island and the description of new species. I received my B.Sc. in Ecology and M.Sc. in Soil Ecology from the University of Calgary, and as a community ecologist, I am interested in processes that create and maintain patterns of biodiversity.

My particular passion in ecology is a group of soildwelling organisms called oribatid mites, who are abundant, incredibly diverse, and species rich, particularly in forest soils. These mites are also found high in the canopy of temperate rainforest trees, in organic matter accumulations called suspended soils. The research I perform involves much time spent in the Walbran Valley on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island collecting these mites from canopy and forest floor soils associated with western redcedar trees. The main focus of my research is exploring the taxonomic differences between these two communities, and how these mites may have dispersed to the canopy.

During my Ph.D., which began in January 2004, I have identified and documented 137 species of oribatid mites, Many of these species are part of a distinct canopy mite community and are undescribed. My results show the abundance and diversity of canopy oribatid mites, the prevalence of undescribed species in this system, and the need for conservation of these ancient trees.

The Alice M. Hay Scholarship is a wonderful contribution to my research. Recently the results of my research were presented at an International conference in Amsterdam, and submitted to peer-reviewed scientific journals for publication. I am currently working on my first species description of an arboreal oribatid mite from Vancouver Island. In the upcoming year I plan to incorporate molecular techniques to aid in distinguishing canopy and forest floor mite populations, and attend conferences in Utah, California and Saskatoon. Your contribution will help me attain these goals. Once again, thank you for this award.

Sincerely, Zoë Lindo

Dear Members - Victoria Natural History Society:

On behalf of the Buttertubs Liaison Committee I would like to thank you for your very kind donation to Phase I of the Campaign to Secure the Integrity of Buttertubs Marsh. We are pleased to enclose your commemorative certificate which we trust will become a treasured reminder of your participation to preserve this wetland.

You will be pleased to know we have nicely exceeded our goal of \$45,000 and are now looking ahead to Phase II of the campaign; to acquire and preserve the remaining portions of the Buttertubs wetland that remain in private hands.

Thank you for assisting our wetland preservation efforts! Yours truly,

Bill Merilees, Chair, Buttertubs Liaison Committee

BULLETIN BOARD

Saturday Birding Group

Meet opposite the entrance to Beaver Lake Park on Elk Lake Drive (between Haliburton and Royal Oak) at 8:00 a.m. Birding location will be decided at the meeting point. For more information, call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 652-3326.

Year-round Tuesday morning birding group

Meet at the foot of Bowker Ave. at 9:00 a.m. Birding activities take place at various locations around Greater Victoria. For information, contact **Bill Dancer** (721-5273) or dcdancer@shaw.ca.

10% OFF scopes & binoculars for VNHS members



MODERN - VINTAGE

WE BUY & SELL

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 Building, Room 159, University of Victoria; **Botany Night**: the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature House; **Birders' Night**: the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser Building, Room 159, University of Victoria. **Marine Night**: the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., in Murray and Anne Fraser Building, Room 159, University of Victoria. 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.

MARCH

Tuesday, March 13

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION AND AGM *The Bats of British Columbia*

David Nagorsen will cover the basic natural history of our bat species with an emphasis on the ten bat species found in south-western British Columbia. He will also touch on current conservation and management issues. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend and *a coffee mug.* Everyone welcome.

Tuesday, March 20

BOTANY NIGHT

Wildflowers of Patagonia

Yvonne Rorison will present her impressions from fascinating flora of Patagonia. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome, bring your friends.

