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# The Victoria NATURALIST

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### Guidelines for Submissions

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: Although it may seem ridiculous to have a butterfly caterpillar on the cover of a winter issue of a Canadian natural history magazine, many species, including this one (*Coenonympha tullia insulana*), do over-winter as larvae, and Lepidoptera, including this particular individual, are featured in two submissions (p.6 and p.9), so read on.

*Photo: Jeremy Tatum*

Last summer I had the privilege of spending a couple of weeks doing field work in the Flathead Valley region of British Columbia, and I quickly learned that the area needs more recognition. When asked where I was going or where I had been, most people did not know anything about it.

Having just returned from a spectacular trip that included a very famous World Heritage Site, I realized that the importance of protecting BC's portion of this valley needed to be on the minds of more people, despite the fear that it could fall victim to being loved to death by future park visitors. The negative impact of park status on wild spaces is not insignificant, but becomes a non-issue when compared to the mountain-top-removal coal mining projects proposed for the Flathead Valley.

With enough "encouragement", a decision to preserve this area could complete the protection of a watershed that crosses provincial and international boundaries (p.18), and it could become the fourth World Heritage Site in British Columbia.

*Claudia*

# President's Message

By Darren Copley

Returning from a trip to the Galapagos and mainland Ecuador has really got me thinking of how we can make changes, for the better. It wasn't that long ago that the incredibly long-lived Galapagos Tortoises were hunted until some subspecies no longer exist. People also used to regularly shoot birds of prey, and 9-metre long Basking Sharks were killed because they were considered a navigational and fishing hazard. Most now look back on these times as if the people doing these things must have been crazy. Well, it's time we look into the future and try and imagine what people will be saying about us.

I find it frustrating that it is so difficult to get people to change their beliefs even if they are at odds with all of the evidence. The previous examples, however, demonstrate that it can be done. Imagine the courage it must have taken for Darwin to release his book on natural selection and evolution. It's inspiring, and I'd like to see some changes in 2010. What exactly this means for our Society, I'm not sure yet, but I do have some initiatives I'd like to start in 2010. Maybe you've got some ideas too.

Although it isn't inspirational, the first change everyone will need to accept is our new rare bird alert number (250-704-2555), as well as the official closing of our events tape. The new system is more efficient for users (no more busy signals!) and will save the Society approximately \$1,000 annually in phone bills.

Our Society needs a committee dedicated to finding new ways of recruiting members. This may involve us getting our feet wet in "social media". We already have a Flickr site, but maybe we should be looking at creating a Facebook page, or even a VNHS blog to help us get in touch with new younger members. Not that social media is only for the young. I'd be

curious to know how many of our senior members are already on Facebook to keep in touch with their family. I look forward to embracing change to help increase our membership, and share our appreciation of nature with others.

On my recent trip to warmer climes we were also introduced to an incredible Ecuadorian guide and naturalist. As a former park naturalist myself, this was a chance to see how large an impact one person can have on others. Our entire group, which included a range of people from the casually interested to those very passionate about nature, was inspired by Vinicio's enthusiasm and knowledge about the natural world. For me personally, I was encouraged to lead more trips in 2010, and I am also inviting other leaders to increase their involvement in our Society. We have so many great naturalists in our area that can motivate and mentor new naturalists. I would like to promote some of these walks to non-members too, so Victorians can see what we have to offer.

I put out a request for board members at our most recent Natural History Night and already two members have stepped forward. The invitation still stands. We have a number of directors whose terms expire in March, so please consider joining the board.

I would also like to thank all of you who donated to the Society in 2009. Not only monetary donations, which are always surprisingly high, but those who are so generous with their time. An example is Christina Ball – she offered to help find and book speakers for the Society's Natural History Presentations and Birders' Nights – Thank you Christina! We can't run things without a large volunteer base, so please keep that in mind if we contact you this year to help out with one of our many activities.



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# VNHS Awards

## Call for Nominations

VNHS members contribute to the Society in many ways. Some write articles for the *Naturalist*, some lead field trips, others serve on the board or on other committees. There are some who go out of their way just to make sure other members can continue to be a part of Society activities, by visiting shut-ins, or driving others to Society functions.

The Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors established the Distinguished Service Award in 1988. This prestigious award is meant to honour those members who have given freely of their time over a long period, in a variety of ways for the Society. Any member of the Society can nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

The VNHS Distinguished Service Award is given annually to members who have shown such dedication. The Society may also bestow Honorary Life Membership on a member whose involvement with VNHS has been exceptionally long and dedicated. Please consider nominating a member, and send your nomination to the Society's address, or give it to one of the directors. **Nominations should be forwarded by February 28, 2010.**


All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least two members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards.

### VNHS Distinguished Service Award Recipients


- 1989 Lyndis Davis, David Stirling, Katherine Sherman
- 1990 Anne Adamson, Charles Trotter, Robb Mackenzie-Grieve
- 1991 Ed Coffin, Mark Nyhof
- 1992 David Fraser, Margaret Mackenzie-Grieve
- 1993 Giff Calvert, Harold Pollock
- 1994 Kaye Suttill
- 1995 Bryan Gates, Bruce Whittington
- 1996 Gordon Devey
- 1997 Michael Carson
- 1998 No recipients
- 1999 Tony Embleton, Dorothy Henderson
- 2000 Tom Gillespie, Marilyn Lambert, David Pearce
- 2001 David Allinson, Beverly Glover, Hank Vander Pol
- 2002 Norm Mogensen
- 2003 Bob Chappell
- 2004 Oluna and Adolf Ceska
- 2005 Rick Schortinghuis
- 2006 Phil Lambert, Tom Burgess
- 2007 No recipients
- 2008 Ann Nightingale
- 2009 No recipients

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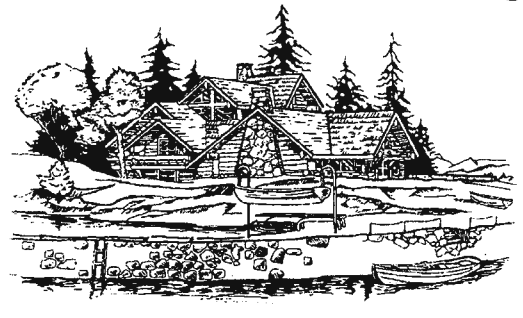
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# A Ringlet Caterpillar

By Jeremy Tatum

For many years, or, to be honest, decades, I had been searching, unsuccessfully, for the caterpillar of the Ringlet butterfly, and I had even taken to telling people that the butterfly doesn't have a caterpillar, almost believing it myself. Then, on May 31, 2009, Darren Copley and James Miskelly, while carefully and patiently watching a butterfly through binoculars, saw one laying eggs at Rithet's Bog, and they managed to find two eggs laid on a withered grass blade. Very generously, James asked me if I would like to try to rear them, and, if so, I could pick the eggs up in his mailbox. This was very exciting, and a great privilege.



Vancouver Island Ringlet pupa (*Coenonympha tullia insulana*). Photo: Jeremy Tatum

The eggs hatched on June 7, 2009. One of the caterpillars died within a couple of days, so tender loving care was evidently an essential for the survivor. The caterpillars feed on grasses, but I didn't know whether it had any particular preferences. I didn't want to try experimenting by offering it one species of grass after another, in case it didn't like my first choices and starved, so I offered it a selection of several species and let it make its own choice. This worked, but, since it ate the grass blades rather than the inflorescence, it meant that I was never sure which grasses it was actually eating, or whether it had any particular choice. If it does prefer any particular species of grass, it would be useful to know this for conservation purposes, but my primary concern was to be sure that this particular caterpillar had something to eat every day.

One thing that I learned is how difficult it is to find good quality grass of any species during the hot months of June and July. It is hard to believe this, for, after all, grass grows everywhere. But just try it in July – go and find a nice, fresh blade of grass, and you will soon find how scorched the countryside is in mid-summer. I actually had to get out in my car and drive half a mile every day to find good quality food for my charge. If we are indeed experiencing hotter and longer summers, the availability of green grass could be an important factor in the survival of this butterfly. I might mention here that there is a lot of range in how easy or difficult it is to rear different species of caterpillar. Any grass-feeders come near the difficult end of the scale, and should not be tried by anyone trying to rear caterpillars for the first time.

Caterpillars are masters of the art of not being seen, and, even when the caterpillar was full grown, I thought several times that I had lost it, even when it was in plain view in front of my face. Small wonder that I had never found one myself. The caterpillar also had a very effective and convincing habit of feigning death from time to time, even though it was perfectly healthy. And it fed mostly at night.

