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# The Victoria NATURALIST

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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: This close-up of edible thistle (*Cirsium edule*) was taken at Hurricane Ridge on last year's VNHS adventure. Be sure to register for this year's trip (p. 22) to get your own photos of this, and many other wildflowers.  
*Photo: Sharon Godkin*

When I first heard the words "garlic mustard" it sounded like something meant to be spread on a smokie. But after I had spent hours pulling it out by the bagful from a local protected area, I became aware of the myriad of issues surrounding this European invasive. It is completely shade-tolerant, self-fertile, a prolific seed producer, and releases toxins into the soil that inhibit the growth of other species.

In reality our protected areas are anything but; the impacts from their immediate neighbours are among those most acutely felt. Almost without exception, residents surrounding our region's parks insist on disposal of their yard debris over the back fence. Many of our invasives are plants that have "stepped out" from these debris piles: ivy, periwinkle, St. John's wort, yellow archangel, etc.

If you don't want bindweed in your landscape, why is it acceptable to add it to a natural area, where, except for the dedication of volunteers such as the Anti-Ivy League and others, it spreads unchecked? Instead of valuing the neighbouring park that provides so many benefits, we instead treat them like garbage dumps.

While it is difficult to stop wildlife from spreading the seeds of some of these invasives into natural areas, we can start by not throwing things we don't want into them. Even more importantly, let decision-makers know that the sale of many species poses a threat to wild spaces and should be prohibited. And while you're in letter-writing mode, ask Parks staff to get off their lawn mowers and get busy looking after our natural heritage through the removal of exotics.

*Claudia*

# President's Message

By Darren Copley

It's hard to believe that a year has gone by since I stepped into the position of VNHS President. The summer is normally when the Society (including your board) takes a bit of a breather from the year's activities, but there always seems to be something great happening.

Looking back it has been quite a year, and I expect a lot more exciting things in the coming one. We've helped a Leadership Victoria group fundraise to complete the teaching shelter at Witty's Lagoon, and the Viewing Platform at Viaduct Flats is now a *fait accompli*, with the mounted telescope for all to use. We've also just finished

the busy school program time of year, with many exciting field trips offered to local schools by our volunteer naturalists. Make sure to participate in the Breeding Bird Atlas, as so many of our members are, and don't miss out on the great summer field trips organized by Rick and Agnes.

By the time you read this, your board will have finished our annual retreat, which is where we brainstorm and discuss some big picture ideas. We have a great group of directors, so I am really looking forward to the upcoming year.



The Tuesday Group's field trip to Langford Lake on June 9, 2009. Photo provided by Bill Dancer

# The Longevity of Birders

By Gwennie Hooper

The birders of the Tuesday Group are renowned (or should be!), for their longevity. Their founder, Davey Davidson, lived to be 100, Elizabeth North to 98, Vera Guernsey 94 and Harry Davidson 92. Dorothy Henderson, who was the Recorder until the end of December 2002, would have carried on birding except that the very next week she broke her arm. She is now a cheerful 98. And Ros Eldridge who still comes out week after week, wet or fine, recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

And there is now another centenarian. Harold Pollock celebrated his 100th birthday in April surrounded by family and old friends. He joined the VNHS in 1979 and birded

with the Tuesday Group for many years, until he was 93, and he also had an illustrious record with the Society. The citation for his Distinguished Service Award in 1993 says that "he enlisted and inspired a great many people throughout British Columbia to provide bluebird nest box trails with the result the Mountain and Western Bluebirds have increased in many parts of the province". He himself built more than 1000 nest boxes, and not only built them but cleaned and maintained them.

Harold also served on the Board of Directors and on several committees. Looking back, he is disappointed that bluebirds did not return in the numbers he had hoped for, but the VNHS is proud to have had him as a member.



Western Bluebird. Photo: Tim Zurowski, <http://timzphotography.com/>

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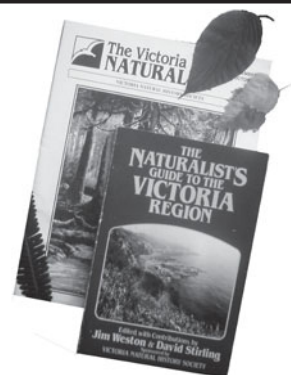
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- ☐ VNHS *Naturalists' Guide to the Victoria Region*

Ask at a meeting, or contact Darren at 250 479-6622





# Pining for Pine Whites

By Annie Pang

I am always quite amazed at the childlike enthusiasm I feel as I find butterflies during Victoria's warmer months...when they do come, that is (meaning the warmer months). There is nothing quite like spotting any butterfly, especially if it is one I've never seen before. So it was with the first female, and later male, *Neophasia menapia* or "Pine White" during late summer 2007.

It happened while I was taking pictures of immature Rufous Hummingbirds feeding at Esquimalt Gorge Park (formerly Gorge Kinsmen Park). What caught my attention was its seemingly lazy flight pattern, although I have since noticed that many municipal horticultural workers completely miss this species altogether, mistaking it for the Cabbage White commonly referred to as "that white butterfly" or "moth".

I had previously seen small photographs of both male and female Pine Whites, but I had never actually seen one in real life. Needless to say, it was an exhilarating experience! I thought her "mascara" was rather badly applied – the black markings on the wings appeared smudged, as if drawn with a black crayon. Such was my ignorance that I was not certain what I had seen until later, when I compared my photographs to some reference pictures. I only saw the one female and only that one day at that one garden for a few

*"Look who has come, trimmed in black lace,  
riding on a breeze right up to my face.*

*A drifting snowflake in warm summer's light,  
from blossom to bloom, dances the Pine White..."*

brief moments before it flew off. It would be another year before I found another female Pine White.

A few days later, in August 2007, I returned to the same garden to shoot more pictures of hummingbirds when, once again, I was completely distracted by the lazy, drifting flight of another even more striking Pine White...the male. He planted himself on some Goldenrod and gave me plenty of opportunities to collect a number of lovely shots. These are gorgeous butterflies to see close-up, with their very delicate, lacy black "trimmed" wings, and despite hearing hummingbirds practically landing next to me, I was too enthralled with the male Pine White to take any notice of them (and that is saying something!).

Pine White winters as an egg and the caterpillar eats new



Left: Pine White female on Goldenrod flowers, Esquimalt Gorge Park. Right: Pine White male. Photos: Annie Pang

growth higher up on pine, hemlock and Douglas-fir trees. I have seen both adults nectaring on Goldenrod (*Solidago sp.*), *Verbena bonariensis* (native to Brazil, although not invasive here where it self-seeds in a half-hearted fashion) as well as numerous other flowers at Glendale Gardens, where I found a few males. I have only seen females at Esquimalt Gorge Park, and only one a year.

The male and female are very different in appearance but I have never seen either at ground level in any numbers and it is not commonly seen in urban Victoria gardens. Most people do not even know it exists where I have seen it, and so, like many of the butterflies, it goes largely unnoticed. I find this sad. And, like many other species of butterflies, its numbers appear to be declining. Before I budged out of my own urban garden, years ago, it was seen by another member in great numbers at Lake Matheson flying high up above the trees. He must have had a really good set of binoculars!

Perhaps the effects of climate change have affected this species as surely as so many others. The summer of 2008 certainly was spooky in the seeming absence of

many species in the numbers I had seen in previous years, although I found the same number of Pine White butterflies (that being not very many).

Time will tell, as it always has. At least I was able to find one more female Pine White (and males in two different locations) in 2008, and was able to get close enough to notice that she had more of a yellowish cast to her body and parts of her wings closest to the thorax. The male Pine Whites had no yellow. If anyone has any ideas about why this might be, I'd be more than happy to know why.

With the very cold winter we had and the lateness of spring, with its below seasonal temperatures, it will be interesting to see if I can find any Pine Whites this year, although I remain optimistic.

*See Annie Pang's display of "poetographs", featuring summer butterflies intermingled with a few dragonflies and other "friends", at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Nature House, July through August.*

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## Annual Butterfly Report

By Jeremy Tatum

Some of us have been toying for a while with the idea of producing an Annual Butterfly Report in a style similar to that of the Annual Bird Report with which most active birdwatchers are now familiar. One possibility might be to print it together with the already-established Annual Bird Report as a single Annual Bird and Butterfly Report. We think we are now past the toying stage and are ready to go. Annie Pang has agreed to start the ball rolling, so we now invite all butterfly enthusiasts to send your annual butterfly observations to Annie. This will nicely complement James Miskelly's monthly Butterfly Counts, in which many of us already participate.