Sunday, March 25

FIELD TRIP

Satin Flowers at Mount Wells

This trip is planned to see the best display of satin flowers (*Olsynium douglasii*) in the whole area. As well as an extensive display of early spring wild flowers, this location also offers a good chance to see a golden eagle soaring above us. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Bring a stick and wear sturdy shoes. Take the Trans-Canada highway towards Goldstream Park. Turn left on Sooke Lake Road shortly before you get to Goldstream. Turn left on Humpback Road at Ma Millar's pub. At the intersection with Irwin Road, stay right. Follow Humpback Road to the park entrance. Meet at the parking lot on the right at 10:00 a.m. Bring a lunch and drinks for the all day outing. No pets please. Call **Agnes Lynn** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Monday, March 26

MARINE NIGHT

Basking Sharks: The Slaughter of BC's Gentle Giants

The basking shark, a fish the size of a bus, used to appear off the BC coast every spring. During World War II, the fish became a nuisance to commercial nets and fishing trollers. By 1970, the basking shark was virtually eradicated in B.C. Researchers **Dr. Scott Wallace** and **Brian Gisborne** have pieced together the history of how this amazing fish has become locally extinct and their book on the subject will be on sale at the talk. 7:30 p.m. Room 159, Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, March 28

BIRDERS' NIGHT

10 Years Working With Hummingbirds

Cam Finlay has been the project coordinator of the Vancouver Island and B.C. chapter of the Hummingbird Banding Network which monitors and bands hummingbirds along their migration routes. You will be amazed at some of the information Cam will share with us regarding these amazing little birds. Everyone is welcome; we meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser building, University of Victoria. *Bring a mug!*

Saturday March 31

FIELD TRIP

Brant Geese and the Large Numbers of Sea Ducks and Gulls Up-Island

Come up to Parksville to see the annual congregation of Brant Geese and the large numbers of sea ducks and gulls. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 7:00 a.m. Leader TBA. Call **Rick** at 652-3326 for more information.

March 30 - April 1

EVENT

Olympic BirdFest 2007

Visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of coastal Pacific Northwest – Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, American Dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and a banquet with our partner, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe are all among the planned activities. The Birdfest with the most spectacular setting! Contact: Dungeness River Audubon Center, P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, WA 98382; 360-681-4076; info@olympicbirdfest. org, www.olympicbirdfest.org.

<u>APRIL</u>

Friday, April 6

FIELD TRIP

Enjoy Good Friday at Mill Hill

Start the long weekend off with a visual treat. In a previous year, when we counted up how many wild flowers were in bloom at each park we visited, Mill Hill won hands down. Extensive work has been done to remove the invasive Scotch broom from the park's Garry Oak ecosystem and we can enjoy the benefits. Please note the trail is steep and rough on the way down but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Start at 10:00 a.m. Take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right on Six Mile Road just before bridge, then left on Atkins Road. Turn left at the four-way intersection to continue on Atkins Avenue that leads to the park entrance on the right. Bring a snack and a drink for an approximately 3 hour outing. No pets please. Call **Agnes Lynn** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Sunday, April 8

FIELD TRIP

Celebrate Easter Sunday at Oak Haven and Gore Parks

The spring wildflowers are early in these two delightful Saanich Peninsula parks, so they will whet your appetite for what will follow over the next month or two. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the entrance to Oak Haven Park on Garden Gate Dr., off Benvenuto Ave. Bring a snack and a drink. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Monday, April 9

FIELD TRIP

Easter Monday Leisurely Walk up Lone Tree Hill

Another treasure trove of spring wildflowers. Diversity of species on this hill is amazing but don't forget to take in the fantastic views from this high viewpoint as well. Start at 10:00 a.m. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Turn right on Millstream Road and continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Keep left to continue on Millstream Road to the park entrance on the right. Bring a snack and a drink. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Tuesday, April 10

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION **** The Butterflies of Vancouver Island

Derrick Marvin of Duncan will be sharing his slides and stories of butterflies found on Vancouver Island. This is a great warm up for participants involved in the Victoria Butterfly Survey, which runs from April to September. *****Please Note Room Change For This Evening.* We meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Matthews/McQueen Theatre (Room C-103) in the David Strong Building; bring your friends and a mug!