The photograph that I took of the caterpillar happened to be the very first photograph I had ever taken with a digital camera. I am still trying to figure out how to use one properly! It (the caterpillar, not the camera) has the two small projections on its anal segment that are typical of the caterpillars of most brown butterflies. (To a butterfly enthusiast, the expression "brown butterfly", or just a "brown", doesn't just mean a butterfly that happens to be coloured brown. It means a butterfly of the subfamily Satyrinae – regardless of its actual colour!).

The caterpillar went through about five instars (sorry – I'm not sure exactly how many!), and it pupated

on July 15, 2009. The jade-green pupa with brown markings is, at least to my eye, an object of quite exceptional beauty. The adult butterfly emerged just ten days later, on July 25, 2009. It caught me completely off guard, emerging less than 24 hours after I first detected colour on the wing cases. Although I didn't manage to photograph the adult, readers can see James's photo of one in the May/June 2009 issue of the *Victoria Naturalist*. I released the butterfly at Rithet's Bog. There is probably a second generation with an overwintering caterpillar.

One difficulty I have with this butterfly is what to call it. There are problems with both the English and the scientific names. The name "Ringlet" has been used for 250 years for a quite different satyrine butterfly in Britain. There, the butterfly of the present article is known as the "Large Heath", a name that has never caught on here. The word "ringlet" refers to the small eye-like spots that are found on the wings of many brown (satyrine) butterflies. The number and conspicuousness of the "ringlet" markings is highly variable in the many populations of the "Large Heath" and its close relatives, and the population on Vancouver Island has no "ringlet" marking whatever! For these two reasons, "Ringlet" does not seem to me to be the most appropriate name for our butterfly.

As for the scientific name, it is clear that the genus is *Coenonympha*, but what is the species? Over the years, numerous specific names have been used for the Vancouver Island population, and no two books seem to use the same name. I am quite happy to follow James and to include all the numerous variations that have been described in Europe and North America under one species, namely *Coenonympha tullia*. The caterpillar and pupa of our butterfly seem to be indistinguishable from those of the European populations. There is no good taxonomic reason for using a different specific (or even subspecific) name for every minor colour variation in a highly variable insect.

Our geographically distinct population, with its lack of "ringlet" markings, might, however, deserve a subspecific name, and those who like subspecific names will probably want to call it *Coenonympha tullia insulana*. Special English names, however, should not be used for subspecies.

One last nomenclatural problem is that taxonomists don't even seem to agree as to what family it belongs to. Traditionally, the browns were classified together in the family Satyridae. Some (by no means all) taxonomists now include the browns in a greatly expanded Nymphalidae, and have demoted the browns to mere subfamilial status, Satyrinae. This takes a little getting used to.

Whatever we choose to call it, it's a lovely little butterfly, and I greatly enjoyed rearing it. Shakespeare had it right when he wrote "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". And that which we call *Coenonympha tullia insulana* is just as pretty whatever we choose to call it. Thank you Darren and James, for finding these eggs.

# Reminder: Please Participate in VNHS Annual Butterfly Report

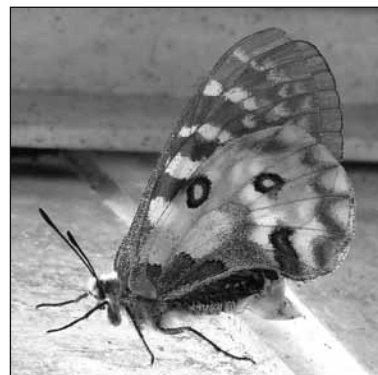
By Annie Pang

Once again, we are trying to get the Society's Annual Butterfly Report "flying" for the first time and I need any information/observations that you can share. Please send your records for 2009/January 2010 (let's see about those Mourning Cloaks!) to me as soon as possible.

As suggested in the July 2009 issue, it would be best if any records could be arranged species-by-species, rather than trip-by-trip (although I am interested in areas covered), and reports of rare, out-of-season, or hard-to-identify species must be supported by some details of how the identification was made. James Miskelly's Butterfly Count chart may be used as a convenient guide for names of butterflies and the order to list your records – email me at [ve7jsp@islandnet.com](mailto:ve7jsp@islandnet.com) if you need a digital version of this and please put "VNHS" or "Butterflies" in the subject line. I get a lot of junk mail and would hate to delete anything if I don't recognize your name.

What we will be focusing on are the dates and areas when each species first appeared as well as when and where the last of them were seen, or reports of dates and locations on which notably large numbers appeared. Records of caterpillars and their food plants are also of great interest as well as habitat where butterflies used to be seen but haven't been seen this year.