For those of you who don't know Annie, I recommend that you pay a visit to the Nature House at Swan Lake and have a look at her wonderful "poetographs" of butterflies and other insects on display there. And in case you don't know what a "poetograph" is – well, go to Swan Lake and find out. You'll be glad you did.

As with the Annual Bird Report, we don't want detailed day-by-day records of every time you see a

common butterfly such as a Cabbage White. Of more interest are the dates when each species first appears and when the last of them are seen, or reports of dates on which notably large numbers appear. Records of caterpillars and their food plants are also of great interest. And, as for the Annual Bird Report, reports of rare, out-of-season, or hard-to-identify species must be supported by some details of how the identification was made.

Records for the year should be sent to Annie by the end of October. Any additional sightings after that month can be sent when they are seen, or in any case before the end of January of the following year. Your records should be arranged species-by-species, and not trip-by-trip. The names of the butterflies, and the order in which they should be listed, can conveniently be the names and order used by James in his Monthly Butterfly Count records – email Annie (ve7jsp@islandnet.com) for a digital version of this list. Records should also be sent to Annie by email in .doc or .pdf format or by snail mail (228 Obed Avenue, Victoria BC V9A 1J6).

# Birding Vietnam

By Gail Schacter

Shortly before leaving on my five week trip at the beginning of November to Vietnam, I attended a VNHS meeting, and when mentioning to another member that I was not going to bird exclusively on my trip to Vietnam, she was shocked. However, although I only had 14 days to go from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City (HCM City), I wanted to see the traditional sites, as well as to get in some birding! In hindsight, I wish I had shifted the balance and birded more. The remaining three weeks of my five week trip in total, would be with a choral group, mostly in HCM City, but with a side trip to the Mui Ne area.

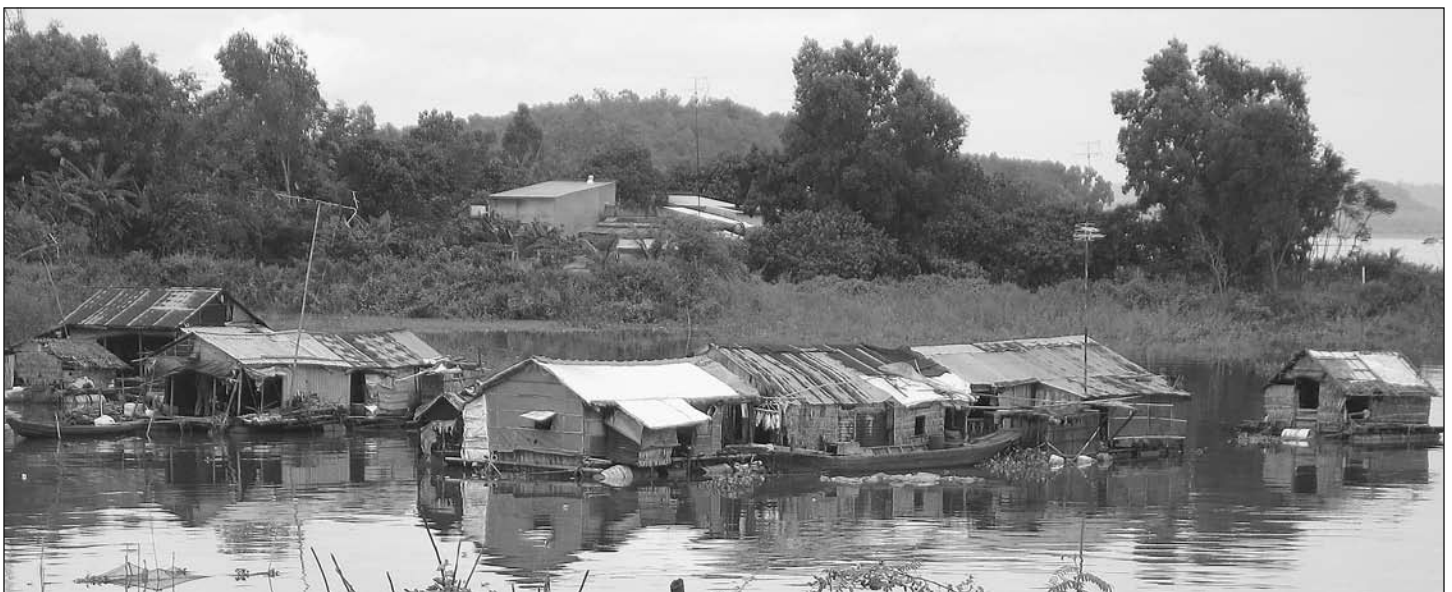
My researching began with googling a generalized “birding in Vietnam”. An excellent site for planning was <http://birdlifeindochina.org/birdwatch/>, which both listed and rated many of the good sites as well as providing a bird list of each one. I am also a regular visitor to the Lonely Planet Thorn Tree Travel sites, specific ones, of course, when I am in the planning stage of a trip. On the Vietnam branch, I connected with a passionate birder who is in the hospitality industry in Vietnam (<http://www.freewebs.com/hannostamm/vietnam.htm>) and it was he who took me birding for a day when I was in Mui Ne. Birdingpal.org was also useful, and is where I connected with a phenomenal guide, whose story I will share with you later. The planning for the birding component of the trip took the most effort, and chosen spots were certainly difficult, time consuming, or expensive to reach, especially traveling solo.

Birding places were narrowed down to include Cuc

Phuong National Park (near Hanoi), Bach Ma National Park (a point of the triangle of it, Hue and Hoi An), Cat Tien National Park (between Dalat and HCM City), Halong Bay, as well as near Mui Ne (about three hours up the coast from HCM City).

As had been predicted, while the beauty of the boat ride in Halong Bay remains a highlight of the trip, it was indeed a “birding desert”, and all that was seen were Black Kites and a Great-billed Heron. While not at all necessary, in the interest of efficiency of time, I had booked this, as well as my plane transportation, between Hanoi and Hue (where I would head into Bach Ma National Park), and Danang to HCM City before my departure.

A last minute phone conversation just before leaving convinced me that I must not miss Cuc Phuong National Park. Unable to spend overnight because of time constraints, I negotiated a taxi to leave Hanoi at 5 a.m. for the three hour trip. Generic packaged trips to this park do not allow for being in the right place at the right time. Hiring a guide at the gate was simple, and while waiting for him, sighted a Scarlet Minivet and Ashy Minivet. Once on the path, other species seen included Crested Serpent-Eagle, White-throated Kingfisher, White Wagtail, Common Tailorbird, Crested Goshawk, Black-crested Bulbul, Striped Tit-Babbler, Sooty-capped Babbler, Rufous-fronted Babbler, Puff-throated Bulbul, Black Eagle, Black Bulbul, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Gray-throated Babbler, Limestone Wren-Babbler (a target bird for this park), Rufous-capped Babbler, and Spotted



*Photos by Gail Schacter*



Dove, plus a Common Kingfisher seen on the way into the park. Dozens of brightly colored butterflies flitted by when we walked through the sunny spots. We spent some time going through the Endangered Primates Centre before I had to leave. It broke my heart to have to head out at 3 p.m., meaning I would have missed both early morning and late afternoon times.

I flew from Hanoi into Hue, and steady rain. I had been corresponding with Le Guy Minh, whose name I had found on Birdingpal.org. Little did I know at this point his reputation as one of the top birders of Vietnam, and birding with him was an extraordinary experience. He was kind enough to arrange for a car and driver to pick me up in Hue, book accommodations at Bach Ma National Park (so damp that I couldn't fall asleep until I changed into my synthetic long underwear), and drop me back in Hoi An.