Thursday, April 12

FIELD TRIP

Evening Stroll up Horth Hill

We will try to squeeze more spring wildflowers into the season by enjoying a short evening outing up North Saanich's Horth Hill. Start at 6:00 p.m. Meet in the parking lot at Horth Hill. To get to Horth Hill, take Pat Bay Highway north to the Wain Road exit. Follow Wain Road west to cross over the highway, then turn right on Tatlow Road to the park entrance on the right. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw. ca) if you need more information.

Friday, April 13

FIELD TRIP

Take the Day off and Join us at Thetis Lake Park

This park is filled with many trails overflowing with wild flowers, common and uncommon. Pause to enjoy the ferns, lichens, mosses and other supporting cast. We can spend the whole day here with the many trails to explore. Meet at the main parking lot at 10:00 a.m. To reach the park, take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right on Six Mile Road just before the bridge, continue on this road when it goes under the highway and

you will come to the Thetis Lake Park parking lot. Bring a lunch and drinks. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Saturday, April 14

FIELD TRIP

Birding Blenkinsop Lake

Come and check out the early migrants at Blenkinsop Lake with **Bill Dancer.** Meet at the south end off Lochside Drive at 7:30 a.m.

Sunday, April 15

FIELD TRIP

Enjoy all that Jocelyn Hill has to offer

Join **Rick Schortinghuis** to enjoy the wildflowers and the birds as well. Our goal is to see the gold stars (*Crocidium multicaule*) in bloom but we will not be disappointed if we miss them as there is an amazing array of other delights and great panoramic views from the ridge. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Turn right on Millstream Road and continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Keep left to continue on Millstream Road. Go past Lone Tree Hill Park on your right and watch for Emma Dixon Road and a large Stonecrest sign on the left. The trail head is on Millstream Rd. just past the sign. Park on the right hand side of the road. Meet there at 9:00 a.m. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Bring a lunch and drinks. No pets please. Call **Agnes Lynn** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Tuesday, April 17 BOTANY NIGHT

Members' Night

Bring your slides or digital photos related or unrelated to botany of British Columbia, North America, or the Mother Earth. Contact **Adolf** if you plan to contribute: aceska@telus.net. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, April 18

FIELD TRIP

Another Short Evening Walk up Bear Hill

Bear Hill at this time of year should be good for seeing calypso orchids (*Calypso bulbosa*) right beside the path. As the days are getting longer, we should have a few more minutes to savour the plants and the view. Start at 6:00 p.m. Take the Pat Bay highway north past Elk Lake. Turn left at the traffic lights at Sayward Rd. Follow road around left, then right to continue on Brookleigh along the north side of Elk Lake to Oldfield Rd. Then right from Oldfield on to Bear Hill Rd. which is another right. Continue on Bear Hill Rd. to the parking lot. Please note exact instructions as there is more than one way to get to Bear Hill. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Friday, April 20

FIELD TRIP

Visit to Lake Cowichan Wildflower Reserve

There are not enough weekend days to see all the birds and flowers at this time of year so take a vacation day and join us. We will visit the pink lilies (*Erythronium revolutum*) as well as stop to explore other areas along the Cowichan River. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. to car-pool. Bring a lunch and drinks for the day-long outing. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Saturday, April 21

FIELD TRIP

Birding Viaduct Flats and Quick's Bottom

Come out and check out the great trails around Viaduct Flats, Quick's Bottom and Layritz Park. A lot of the early migrants should be around. Meet at the foot of Viaduct Flats at 7:30 a.m. Leader TBA.

Sunday, April 22

FIELD TRIP

Plants of Uplands Park and Cattle Point

This is an area of rare and endangered plants in an urban setting. Conservationist **Matt Fairbarns** will show you many reasons why it is special. Cattle Point/Uplands Park is on Beach Drive between Oak Bay and Cadboro Bay. Meet at the nature sign at the Cattle Point waterfront parking area at 9:00 a.m. Bring a snack and a drink for an approximately 3 hour outing. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw. ca) if you need more information.