At this point, any information would be of great interest to get this egg hatched! Whether you are a "Birder", "Butterflyer", both, or neither, your input is important! Records should be sent to me by email (see above) in .doc or .pdf format or by mail (Annie Pang, 228 Obed Avenue, Victoria BC V9A 1J6). Please enclose your contact information in case anything you send needs further clarification.



Clodius Parnassian (*Parnassian clodius*) found in greenhouse at The Garden Path nursery, June 14, 2009.

# BC Entomologist Receives National Award from Canadian Museum Network

Press Release October 27, 2009

Dr. Robert Cannings, a respected scientist who has devoted his career to the study of entomology (insects), is the distinguished recipient this year of the Bruce Naylor Award. This national award, presented by the Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada (ANHMC), recognizes exceptional contributions to the study of museum-based natural history in Canada.

Dr. Cannings' contributions as a biologist go back decades, from his early days as a naturalist and nature interpreter, to his 29 years as Curator of Entomology at the Royal BC Museum (RBCM) in Victoria. He has authored several books, published more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific articles and written more than 100 popular articles. Under his curatorship, the RBCM's entomology collection has grown from a few thousand specimens to the present day collection of over 250,000. He has also written text for, and contributed to the planning of, a wide range of museum exhibits.

While he publishes on many kinds of insects, his research focuses on the diversity and evolution of dragonflies and robber flies. Books that he has authored or co-authored include *The Dragonflies of British Columbia* (1977), *The World of Fresh Water* (1998), *Introducing the Dragonflies of British Columbia and the Yukon* (2002) and *The Systematics of Lasiopogon (Diptera: Asilidae)* (2002).

He joined forces with his brothers, biologists Sydney and Richard, to produce *Birds of the Okanagan Valley* (1987), and his artistic talents were put to use to illustrate the White-headed Woodpeckers on the book's cover.

For many years he has served on the executive of the Entomological Society of British Columbia and was editor of the ESBC newsletter *Boreus* (which he started in 1981) until 1991. He is a member of the Arthropod Subcommittee of COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) and the British Columbia Invertebrate Recovery Team. He has also been active on the Scientific Committee of the Biological Survey of Canada (Terrestrial Arthropods).

"The thing that I've always tried to do is be broad in my interests, rather than always simply focusing on particular research and collections projects," says Dr. Cannings. "I've tried to be a bit of everything. I like to think this award recognizes that versatility."

Periodically he teaches at the University of Victoria and has brought fourth-year students into the RBCM's labs to give them direct exposure to the kind of work done by museum biologists.

"I have never known anyone so well-rounded and devoted", says Mr. Kelly Sendall, Manager of Natural History at Royal BC Museum. "In my mind he is the epitome of what a curator in a natural history museum should be."



Rob Cannings (centre) being presented with the Bruce Naylor Award by Pauline Rafferty (CEO of the Royal BC Museum and President of the Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada) and Bill Greenlaw (CEO of the Nova Scotia Museum and Chair of the Alliance Awards Committee). Photo provided by Rob Cannings

Cannings grew up in Penticton in the Okanagan Valley. His father was the photographer for the Agriculture Canada research station in Summerland. The young Cannings frequently hung around with the scientists. An amateur biologist, his father often took the family to the Penticton museum, and at times they would donate things they found in nature to the museum.

"I was a museum kid long before I ever came here," says Cannings. "Natural history and collecting were part of our life."

Cannings recalls that his family had a long shelf of natural history books, including handbooks produced by the RBCM (formerly the British Columbia Provincial Museum). Even at a young age, one of his ambitions was to write a museum handbook. His goal was realized with *The Dragonflies of British Columbia*, which was published before he joined the museum in 1980.

In 2008, the Okanagan University College recognized Dr. Cannings and his two brothers as Honorary Fellows for their contributions to the appreciation of nature through their writings, professional activities and dedication.

The Bruce Naylor Award is named for the former director of the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology. Deceased in 2007, Dr. Naylor had also served as president of the ANHMC. The award was presented at a special reception on October 27, 2009 in The Speaker's Reception Room in the Centre Block of Parliament Hill, Ottawa.



# Bruce Naylor Award: Thank-you

By Robert Cannings, Curator of Entomology Royal British Columbia Museum

Madam President, Alliance members, ladies and gentlemen, mes chers amis:

Bonsoir. It's good to be here in Ottawa this evening surrounded by natural historians and other friends...