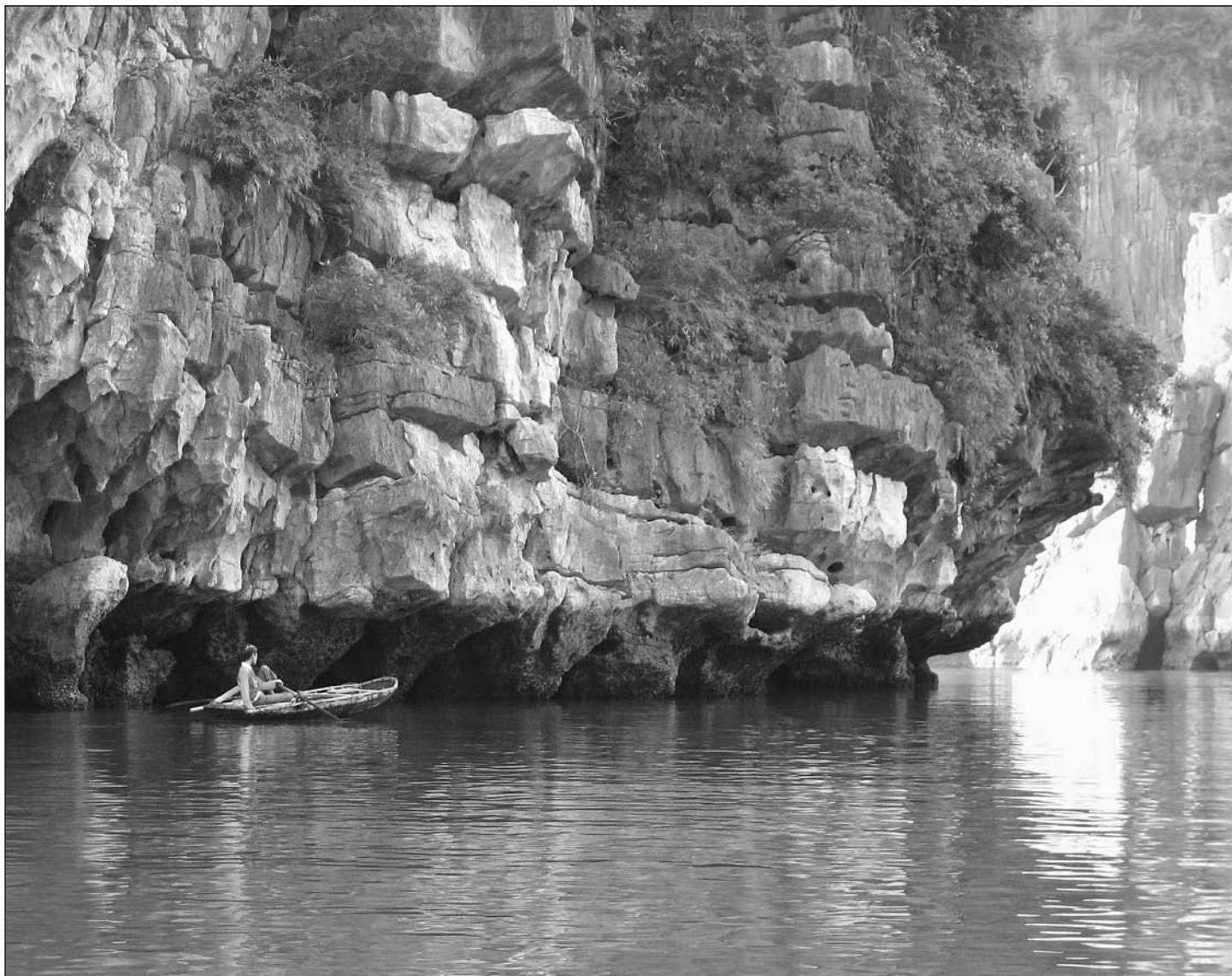
Weather was great, and we first birded the lower area prior to entering the park. We sighted a White-throated Kingfisher, Long-tailed Shrike, Racket-tailed Treepie, Marsh Laughingthrush, Greater Coucal, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Richard's Pipit, Spotted Dove, Eurasian Blackbird, Chinese

Pond-Heron, Red Junglefowl, Eurasian Hobby, White-crested Laughingthrush, and Red-vented Bulbul.

We then drove up the narrow windy road to the guest accommodation area of the park, from which we took a pleasant walk mostly along the road, and off to some narrower paths. There were leeches, and I still have the scars to prove it. Species seen included Black-throated Laughingthrush, Olive-backed Pipit, Puff-throated Bulbul, Mountain Fulvetia, Silver-eared Mesia, Greenish Warbler, Gray-cheeked Warbler, White-throated Fantail, Canary Flycatcher, Striated Yehina, Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler.

The evening was spent in the restaurant which served "the meal of the day". I ordered a beer, and enjoyed chatting with a young French traveler who I joined for dinner. He had spent several days up at the summit, hiking and exploring the many trails. I also spoke with two volunteers from Germany who were there working on projects.

Planning an early start, we woke up to torrential rain! Quite truly, it just poured down, but we valiantly set out. Numbers of species was low, but the quality: Orange-flanked Bush-Robin, Silver Pheasant (seen four separate times as



it scurried back and forth on the dense jungle floor), Slaty-backed Forktail, and Indochina Yellow-breasted Green Magpie. Soaked to the skin, we finally gave up, and drove down the hill.

Minh is not only a superb birder, but also head of Bach Ma National Park's Ecotourism Department in Vietnam, and is passionate about the environment around him. He says, "One of the best ways to lead the love of people to nature is birding. While bird watching, people can observe nature around them and day by day, they will grow to love it. While their love of nature is high, the protection of nature also comes high." It is a challenge because unless this interest is piqued, "people can kill a 25 gram bird for meat to share with four children instead of using an egg", especially in economically challenged populations. However, birding requires binoculars, which are both poor quality in Vietnam and/or very expensive. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, if you are interested in making a donation of your old optics, or passing on a few dollars (I have recently heard of a place in town which has decent bins for a very reasonable price), I have made arrangements to get them to Minh, and his youth groups. I can be reached at 250-384-5905/[gailschacter@shaw.ca](mailto:gailschacter@shaw.ca)).

Flying from Danang to HCM City, I left the next morning for Cat Tien National Park. Searching had shown that with the short time I had available, using public transportation was out of the question. Googling "overnight trip in Cat Tien" brought a significant range of prices from tour operators for essentially the same trip as there is only one place to stay in the park. Fortunately I found a companion for the one I chose, as the cost of these trips went down with the numbers joining into them. I was assured that the guide would be knowledgeable, which unfortunately turned out not to be true. There was a packaged birding group there, and on the advice of their guide, hired a local birding guide for the next morning.

With Dzong showing the way in the morning, we saw the following on our three hour walk: Streak-eared Bulbul, Racket-tailed Drongo, Olive-backed Sunbird, Black Drongo, Asian-brown Flycatcher, Red-breasted Parakeet, White-rumped Shama, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Ashy Drongo, Black-crested Bulbul, Long-tailed Treepie, Flame-backed Woodpecker, Dark-necked Tailorbird, Liniated Barbet, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Black-and-Red Broadbill, Thick-billed Green Pigeon, Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, a flock of Pied Hornbills, Orange-billed Trogon, White-throated Kingfisher,



Asian Fairy Bluebird, and a Black-crested Bulbul. Just prior to leaving the park, I saw a Blue-tailed Bee-eater. Again, I left wanting more!!

In the middle of our tour, our choral group headed to a lovely resort in the Mui Ne area for several days, and it was here that I met up with Hanno, who picked me up and took me up to a top of a hill by cable car (the attraction for most people there was the huge concrete Buddha), and we walked down. Birds noted were: Green-eared Barbet, Blue-eared Barbet, Indian Cuckoo (heard), Greater Coucal (heard), Palm Swift, Needletail sp., Cattle Egret (the reason so many of these egrets survived the upsurge of hunting during the avian bird flu cull was that they did not taste good!), Ashy Drongo (heard), Spangled Drongo, Great Iora, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-crested Bulbul, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Streak-eared Bulbul, Dark-necked Tailorbird (heard), Puff-throated Babbler and Olive-backed Sunbird. Hanno is also very involved in the fight against hunting for rare birds for captivity, which is of great concern to him.

On reflection about this trip, what would I do differently? I would have spent at least one overnight in Cuc Phuong, and eliminated Hue other than a place from which to head over to Bach Ma, or even flown into Danang (the closest airport to Hoi An which was a lovely place to spend several days), going to Bach Ma from there. Definitely, I would add on at least another week, and would use HCM City only as a place from which to pass through, or even eliminate it completely as it takes at least 1.5 hours to make it to the outskirts into the surroundings of this quite unattractive city. I would have birded more!!

Do I recommend doing an independent trip? It depends on whether you enjoy doing the research, and if you have the time to get from one place to another. I certainly left feeling that I had not done enough birding, but also enjoyed having the time to view the cultural highlights of Vietnam, and the serendipity of meeting interesting people and having unusual experiences along the way.



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# The 10-Block Diet of Flora and Fauna: Getting to Know Nature in Your 'Hood

An Interview with Jim Chapman by Anne Hansen

I first met Jim Chapman on a January afternoon above the beach at Holland Point. With his “serious” optical equipment, he looked like a fellow birder to whom I could confess my obsession with oystercatchers. Next thing you know, he’s leading me to a Barred Owl, a resident of my local woods whom I had sadly overlooked on my forays to the tideline. Jim’s passion for the “everyday miracles” of nature in Beacon Hill Park is beautifully evident on his photo website <[www.beaconhillphotos.com](http://www.beaconhillphotos.com)>.