Sunday, April 22

FIELD TRIP

Birding Ladysmith

Explore the nether regions of the Victoria checklist area. Join **Bruce Whittington** for a walk along Ladysmith's historic waterfront, and see B.C.'s largest colony of Purple Martins. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Transfer Beach Park. Turn right off Hwy 1 at the traffic light at the old post office and the town hall (not the light at Safeway) and park in the paved parking lot. Allow 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 hours to drive from Victoria. Meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 7:30 a.m. to car pool. Bring a lunch. Call **Bruce** at 1-250-245-5325 if you would like more information.

Wednesday, April 25

BIRDER'S NIGHT****

Mosquitoes, Crows and the Arrival of the West Nile Virus **Michael Jackson**, Ph.D. of Culex Environmental Ltd. will be shedding some light on this subject and the possible impact to the crow populations of Victoria and the Lower Mainland. *Please Note Room Change For This Evening*.**** We meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Matthews/McQueen Theatre (room C-103) in the David Strong Building. Everyone is welcome for this presentation. Bring a mug!

Thursday, April 26

FIELD TRIP

Meander Around UVic's Finnerty Gardens

The Finnerty Gardens are the most visited venue at the University of Victoria. Although the gardens have something of interest on everyday of the year, the rhododendrons and other companion plants are at their peak at this time. Not many native plants but there are lots of birds in the garden to watch for. For a quiet peaceful visit, meet outside the UVic Chapel at 6:00 p.m. for an approximately 1 hour tour. To find the Chapel, go around the Ring Road and look for Parking Lot 6. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Friday, April 27

FIELD TRIP

Mount Tzouhalem Ecological Reserve

Another weekday trip to enjoy the rare deltoid balsam root (*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*) as well as other wildflowers of the

Garry oak meadow. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. to car-pool. We may also stop at Somenos to see the Garry Oak Preserve there and check out a few birds. Bring a lunch and drinks for the day-long outing. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

Saturday, April 28

FIELD TRIP

Birding Observatory Hill

Join **Ed Pellizzon** in birding Observatory Hill. Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the entrance off of West Saanich Road. There should be a good number of early migrants. Call Ed at 881-1476 if you would like more information.

Sunday, April 29

FIELD TRIP

Birding Rithet's Bog

There should be a good number of early migrants around. Meet at 8:00 a.m. along Dalewood Lane (just off Chatterton Way) in the northwest corner of the bog. Leader is **Marie O'Shaughnessy**; call her at 598-9680 if you would like more information.

Monday, April 30

MARINE NIGHT

The Culture of Oceans: Traditional Management Systems and Marine Habitats along the B.C. Coast

Dr. Nancy Turner, Distinguished Professor, and acting Director of the School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria will talk about indigenous knowledge of marine ecosystems, habitats, and species, and how coastal First Peoples in B.C. have been using, caring for, and managing their marine resources for countless generations. Given the decline of our marine resources from over-exploitation, pollution and other causes, we can learn many lessons from traditional practices. 7:30 p.m. Room 159, Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone welcome.

Saturday, May 5

EVENT

16th Annual Camas Day

Co-sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and the Friends of Beacon Hill Park, this celebration of one of our region's special places starts at 9 a.m. and continues all day. Guided Walks (each 1-2 hours long) about birds, bugs, botany and first nations history all start at the flagpole on top of Beacon Hill. The next issue of the magazine will have details about the times, topics, and leaders, but be sure to mark your calendars now so you don't forget! For more information, call **Helen Oldershaw** (592-6659) or email **Agnes Lynn** (thelynns at shaw.ca).

Tuesday, May 15

BOTANY NIGHT

Plants and Poetry **Andy MacKinnon** will

Andy MacKinnon will present a second installment of his poetry night. The last Botanical Poetry Night was a feast for the few courageous who attended. "Little bit of poetry does not kill you," says a Czech popular song of the old, good 1960's. Contact Andy if you want to include your own poetry or your own choice. His e-mail is metchosinmacs@yahoo.ca. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome, bring your friends.



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