I sincerely thank the Alliance for honouring me with this year's Bruce Naylor Award. I'm truly delighted to receive it. I never met Bruce, but I wish I had. My good friend John Acorn, an Alberta entomologist and paleontologist, knew him well. When I asked John recently about Bruce he said: "Bruce! A great guy....a bit quirky, a very careful paleontologist and a damn good biologist. He was a great guy!" I'm sure I would have liked and admired him.

Also, to my many colleagues across Canada and around the world, and especially at the Royal BC Museum, where I have worked for 30 years, thank you for your help and friendship. My thanks to Pauline Rafferty, CEO of the museum, and her predecessors, for their support. To my wife, Joan, also a Royal BC Museum natural history colleague, thank-you for everything.

Tonight I'd like to tell you a personal story. You'll be happy to hear that my wife made me promise to keep it short!.... It's a story that illustrates a critical function of a museum biologist's life – helping a kid; passing the torch.

Jim Grant was an extraordinary naturalist and professional entomologist in BC's Okanagan Valley, where I grew up. He was a great friend of my father and, from an early age, I considered him a friend and mentor. His encouragement was one of the main reasons that I became fascinated by insects in the late 1950s. He had the delightful habit of dropping by our house in Penticton with entomological treasures. Once he brought me the first Monarch butterfly caterpillar I had ever seen. In BC this is a very rare species and, to a young BC insect enthusiast, this iconic caterpillar was pure gold. Jim left it at our doorstep one summer day.

I raised that butterfly patiently and my Dad and I photographed it through the various stages of its growth. I still use some of those pictures in slide shows today. A camping holiday intervened during the pupal stage and I carried the jar the whole way. To my relief, the adult emerged the day after we got home. Then came the big moral dilemma – to let the butterfly go or put it in my collection. I had grown attached to the insect over the weeks that I'd raised it; killing it seemed a really bad idea. And Monarchs were rare in the Okanagan, so letting it go was sensible. But I knew I would probably never catch another, and I desperately wanted that specimen. In the end, the collecting urge triumphed. With considerable guilt, I carefully added the butterfly to my

collection. And, as Jim taught me was critical for all my specimens, I made a label listing all the collection information and pinned it with the butterfly.

Now before coming to the Royal BC Museum, I was curator of the Spencer Entomological Museum at the University of BC. Dr. Walter Lazorko, a retired psychiatrist and expert amateur beetle researcher, frequently came to work in the collection. Walter was a tall, distinguished European gentleman, always in suit and tie. He was a character, usually rather morose and pessimistic. He had been through a lot. Among other things, in the chaos of the spring of 1945 he had smuggled his huge beetle collection across war-torn Europe from the Ukraine to Austria and, from there, brought it to Canada. An amazing feat! One day, while we were lamenting the state of amateur entomology in BC, he started talking about his pal, Jim Grant, my old Okanagan mentor.

"There should be more people like Jim", said Walter, "He always encouraged kids – there would be more young entomologists if more of us were like Jim!"

Walter could get excited in a gloomy sort of way. "Why, he went on, "once when I was on a collecting trip with Jim at Penticton, way back about 1960, we found a Monarch butterfly larva on a milkweed plant.... Very rare. Jim said, 'I know a young boy who would love to have this.' Jim and I drove a long way up to this boy's house but he wasn't home, so we left the caterpillar in a bag attached to the door handle."

Walter's story stunned me. The caterpillar on the door was a family legend. "Walter", I said softly, "that young boy was *me*." Walter was even more flabbergasted – almost disbelieving. After a long silence, tears ran down his cheeks and he said with conviction, "You see, then you were a small boy and now you're an entomologist – that's what Jim did for you!" Of course, an exact cause and effect is a little far-fetched, but both incidents – the caterpillar on the door and the lunchtime conversation in the museum – have stayed with me.

Later, when I was president of the Entomological Society of BC, I helped create an award for the best graduate student paper delivered at our annual meeting. We call it the James Grant Award in honour of Jim's dedication to inspiring kids, to passing the torch.

All this is to say that a small act can go a long way in stimulating the quest for knowledge in children and adults alike. I hope that we all can do this, more and more, in our own museum work.

Thank-you all again. Merci.