ANNE: *“The 100-Mile Diet” is a social movement that advocates eating locally. The idea was popularized by Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon, a Vancouver couple. They chronicled their year-long eating experience in a bestselling book by the same name in 2007. You clearly have an insatiable visual appetite for the creatures and plants within walking distance of your residence. Do you see your pursuit of the “10-Block Diet” as a kind of rebuttal to the bird “list-ers” who think nothing of travelling in a fossil-fuel burning aircraft in order to spend a short, impersonal time with a new and exotic species? Would you say you’re inviting a simpler, yet much richer experience than the jet-setters?*

JIM: Travel has its time and place. However, we seem to have taken our ability to travel beyond what is healthful for our planet and for ourselves. One of the most frequent responses I receive from people who view my photos or watch my “Ordinary Miracles” video on my website is that they had no idea so much beauty and biodiversity could be found in a single city park. It doesn’t matter whether they are from another country or from across the street – people are opened to the possibility of seeing more right where they are. They start walking more and sitting outdoors longer to notice and appreciate Nature’s immediate gifts in their local parks, neighbourhoods, and yards. They even send me their photos and inspire me!

Another interesting thing happens on the 10-block diet: We get to know our local plants and animals much better. We form “personal” relationships with them that have depth and meaning just like we enjoy with family and close friends. We don’t need to travel merely to see something new because we begin to see something new locally in the neighbourhood: birds that build nests, mate, lay eggs, care for their broods and teach them to fly and find food. We start examining the old familiar ground with new fresh eyes in anticipation of what we might find.

My dear friend, Maggie, used to play a game she called “One Square Foot of Earth” with her nephew and niece. She



Jim Chapman. Photo: Anne Hansen

would sit them down in her backyard and each one would examine one square foot of ground to see what they could discover and share with each other. I was just as wide-eyed amazed as those children were by what could be found. You could say that what I do with my camera is a variation of Maggie’s game – discovering and sharing what I find in Nature as I walk around my neighbourhood.

ANNE: *American wilderness defender Edward Abbey once wrote that cars should be banished from parks. He said, “Let the people walk. Or ride horses, bicycles, mules, wild pigs – anything – but keep the automobiles and all their motorized relatives out. We have agreed not to drive our automobiles into cathedrals, concert halls, art museums, legislative assemblies, private bedrooms and the other sanctums of our culture; we should treat our national parks with the same deference, for they, too, are holy places.” (Desert Solitaire, Ballantine Books, 1968). In New York City, there’s a movement led by cyclists and pedestrians to declare Central Park car-free. Have you fantasized about Beacon Hill Park being car-free?*

JIM: I’ve fantasized about finding ways to inspire people to respect and protect Beacon Hill Park and beyond through my work. In my heart of hearts, my desire is to reveal the extraordinary beauty in the animals and plants in the Park so people will be overcome by the inner beauty they

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“I take my best pictures when I have my camera with me.” – Henry Kock, 1952-2005, author of *Growing Trees from Seed* (Firefly Books, 2008)

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themselves ARE! Once that happens, all kinds of creative ideas emerge and we find ourselves walking more and cherishing the Nature that supports us all. We begin to truly collaborate in ways that lead us to understand our collective power to nurture or destroy our parks and our planet. Maybe freeing the Park from cars is one way we will act on our insight and responsibility; maybe it's another way that is yet to be imagined.

ANNE: *Talented photographers are invariably confronted with the classic insult, “You must have a great camera!” That’s like remarking to a painter that “you must have great brushes.” Are you a believer that art is more a matter of spirit and imagination, than skill and technique?*

JIM: Beacon Hill Park is a wonderful place to enjoy photography – regardless of the camera you use. The key is the enjoyment – not the equipment you use. Sometimes people experience the beauty of Nature in my photographs and email me, wanting to know what kind of camera I use so they can capture that same beauty themselves. My answer to that question is: “It doesn’t matter what you use.” I can say this because some of the photos you see on my website were taken with a small, palm-size digital camera with a 3.5x zoom lens. Others were taken with a digital SLR camera with an 18-200mm zoom lens. Based on the feedback I receive from viewers, what’s liked most on my site has nothing to do with the camera I used.

It’s funny how most photographers think I have some amazing telephoto lens or some expensive micro lens to capture the images I do. I have neither. And when I encounter a “serious” nature photographer outdoors, I can see their huge camera-lens-tripod coming before I can see them smile at my almost invisible setup hanging by my side. Some of them take some great, inspirational photos; many don’t.

I have always loved the opportunity (and the challenge!) to be close to wild creatures, to earn their trust and then to photograph them. I always want to be close enough to hear their breathing and their other, almost inaudible sounds, and to see the tiny movements in their eyes – all without frightening them. The hawks, in particular, take time to befriend. Sometimes it takes weeks of my visiting with them for hours every day until all of a sudden they no longer view me as an outsider. I have actually touched and been touched – physically (as well as emotionally and spiritually) – by countless wild creatures and occasionally I’m even unable to photograph them because they moved too close! So when you view my photographs, you are really meeting my dear friends. Each one is a savored “experience,” not merely some impersonal picture captured by expensive cameras and lenses at a distance.

All of this is my longwinded way of encouraging you to go outdoors – whether it’s in your backyard or the

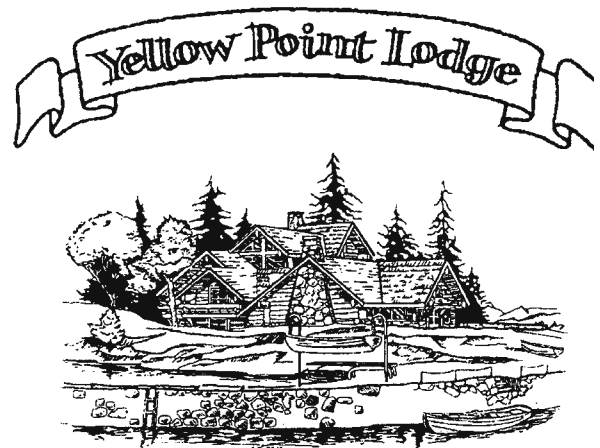
backcountry – and experience the beauty you ARE in the Nature you see. If you have a camera (even if it’s on your cell phone!) and enjoy taking photos, use it to draw you closer into an intimate relationship with some amazing creature, flower, or pond.

ANNE: *A naturalist once told me he observed a Hermit Thrush coming to the rescue of his fellow who was struggling to free himself from some brushy tangle. What kinds of altruism among animals have you witnessed?*

JIM: I have observed amazing acts of altruism in animals – things that went against everything I thought I knew about animal behaviour. I’ll give you an example.

I followed a brood of Cooper’s Hawk chicks for hours every day as they began to fly and live outside the nest. All of them were growing larger and when the parents would kill a bird and bring it to a branch; each would aggressively grab one and eat it – all except one.

That one chick was noticeably smaller and rarely got any of the food before one of the larger birds grabbed it and took it away. I was worried and yet knew nothing I could



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do to help. Then one day, all of a sudden and for no obvious reason, one of the small chick's siblings began to chew its food and then – instead of following its instincts to protect its food – it turned its head upside down and began to let the little one eat out of its mouth! It did this for several days until the small chick grew stronger and larger. Very quickly that puny one became the most aggressive of them all! It would immediately grab the kill brought in by the parents and would fiercely defend it against its siblings – even the one who had fed it! There's a photo of one of those altruistic moments between these two birds in the "Ordinary Miracles" video slideshow on my website.

ANNE: *When you are outside for hours at a time, quietly observing another being, do you feel as if you're having an otherworldly experience?*

JIM: What "other" world? When I'm still, quiet and looking directly into the eyes of an animal or the heart of a dew-covered, blossoming rose at dawn, I realize the one world we are all sharing. I've looked, but I have not been able to find any dividing lines or boundaries in beauty. Can you? Sometimes when I cross a border between countries, I'll have an otherworldly experience because I know it's all made up. The guards, the rules, the invisible line on the earth – all that must surely be from some other world!

ANNE: *In 1977, Jerry Mander wrote a book called Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television, which became a bit of a cult classic. He argues "the more the natural environment is conveyed on TV, the less people will understand about it or care about it, and the more likely its destruction becomes. Ecologists would be wise to abandon all attempts to put nature on television." Surely the great naturalists, writers, and wilderness defenders – people like Rachel Carson, David Suzuki, Farley Mowat, Robert Bateman, Roger Tory Peterson, and indeed Emily Carr – did not come upon their calling by watching television. Did you have a sort of "Farley Mowat" childhood, with plenty of unstructured, exploratory outdoor experiences?*

JIM: The television was at the centre of our family and rarely did we watch a show on Nature. Other than gathering around the dining room table at mealtime, watching television shows was one of the few times when we all came together. There was virtually no conversation – but we were in the same room at the same time! Lucky for me, my father liked to fish. He started taking me out with him on weekends when I was three and I LOVED it. Nature began to have her way with me on those fishing trips and when we moved out of the city when I was 12, I really fell into it. I was continually drawn outdoors and began exploring the woods, creeks, bogs, fields, and all they contained. It was an uneducated and non-scientific love affair that introduced me to the wondrous creatures and plants around our home and helped me to survive the unnatural ways of school.

ANNE: *Like many Victoria residents, you are relatively new to BC. Have you experienced a similar connection to any other place?*

JIM: Yes, but never was it so complete. When I arrived in Victoria five years ago I had an experience that was not unlike falling in love – only this time it was with a place and not a person. That passionate experience continues today.

ANNE: *Does your empathy for animals extend to your dinner plate? Are you vegetarian?*

JIM: I would say I'm 99.7% vegetarian. I do occasionally eat some fish and on rare occasions I eat some meat. I'm dedicated to eating organically-grown food – regardless of what it is. In the early 70's I decided to grow as much of my own food as I could. I moved to the country and grew a huge, wonderful organic garden for my veggies and raised beautiful goats for my milk and chickens for my eggs. I also made a deal with myself back then that I would no longer be a "hired killer" who paid someone else to do all the dirty work when I wanted to eat meat or poultry. It bothered me to see myself included in the category of people who couldn't bear the image of an animal being killed but enjoyed eating one from the market or in a restaurant. My "bible" for this endeavour was a newly published (1972) book called *Grow It* that taught me organic gardening and compassionate animal care. One chapter even included instructions on how to kill chickens in a painless way. After doing it a couple of times, I became totally vegetarian and remained that way for many years. Now, on the rare occasions when I feel the need to eat an animal, I once again pay someone else to do the dirty work – but with a first-hand understanding and appreciation of what it takes for me to enjoy that meal.

ANNE: *Do you see your work as advocacy, or an art form or both?*

JIM: I see my work as my religion. On the home page of my website you will see a quote from the Persian mystic poet, Jalâl ad-Dîn Rumi, that says, "Let the beauty we love, be what we do." My work is really that simple. In my own words, what I do is reveal extraordinary beauty in everyday life. Nature photography is the purest outlet I have been able to find for the creative energy that comes out of my ecstatic practice of worshipping the extraordinary beauty I see in my neighbourhood. Of course this work also becomes an advocacy and Nature's influence has changed many a mind and life – helping us to make wiser environmental choices.



JIM CHAPMAN'S  
photos are available at  
<[www.beaconhillphotos.com](http://www.beaconhillphotos.com)>

ANNE HANSEN  
paints, photographs and  
celebrates oystercatchers  
with a passion.  
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# Carnivores of British Columbia

Book Review by Michael Price

The recently released publication by the Royal British Columbia Museum titled, *Carnivores of British Columbia* is similar to many of the Museum's other handbooks on BC's flora and fauna. It is well written, and does an excellent job condensing a tonne of information on each of the noted species. It is easy to read, and provides the right balance of anecdotal/observational information about the animals and their prey, habitat, and habits, all supported by relevant documented research.

All terrestrial carnivores are described in this book; readers can learn about the iconic Grizzly Bear and some of its most sensitive social behaviours, and the ostracized Striped Skunk that primarily relies on insects for sustenance. However, readers will find little trace of marine carnivores such as Seals and Sea Lions in this edition beyond the Sea Otter, due to their only recent classification in the Order Carnivora. But rest assured, these animals will be described in an upcoming Museum handbook titled: *The Marine Mammals of British Columbia*.

The authors describe in great detail the identifying features of each mammal, with keys to both the whole animal and their skulls; yet fail to include tracks and faecal descriptions. This is unfortunate, as very few people ever witness a Wolverine, Fisher, or Lynx, but more often than not they will encounter tracks or scat left behind by these secretive creatures. And this especially holds true for all areas of BC covered by snow for six months of the year; tracks are the most abundant sign indicating the presence of an animal.

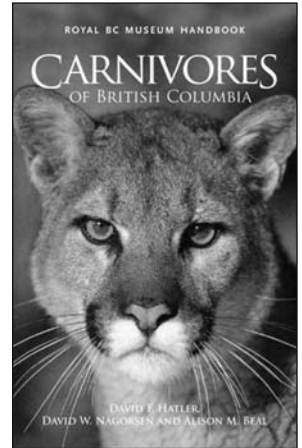
I am most impressed by the depth of information in this book on the daily/nocturnal habits of individual species, and the inclusion of observational accounts by the authors and other witnesses. For example, the authors describe

an incident of opportunistic feeding by the American Marten, "A Marten appeared and attempted to carry off a frozen package of hamburger from my food box less than five minutes after my arrival at Turnagain Lake in northern BC". These descriptions add up to provide more insight into an animal's character than a radio-collar study ever can.

Although the authors include a "conservation status" section at the end of each species' segment, I personally would have liked to see more information on each animal's ecological importance within their respective biological communities. Given the accelerating alteration of natural habitat, and the associated soaring costs to conserve threatened species, it is fundamental to understand how they fit into the ecosystem. In many ways, this should have been the major focus of the book, yet the subject is not found in any detail.

Despite several shortfalls, readers should be aware that *Carnivores of British Columbia* is an excellent reference book to read about the secret lives of many of our most elusive animals.

*Carnivores of British Columbia*. 2008 by David F. Hatler, David W. Nagorsen, and Alison M. Beal. 407 pages, \$ 27.95 (paperback). Royal BC Museum, Victoria BC. 21.2 x 14 x 2.6 cm; 540 g.



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# Vascular Plants of Francis-King Park

By Ian Cruickshank

A few years ago I decided to survey the plant life of a small tract of forest near Victoria. I chose the half of Francis-King Park east of Munn Road, a 25-hectare patch of Douglas-fir dominated forest, typical of the forests in the vicinity of Victoria except that it is mostly unlogged. The topography is undulating, creating some drier rock outcrops with open Douglas-fir and Garry oak forest, and a few wetter depressions with small wooded ponds. The area is criss-crossed with trails, providing access to all plant communities.

This plant list excludes grasses, sedges, rushes, mosses, and liverworts. Surveys were conducted on June 2, 4, and 6, 2006 and April 4, 2007. Sequence and nomenclature follows the *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia*.



Skunk cabbage. Drawing: Joanne Thomson

\* denotes introduced species    \*? denotes species with both introduced and native populations

## MONOCOTYLEDONS

### Araceae (Arum Family)

*Lysichiton americanus* skunk cabbage

### Lemnaceae (Duckweed Family)

*Lemna minor* common duckweed

### Liliaceae (Lily Family)

*Camassia quamash* common camas

*Erythronium oregonum* white fawn lily

*Maianthemum dilatatum* false lily-of-the-valley

*Prosartes hookeri* Hooker's fairybells

*Trillium ovatum* western trillium

### Orchidaceae (Orchid Family)

*Calypso bulbosa* fairy-slipper

*Corallorhiza maculata* spotted coralroot

*Corallorhiza striata* striped coralroot

*Epipactis helleborine*\* helleborine\*

*Goodyera oblongifolia* rattlesnake-plantain

*Piperia* sp. rein orchid

### Potamogetonaceae (Pondweed Family)

*Potamogeton* sp. pondweed sp.