# Some Rare Bird Sightings for Victoria

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

The month of November often provides interesting and unusual sightings of rare bird visitors. With several strong wind storms and many days of torrential rain, November 2009 has indeed provided us with several records. These include Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese, Trumpeter and Tundra Swan, Rock Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Ancient Murrelet, Franklin's Gull, Ruddy Duck, Short-eared Owl, Mourning Dove, Pine Grosbeak, Northern Shrike, Townsend's Solitaire, White-throated Sparrow, and Snow Bunting, among others. Some of these visitors will call Victoria home for the winter and some will move further south in search of food and milder temperatures. On November 14, at Clover Point, an experienced birder identified a Black-tailed Gull. This was a rare highlight for the month. If confirmed, it would be a first record of this bird for the Victoria area. Close by, at Ogden Point Breakwater, a Franklin's Gull was reported for several days. Birders were able to enjoy this gull at close range as it drifted in the wind that rides the length of the breakwater.

Two other unusual birds that I was able to observe on several occasions were a Willet and a Marbled Godwit. They had first been reported late October and were repeatedly observed at the foot of Bowker Avenue, foraging together on the shoreline rocks as the tide ebbed. These large waders were almost inseparable – when one flew the other followed. They kept company with Greater Yellowlegs, Surf-birds, Black Turnstones, and Black-bellied Plovers. The drab-looking and stocky Willet was in stark contrast to the elegant, cinnamon-coloured and strongly patterned Marbled Godwit. The Godwit's long, two-toned (salmon and grey)

and upturned bill, and regal posture made for a handsome bird. When the Willet flew, however, one would glimpse the striking dark wing pattern that makes this bird unique.

The slightly larger western form of Willet tends to winter along the shores of the Oregon, California, Baja, Mexico, and Peruvian coasts. Willets breed inland, favouring the Canadian prairies, as well as the northwestern and north-central United States. The winter range of the Marbled Godwit is found along the Pacific west coast and south to Central America, preferring tidal mud flats and rocky shorelines for foraging. They breed in the Canadian prairies, as well as the northern-central states of Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota. Several small breeding colonies can be found on the southern shores of St. James Bay and the western end of the Alaskan Peninsula. Generally, single birds of both the Willet and Marbled Godwit are seen around the Victoria waterfront in both spring and fall. A few Godwits show up and appear to migrate in the spring with the Whimbrels that frequent the Victoria Golf Course during late April and May.

Another migrant visitor this month was the Snow Bunting that was reported November 14 at Clover Point. It is interesting to note that a single Snow Bunting was seen during March at much the same location and was reported over several weeks. Generally this species flocks together and they tend to winter in open country across North America. They breed in the high arctic tundra, and are resident in the Aleutians. Curiously, a single bird was also seen and photographed by the remote camera at Race Rocks on November 10, 2009. Could this have been the same bird visiting Victoria several days later? Could it be the same bird that was observed in the early months of 2009?

Enjoying a walk for health and exercise on a brisk day can bring many rewards. With the abundant bird life that Victoria has to offer, one is sure to see something interesting, especially along the shoreline. Even if you don't chance upon the unexpected, it is still exhilarating to watch a familiar bird soaring on the wing, enjoying the thrill of the ride on some gusty winter wind.

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Snow Bunting. Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy



*Top: Marbled Godwit. Bottom: Willet*

# Recommendations for Budget 2010: Investing in a Prosperous Green Future

*What follows is the Executive Summary of a report from the Green Budget Coalition, comprised of 21 of Canada's leading environmental and conservation organizations. \*See page 16 for a list of coalition members. The complete report can be found at <<http://www.naturecanada.ca/reports.asp#sar>>*

**B**udget 2010 is a prime opportunity to create enduring economic and environmental benefits for Canadians. The Green Budget Coalition's priority recommendations for Budget 2010 are:

- 1) Protecting Ecosystems and Biodiversity:  
A Necessity in the Face of Climate Change,**
- 2) Investing in Canada's Freshwater Future:  
Beginning with the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence  
Basin, and**
- 3) Renewable Energy: Attracting Investment,  
Creating Jobs.**

Adopting these three recommendations alone would stimulate more than eight thousand new jobs in renewable energy, ensure a clean source of drinking water for millions of Canadians, and protect key elements of our marine and terrestrial ecosystems.



Investing in renewable energy and a national water strategy will expedite the transformation of the Canadian economy into a globally-leading, environmentally restorative economy that creates jobs while preserving Canadians' enviable quality of life. Canada and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in its Declaration on Green Growth, have recently recognised "the need to ensure that each country pursues green growth policies, including to tackle climate change".