## GYMNOSPERMS

### Cupressaceae (Cypress Family)

*Thuja plicata* western redcedar

### Taxaceae (Yew Family)

*Taxus brevifolia* western yew

### Pinaceae (Pine Family)

*Abies grandis* grand fir

*Pseudotsuga menziesii* Douglas-fir

*Tsuga heterophylla* western hemlock

## PTERIDOPHYTES

### Equisetaceae (Horsetail Family)

*Equisetum hyemale* scouring-rush

### Blechnaceae (Chain Fern Family)

*Blechnum spicant* deer fern

### Dennstaedtiaceae (Hay-scented Fern Family)

*Pteridium aquilinum* bracken fern

### Polypodiaceae (Polypody Family)

*Polypodium glycyrrhiza* licorice fern

### Dryopteridaceae (Wood Fern Family)

*Athyrium filix-femina* lady fern

*Cystopteris fragilis* fragile fern

*Dryopteris expansa* spiny wood fern

*Polystichum imbricans* narrow-leaved sword fern

*Polystichum munitum* sword fern

## DICOTYLEDONS

### **Aceraceae (Maple Family)**

*Acer macrophyllum* bigleaf maple

### **Apiaceae (Carrot Family)**

*Heracleum maximum* cow-parsnip  
*Oenanthe sarmentosa* Pacific water-parsley  
*Osmorhiza berteroi* mountain sweet-cicely  
*Sanicula crassicaulis* Pacific sanicle

### **Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)**

*Apocynum androsaemifolium* spreading dogbane  
*Vinca major*\* large periwinkle\*

### **Aquifoliaceae (Holly Family)**

*Ilex aquifolium*\* English holly\*

### **Araliaceae (Ginseng Family)**

*Hedera helix*\* English ivy \*

### **Asteraceae (Aster/Composite, Family)**

*Achillea millefolium* yarrow  
*Adenocaulon bicolor* pathfinder  
*Bellis perennis*\* English daisy\*  
*Cirsium* sp. thistle  
*Hieracium albiflorum* white hawkweed  
*Hypochaeris radicata*\* hairy cat's-ear\*  
*Lactuca muralis*\* wall lettuce\*  
*Lapsana communis*\* nipplewort\*  
*Madia* sp. tarweed  
*Sonchus* sp.\* sow-thistle\*  
*Taraxacum officinale*\* common dandelion\*

### **Berberidaceae (Barberry Family)**

*Achlys triphylla* vanilla-leaf  
*Mahonia aquifolium* tall Oregon-grape  
*Mahonia nervosa* dull Oregon-grape

### **Betulaceae (Birch Family)**

*Alnus rubra* red alder

### **Brassicaceae (Mustard Family)**

*Cardamine* sp. bitter-cress

### **Campanulaceae (Harebell Family)**

*Campanula scouleri* Scouler's harebell

### **Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle Family)**

*Linnaea borealis* twinflower  
*Lonicera ciliosa* western trumpet honeysuckle  
*Lonicera hispidula* hairy honeysuckle  
*Symphoricarpos albus* common snowberry  
*Symphoricarpos hesperius* trailing snowberry

### **Plantaginaceae (Plantain Family)**

*Plantago lanceolata*\* ribwort plantain\*

### **Portulacaceae (Purslane Family)**

*Claytonia perfoliata* miner's-lettuce

### **Caryophyllaceae (Pink Family)**

*Cerastium glomeratum*\* sticky chickweed\*  
*Moehringia macrophylla* big-leaved sandwort  
*Stellaria media*\* common chickweed\*

### **Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)**

*Sedum spathulifolium* broad leaved stonecrop

### **Ericaceae (Heather Family)**

*Arbutus menziesii* arbutus  
*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* kinnikinnick  
*Gaultheria shallon* salal  
*Vaccinium parvifolium* red huckleberry

### **Fabaceae (Pea Family)**

*Cytisus scoparius*\* Scotch broom \*  
*Lathyrus nevadensis* purple peavine  
*Lotus micranthus* small-flowered birds-foot trefoil  
*Trifolium dubium*\* small hop-clover\*  
*Trifolium* sp. clover, un-identified  
*Vicia hirsuta* tiny vetch \*  
*Vicia sativa*\* common vetch \*

### **Fagaceae (Beech Family)**

*Quercus garryana* Garry oak

### **Geraniaceae (Geranium Family)**

*Geranium* sp., probably *molle*\* geranium, (dovefoot?)\*  
*Geranium robertianum*\* Robert's geranium\*

### **Grossulariaceae (Currant and Gooseberry Family)**

*Ribes sanguineum* red-flowering currant

### **Hydrophyllaceae (Waterleaf Family)**

*Nemophila parviflora* small-flowered nemophila

### **Lamiaceae (Mint Family)**

*Clinopodium douglasii* yerba buena  
*Lamium purpureum* var. *purpureum*\* purple dead-nettle\*  
*Prunella vulgaris*\*? self-heal\*?  
*Stachys* sp. hedge-nettle

### **Polygonaceae (Buckwheat Family)**

*Rumex acetosella*\* sheep sorrel\*  
*Rumex obtusifolius*\* bitter dock\*

### **Portulacaceae (Purslane Family)**

*Claytonia perfoliata* miner's-lettuce  
*Claytonia sibirica* Siberian miner's-lettuce  
*Montia parvifolia* small-leaved montia

### **Primulaceae (Primrose Family)**

*Dodecatheon hendersonii* broad-leaved shootingstar  
*Trientalis borealis* broad-leaved starflower

### **Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family)**

*Anemone lyallii* Lyall's anemone  
*Delphinium menziesii* Menzies' larkspur  
*Ranunculus occidentalis* western buttercup  
*Ranunculus repens*\* creeping buttercup\*  
*Ranunculus uncinatus* little buttercup

### **Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)**

*Rhamnus purshiana* cascara

### **Rubiaceae (Madder Family)**

*Galium aparine* cleavers  
*Galium triflorum* sweet-scented bedstraw

## DICOTYLEDONS Continued...

### Celastraceae (Staff-tree Family)

*Paxistima myrsinites* falsebox

### Cornaceae (Dogwood Family)

*Cornus stolonifera* red-osier dogwood

### Rosaceae (Rose Family)

*Amelanchier alnifolia* saskatoon  
*Aphanes* sp. parsley-piert  
*Crataegus monogyna*\* common hawthorn \*  
*Fragaria vesca* woodland strawberry  
*Geum macrophyllum* large-leaved avens  
*Holodiscus discolor* oceanspray  
*Malus fusca* Pacific crab apple  
*Oemleria cerasiformis* Indian-plum  
*Physocarpus capitatus* Pacific ninebark  
*Prunus emarginata* bitter cherry  
*Prunus* sp., introduced\* introduced cherry \*  
*Rosa gymnocarpa* baldhip rose  
*Rosa nutkana* Nootka rose  
*Rubus discolor*\* Himalayan blackberry \*  
*Rubus leucodermis* black raspberry  
*Rubus parviflorus* thimbleberry  
*Rubus spectabilis* salmonberry  
*Rubus ursinus* trailing blackberry  
*Spiraea douglasii* hardhack

### Salicaceae (Willow Family)

*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa* black cottonwood

*Populus tremuloides* trembling aspen

*Salix* spp. (at least three species) willows

### Saxifragaceae (Saxifrage Family)

*Heuchera micrantha* small-flowered alumroot

*Lithophragma parviflorum* small-flowered fringe cup

*Tellima grandiflora* fringe cup

*Tiarella trifoliata* var. *laciniata* cut-leaved foamflower

*Tiarella trifoliata* var. *trifoliata* three-leaved foamflower

*Saxifraga integrifolia* grassland saxifrage

### Scrophulariaceae (Figwort Family)

*Collinsia parviflora* small-flowered blue-eyed Mary

*Digitalis purpurea*\* common foxglove \*

*Mimulus alsinoides* chickweed monkey-flower

*Veronica beccabunga* ssp. *americana* American speedwell

*Veronica serpyllifolia*\*? thyme-leaved speedwell \*?

### Thymelaeaceae (Daphne Family)

*Daphne laureola*\* spurge-laurel \*

### Urticaceae (Nettle Family)

*Urtica dioica*\*? stinging nettle \*?

### Valerianaceae (Valerian Family)

*Plectritis congesta* sea blush

### Violaceae (Violet Family)

*Viola adunca* early blue violet

I am struck by the diversity of organisms living on every small piece of land. It makes one really wonder about the bulldozing of ecosystems that constantly goes on, for things such as golf courses and malls. Amenities for one species at the expense of the lives of hundreds of others.

Botanizing can be a delightful pursuit. All that is needed is a small 10x hand-lens, a good plant book, a pencil and paper, and some curiosity.

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# Bird Studies Canada's Coastal Monitoring Programs: Call for Volunteers!

By Karen Barry, BC Program Officer, Bird Studies Canada

**B**ird Studies Canada <[www.birdscanada.org](http://www.birdscanada.org)> coordinates many citizen-science bird monitoring programs across Canada. Here in BC, we have two coastal programs with the goal of improving our understanding of ducks, shorebirds, and other seabirds. For these programs to be effective we need to expand our volunteer network.

The **Coastal Waterbird Survey** involves monthly bird counts along fixed 1-2 km stretches of coastline on or around the second Sunday of the month. This program focuses on the winter period (September – April), but we are also interested in summer counts. The information is used to assess long-term trends in waterbird distribution and abundance. The program has been running since 1999 and we are in the process of completing a trends analysis for 10 years of data. Some very interesting and valuable results to inform conservation planning and management are being generated, all through volunteer efforts!

The **Beached Bird Survey** involves conducting monthly beach walks, during the last week of the month, looking for carcasses that have washed up on shore. This may sound a little grim, but this information is key to understanding causes of seabird mortality and identifying which species are most vulnerable to events such as oils spills and fisheries by-catch. Volunteers are asked to visually check the wrack line, the area between the low and high tides where flotsam and jetsam come to rest. If a carcass is found, it is tagged and some measurements and observations are recorded. We supply all the survey equipment, data forms and we are always available to help with training or to answer questions.