Furthermore, implementing these recommendations would help Canada shine on the world stage, during the International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and in the lead-up to hosting the G8 Summit in June 2010. Prime Minister Harper has already highlighted that Canada has an "unprecedented opportunity to lead the way to a better, cleaner, healthier world," and that "climate change is perhaps the biggest threat to confront the future of humanity today."

The Green Budget Coalition brings together the collective expertise of twenty-one of Canada's leading environmental and conservation organizations, representing more than 600,000 Canadians, and has been assisting the federal government to develop and adopt strategic budgetary and fiscal measures since 1999.

This document details the Green Budget Coalition's three priority recommendations, and seven actions on other important issues, whose adoption could create dramatic progress towards long-term sustainability and a globally-leading, environmentally-restorative economy for Canadians.

## **1) Protecting Ecosystems and Biodiversity: A Necessity in the Face of Climate Change**

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity, and the deadline for reporting to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity on progress in protecting biodiversity. Given that Canada has not fully met our commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, there is a need to enhance efforts and engage in more tangible actions that will result in the long-term protection of Canada's ecosystems and natural resources.

Climate change is a growing threat facing Canada's natural environment and economy. Protecting key elements of Canada's ecosystems is an important strategy for mitigating increases in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Healthy ecosystems can facilitate adaptation and enhance the probability of securing functional and resilient ecosystems

that maintain species, enhance economic prosperity, and provide clean air and water.

To improve Canada's performance on biodiversity protection, the Green Budget Coalition recommends that Canada *act now to fund a national ecosystem based adaptation strategy including:*

1. Completing Canada's national systems of national parks and federal protected areas for wildlife, and ensuring their long-term protection;
2. Implementing integrated oceans management plans in five Large Ocean Management Areas, completing a national system of marine protected areas that covers at least 30% of Canada's ocean area, and enhancing efforts to recover wild salmon populations through fisheries, aquaculture and habitat protection reforms; and
3. Creating incentives for protecting and restoring greenhouse gas reservoirs in natural forests and wetlands.

It is also important to fund the full, effective implementation of the *Species At Risk Act*.

## 2) Investing in Canada's Freshwater Future: Beginning with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin

Canadians strongly believe that water is our single most important natural resource, ahead of oil, forestry and agriculture. Furthermore, there is broad consensus among representatives of a cross-section of Canadian society that federal leadership is crucial in protecting Canada's freshwater resources.

Canada should deliver its promised federal water strategy, building upon its actions over the past three years, with initial implementation in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin due to its unique economic, social and cultural importance. Federal leadership is required to ensure that actions to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are focused and well coordinated.

*Priority areas for investment in the waters of the*







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*Great Lakes – St. Lawrence are:*

**1. Water Quantity and Quality**

- a. Improve water quality by updating water and wastewater infrastructure and integrating conservation measures to ensure sustainability of water resources.
- b. Ensure the clean up and de-listing of existing Great Lakes Areas of Concern and delivery of Ecological Rehabilitation Action Plans for these and the St Lawrence Zones d'intervention prioritaire in Québec.

**2. Freshwater Ecosystems**

- a. Foster healthy biodiversity through the preservation and protection of ecologically sensitive wetland habitat in the watershed, particularly near shore areas.
- b. Protect from invasive species.

Such investments will ensure a clean healthy source of drinking water for millions of Canadians, strengthen the ecosystem's capacity and resilience to support strong economic and social systems, and facilitate a healthy, growing economy and business climate for area residents.

**3) Renewable Energy: Attracting Investment, Creating Jobs**

2010 is an important time for the government of Canada to increase its support for renewable power, to enable Canada to meet its target of 90% non-emitting electricity by 2020, and to create new economic development opportunities while keeping pace with major growth in the sector both in the United States and overseas. While renewable energy includes electricity, heat and fuels, this fiscal year is an important time to focus on renewable electricity in order to be prepared for the necessary replacement of many of Canada's power plants that are reaching the end of their working lives and for potential increased demand from electric and plug-in hybrid cars, while reducing the impact and emissions from the current portfolio of power stations.