We have many available sites around the Victoria, Esquimalt, and Sooke area. If you are interested in participating in either of our programs, or know someone who may be interested, please contact me at <[bcprograms@birdscanada.org](mailto:bcprograms@birdscanada.org)> or call toll free: 1-877-349-2473.

Many thanks to all of our current volunteers. We look forward to hearing from some new ones!



University  
of Victoria  
Continuing  
Studies

## *Birding Courses*

Join local bird biologist James Clowater for two informative and entertaining learning opportunities through the Division of Continuing Studies, UVic.

### **Marine Birds**

This series of five lectures, illustrated with slides and dramatic video presentations, is ideal for birders and naturalists interested in learning more about local marine birds and bird behaviour. Two shoreline field trips are included.

**Lectures: Thursdays, September 24 to October 22:**

7 to 9 pm

**Fieldtrips: Sundays, October 11 and October 18:**

9 to 10:30 am

Fee: \$95 plus GST

### **Love Among the Feathers**

The romantic adventures of resident waterbirds are examined in this PowerPoint and video presentation.

Note: This session takes place at Berwick House Royal Oak, 4680 Elk Lake Drive, Saanich.

**Thursday, October 29:** 2 to 3:15 pm, 1 session

Fee: \$12 plus GST

For further information or to register contact Janet King (250-721-8827, [jaking@uvic.ca](mailto:jaking@uvic.ca)) or visit our website:

**[www.continuingstudies.uvic.ca/](http://www.continuingstudies.uvic.ca/)**

Look for "Nature, Environment, Sustainability" under "Courses"



# Attention All Shoppers: Toxins in Aisle 4

By Jennifer Foulds, Environmental Defence

Environmental Defence warns that toxic chemicals are still being found in toys and other consumer products because the government has failed to pass adequate consumer protection laws. "Canadians lack the legal protections of other industrialized countries when it comes to toxic chemicals in everyday household items," said Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director of Environmental Defence. "Until Canada catches up, it's 'buyer beware.'"

Over the past year, lead has been found in several consumer products, including children's jewellery and other toys. Lead is a well known toxin that has been linked to damage to the nervous, excretory, and reproductive systems, as well as impaired mental and physical development.

Phthalates, an endocrine disruptor (a chemical that interferes with natural development processes) is commonly found in vinyl and other plastic products. Environmental Defence co-released a report in June 2008 on phthalates and

other volatile organic compounds in vinyl shower curtains (report available for free download at <<http://www.toxicnation.ca>>). Phthalates had previously also been found in soft plastic children's toys.

Canada still allows six phthalates in kids' toys that have been illegal in the European Union since 1999 and are illegal in the United States as of February 2009. Similarly, the toxic flame retardant known as Deca is banned for use in electronics in the European Union as of last July and remains unrestricted in its use in Canada.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE (<[www.environmental-defence.ca](http://www.environmental-defence.ca)>) protects the environment and human health. We research solutions. We educate. We go to court when we have to. All in order to ensure clean air, clean water and thriving ecosystems nationwide, and to bring a halt to Canada's contribution to climate change.

Visit Wild Birds Unlimited for a wide selection of binoculars, featuring Vortex Optics and Eagle Optics!



The Vortex VIPER 10x42 has been named **"BEST OF THE BEST"** By Field & Stream Magazine '07.

*"...the resolution is exceptionally good... the right size and weight package at the right price." - Field & Stream*

These impressive binoculars are also available in 8x42 and 12x42 configurations. All Vortex products are backed by a lifetime, no-fault warranty!

*It is YOUR opinion that matters most... we invite you to come on in and see these award-winners for yourself!*

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Optics  
Nature Gifts

## Welcome to New VNHS Members

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

**John Potter and Joan Hendrick**  
Prospect Lake Road  
*conservation*

**Beverly Paterson**  
Douglas Street

**Peter King**  
Harding Lane  
*birds*

**Lillah Sadler**  
Jim's Crescent  
*botany and hiking*



Help Wild ARC raise Daisy Dollars by collecting UPC codes from all Island Farms products

Each UPC code earns 3 cents for Wild Arc towards the care of injured and orphaned wildlife. Please bundle UPC codes in 50s when ready.

**Thank you for your support!**

# Desperate Mother Dodges Traffic

By Todd Carnahan, HAT Land Care Co-ordinator

To lay her clutch of as many as 23 leathery eggs, female turtles often have to cross a busy road to reach nest sites on sunny slopes. Female turtles do not lay a clutch of eggs until they are at least 12–15 years old and they likely live 50 years or more.

Endangered western painted turtles are now leaving the water to lay their eggs. Please do not touch turtles unless they are in mortal danger from cars or pets. Eggs will hatch in about 76 days, but the hatchlings will remain buried until next April. Temperature dictates gender: 29°C or higher temperatures produce females, below 27°C produces males and constant temperatures of 28°C, produces both sexes.

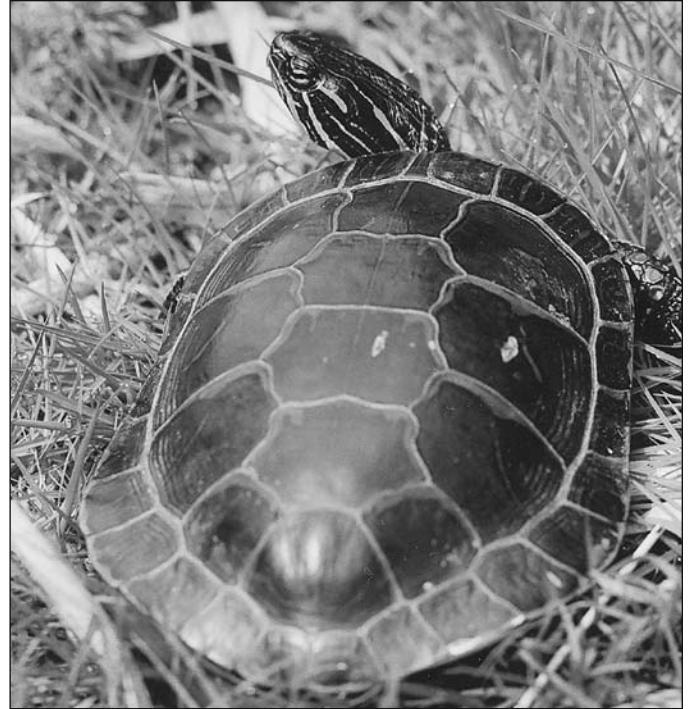
HAT is promoting community awareness and protection of species at risk such as painted turtles. To do this we must identify their overland travel routes and seasonal habitats, threats, and recovery opportunities. Last year we located three new turtle populations on southern Vancouver Island. Watch for HAT's turtle traffic signs on identified road crossings next year.

Please report all turtle sightings to HAT, including reports of unfortunate road-crossers. Call me at 250-995-2428 or email [todd@hat.bc.ca](mailto:todd@hat.bc.ca). Your photos are very valuable for species identification; please send them even if they are not recent.

With your help, turtles in our region will find their nesting grounds in good shape for many more generations.



Creating Conservation Legacies



Painted turtle. *Photo: Woody Thomson*

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## Letters

Thank-you letters from teachers participating in the VNHS *Connecting Children with Nature* project, where member volunteers lead school groups into nearby natural areas.

Our nature guides, Donna Murray and Deb Wade, were wonderful! They presented age-appropriate information to our students and had great class management skills. Their passion for nature was truly evident!

Jeanette Dibiase  
Quadra Elementary School

John Henigman came to our school on June 1 and took my Grade 2 class on an almost two-hour nature walk around our school. We explored the pond and discussed pond life and the life cycle of mosquitoes, we discussed the formation

of the rocks at the back of the school during the ice age, we talked about the camas and how the natives farmed and used them in this area, and we talked about the Garry Oaks and how they got their name. John was so knowledgeable and we learned so much about our own school environment. The students really enjoyed the nature walk and I hope John or another volunteer will come to my school again next year. Thank-you!!!

Kathy Mead  
Strawberry Vale Elementary

# 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 Christmas Hill 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. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>>, and is updated regularly.

**Codes for Field Trip Difficulty Levels:** LEVEL 1 — Easy walking, mostly level paths. LEVEL 2 — Paths can be narrow with uneven terrain. LEVEL 3 — Obstacles in paths requiring agility or steeper grades. LEVEL 4 — Very steep, insecure footing or longer hikes requiring good physical condition.

## JULY

### Saturday, July 18

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *Discovery Island & Chain Islands Ecological Reserve Bird-watchers Kayak Tour*

Once home to First Nations people (and lighthouse keepers), Discovery Island is now a Provincial Marine Park. A Mecca for sea kayakers and nature enthusiasts, the area presents many opportunities for viewing wildlife and many birds. You may sight Bald Eagles, oystercatchers, Harlequin Ducks, sandpipers, and cormorants. By kayak we are able to see the numerous sea birds that nest and feed in and around these shores such as the Pigeon Guillemot, Rhinoceros Auklet, and the Common Murre. The tour will also explore the nearby Chain Islands which are protected bird sanctuaries and seal rookeries. You will also learn about the area's natural history. Cost: \$90.25 for a five-hour guided tour. Maximum 12 people/tour. We will be out on the water for five hours so please pack a lunch and some snacks. Be prepared for the day's weather; you are able to layer up or down while on the water. Suggested gear: Sunglasses, sun hat, sun screen, footwear (you can get wet), windbreaker, toque, binoculars, lunch, snacks and lots of liquid to drink. For more information or to register: Phone: 361-9365 or toll free: 1-877-921-9365.

### Saturday, July 18 and Sunday, July 19

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.

### Friday, July 24

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3/4)

#### *Mount Washington Botanical Day Trip*

This trip is planned for peak bloom time but the area is interesting over several weeks with a succession of flowers. The plan is to meet at Raven Lodge on the mountain around 11:00 a.m. and decide when we get there what we will do with our day. First choice is to go up the chairlift and walk down the meandering West Summit Ridge Trail to the bottom (not the straight-down trail!). There is a lovely little sub-alpine lake and many interesting plants in several changing habitats as we go down. If the top of the mountain is still too snowy or the visibility is too poor, the alternate option is to walk around the Lake Helen MacKenzie – Battleship Lake route. We will also fit in a tour around Paradise Meadows either before, during, or after our

main adventure. Either trail that we choose will be on hilly and uneven ground but will be done at a slow pace. We will leave Victoria at 7:00 a.m. and return late, probably stopping for a quick supper on the way home. We'll eat our lunch someplace out on the trail. Preregister by contacting Agnes after July 1. First 10 people to sign up have the option of coming in her van. Others to carpool by pre-arrangement. Cost to come in the van or carpool with others will be about \$30 for the day from Victoria. Additional cost of \$15 (\$12 senior) if we go up the chairlift. Remember to bring money for a fast-food supper. Bring lots of water, lunch and snacks. Wear proper footwear and bring a hiking stick plus warm clothes as it may be quite cold up there. Call **Agnes** at 250-721-0634 or preferably email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) for more information or to register.

### Sunday, July 26

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *Mandarte Island Seabird Colony and Sidney Spit*

We will be going around Mandarte Island to check out the Pelagic Cormorants, Double-crested Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemots and Glaucous-winged Gulls that nest there, and then go to Sidney Spit to see some migrating shorebirds and the passerines that nest on the island. We will return to Sidney on one of the afternoon ferries. Bring a drink, snack and a lunch. Meet at the foot of Beacon Ave at 6:40 a.m. for a 7:00 a.m. departure. Cost is \$50.00 per person, that includes the return trip to Sidney. We need at least 15 people for the trip to go. Reserve your spot by paying through Paypal on the VNHS website ([vicnhs.bc.ca](http://vicnhs.bc.ca)) or you can pay by cheque sent to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Either way, please let Rick (250-885-2454) know that you are coming on the trip and that you have made a payment. VNHS members get a priority. Please book early. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 250-885-2454 if you need more information.

## AUGUST

### Sunday, August 2

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

#### *Hurricane Ridge Alpine Flowers*

For several years, VNHS has arranged for a bus in Port Angeles to take us up the hill to the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Centre in Washington's Olympic National Park to enjoy the high elevation species of alpine flowers at their peak. We will walk up the Hurricane Hill trail and then back down to the Visitor Centre. Although the weather is generally sunny and clear, due to the

high elevation, it could possibly be quite cool or it might rain, so be prepared. Also wear sturdy hiking boots and hiking poles would be an asset. Bring a lunch and lots to drink as we will not be near facilities at lunch time. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. (allow time to park) for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the *M.V. Coho*. Ferry cost is \$31.00 CDN return. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT FOR GOING THROUGH U.S. CUSTOMS.** Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$60.00 CDN. There is room for 22 participants. We will return on the 5:15 p.m. sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing) and there is usually good birding on the ferry. Reserve your spot by paying through Paypal on the VNHS website (vicnhs.bc.ca) or you can pay by cheque sent to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Either way, please let Rick (250-885-2454) know that you are coming on the trip and that you have made a payment. VNHS members get a priority. Please book early. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** at 250-885-2454 if you need more information.

### **Saturday, August 8**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### ***Discovery Island & Chain Islands Ecological Reserve Bird-watchers Kayak Tour***

Once home to First Nations people (and lighthouse keepers), Discovery Island is now a Provincial Marine Park. A Mecca for sea kayakers and nature enthusiasts, the area presents many opportunities for viewing wildlife and many birds. You may sight Bald Eagles, oystercatchers, Harlequin Ducks, sandpipers, and cormorants. By kayak we are able to see the numerous sea birds that nest and feed in and around these shores such as the Pigeon Guillemot, Rhinoceros Auklet, and the Common Murre. The tour will also explore the nearby Chain Islands which are protected bird sanctuaries and seal rookeries. You will also learn about the area's natural history. Cost: \$90.25 for a five-hour guided tour. Maximum 12 people/tour. We will be out on the water for five hours so please pack a lunch and some snacks. Be prepared for the day's weather; you are able to layer up or down while on the water. Suggested gear: Sunglasses, sun hat, sun screen, footwear (you can get wet), windbreaker, toque, binoculars, lunch, snacks and lots of liquid to drink. For more information or to register: Phone: 361-9365 or toll free: 1-877-921-9365

### **Saturday, August 15 and Sunday, August 16**

#### ***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, August 16**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

#### ***Tufted Puffins, Sea Otters 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 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 a.m. sailing of the *M.V. Coho*. Ferry cost is \$31.00 CDN return. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT FOR GOING THROUGH U.S. CUSTOMS.** Cost of the charter bus and entry to the museum is \$70.00 CDN. We will return to Victoria on the 9:30 p.m. sailing (90 minute crossing time). Bring a lunch and something to drink; we will have dinner in Port Angeles. There is room for 22 participants plus two leaders. This trip always fills, so reserve your spot early by paying through Paypal on the VNHS web site (vicnhs.bc.ca) or you can send a cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4. Either way, please let **Rick Schortinghuis** (250-885-2454) know that you are coming on the trip and that you have made a payment. VNHS members will be given priority.

### **Friday, August 21**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

#### ***Dungeness Spit Shorebirds***

Two hundred and forty four species of birds, including 38 species of shorebirds, have been reported at the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge. We will be hiking out on the spit in the morning and then go to Dungeness Bay later in the day. Bring a lunch, snacks, and drinks. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal at 5:45 a.m. (allow time to park) for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the *M.V. Coho*. Ferry cost is \$31.00 CDN return. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT FOR GOING THROUGH U.S. CUSTOMS.** Cost of the charter bus is \$60.00 CDN. We will return to Victoria on the 5:15 p.m. sailing (90 minute crossing time). There is room for 11 participants plus one leader. This trip should fill so reserve your spot early by paying through Paypal on the VNHS web site (vicnhs.bc.ca) or you can send a cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4. Either way, please let **Rick Schortinghuis** (250-885-2454) know that you are coming on the trip and that you have made a payment. VNHS members will be given priority.

### **Sunday, August 30**

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### ***Exploring the Victoria Shoreline for Shorebirds***

We will be searching for migrant shorebirds at Cattle Point, the end of Bowker, Oak Bay Marina, Clover Point, and the Ogden Point Breakwater. Meet at Cattle Point at 7:30 a.m. Leader TBA. Call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 for more information

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## **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **Saturday Birding Group**

We send out the time and location on the Rare Bird Alert (250-592-3381) on the Thursday and Friday before that week's walk. For more information, call Rick Schortinghuis at 250-885-2454.

### **Year-round Tuesday Morning Birding Group**

The Tuesday Birding Group meets every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. at the foot of Bowker Avenue on the waterfront in Oak Bay and decide where they will go birding that morning. The Tuesday Birding group has been around for more than 50 years. Call Bill Dancer at 250-721-5273 for more information.





Some of the participants in the VNHS low tide field trip to Whiffen Spit.  
*Photo: Michael Harvey*