*The Government of Canada should start by seizing the opportunity to invest in clean electricity by:*

1. Replacing the sun-setting ecoENERGY for Renewable Power program with a capital grant program including a specific set-aside for northern and remote communities. Renewing and expanding federal support for renewable electricity will avoid investment uncertainty as the current production incentive was over-subscribed over a year ahead of its program end date (March 2011). An equivalent incentive in the form of a capital contribution will enable developers to finance new projects, keeping the Canadian market competitive at a time when global investment (particularly in the United States) is ramping up.
2. Establishing "Green Energy Bonds" as a mechanism that will ease access to capital and reduce borrowing costs for renewable energy developers, while enabling individual Canadians to directly support the development of renewable electricity.
3. Unlocking Canada's geothermal potential by developing a national geothermal data and classification system to assess, quantify and characterize Canada's national geothermal resources.

The Green Budget Coalition also recommends the following seven actions on other important issues:

1. **Energy Efficiency**

Create jobs and monthly savings for Canadians by funding actions to advance: home heat pumps, smart grid technologies, new green buildings, retrofits to existing apartment buildings, electric/hybrid vehicle fleets, and a national energy efficiency advertising campaign.

2. **Metal and Mineral Recycling**

Support innovation and the development of environmentally sound closed-loop metal and mineral recycling by harmonizing the tax benefits between primary extraction and recycling and by supporting new material stewardship initiatives.

3. **Chrysotile Asbestos Subsidies**

End the annual federal \$250,000 contribution to the Chrysotile Institute, which promotes the use of chrysotile asbestos, a known carcinogen, internationally.

4. **Conserving Our Migratory Birds**

Invest in migratory bird conservation through programs supporting additional monitoring and research,

particularly in the Arctic and in support of incidental take regulations.

5. **Extending Ecogift Tax Incentives to Inventory Lands**

Further assist Canadian landowners to preserve Canada's natural heritage.

6. **Natural Capital Indicators**

Renew and expand existing indicators to provide the necessary information for decision-makers to preserve and grow our natural capital simultaneously with our financial capital, and to support implementation of the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

7. **Carbon Pricing: Revenue Recycling.** Direct revenues from carbon pricing to six priority areas: helping meet Canada's greenhouse gas reduction target and international climate finance obligations, protecting low-income Canadians, households in unduly impacted regions, and trade-exposed sectors, and reducing personal and corporate taxes.

The transformation to a globally-leading, environmentally-restorative Canadian economy requires each of the following actions: major investments in renewable energy and water and wastewater infrastructure; a strong federal signal



that polluters will pay for the environmental and health damage they cause; and making financial transfers to governments, and subsidies to industry, conditional on achieving defined environmental outcomes.

The Green Budget Coalition thus firmly believes that Canada's prosperity requires policies that ensure that market prices for goods and services accurately reflect the true value of the required resources, today and in the future, as well as the full costs and benefits to the environment and human health associated with their development, production, transportation, sale, use and disposal. Canada's economy will only maximize benefits for Canadians, and be truly "green," when market prices thus tell the environmental truth.

This approach is often called ecological fiscal reform, and could be implemented through a mix of market-based instruments, such as taxes, fees, rebates, credits, tradable permits and subsidy removal. True-cost pricing policies should be complemented by the transitional use of policies such as product incentives and "fee-bates" to shift buying and usage patterns for major purchases, such as heating systems, automobiles and appliances, towards those whose life-cycle impacts are more positive for the environment and human health. The existing and proposed new ecoENERGY for renewable power programs represent progress in this direction.



Such ecological fiscal reform policies create many benefits. They reward environmental leaders among businesses and citizens, preserve natural resources for higher value uses, stimulate environmental innovations with global export potential, and expedite the development of economies where economic success brings concurrent environmental and human health benefits, and where self-interested economic choices are more frequently those with the most social and environmental benefits. Furthermore, such policies provide enhanced fairness to citizens and business through the "polluter pays principle," by forcing polluters to pay for the harm they cause.

The Green Budget Coalition has commended many actions in recent federal budgets as being important steps towards implementing ecological fiscal reform, and highlights many prime opportunities in this document to build upon those measures. In particular, Carbon Pricing: Revenue Recycling illustrates how revenues from carbon pricing can generate further benefits in addition to the price disincentive. Metal and Mineral Recycling: Closing the Loop would build upon changes to capital cost allowance rates in Budgets 2007-2009 to advance Canada farther towards a sustainable resource future.

The Green Budget Coalition also strongly encourages the Government to further build upon the important steps it has taken towards making environmental values and information central to all relevant government policy-making. The Federal Sustainable Development Act, adopted in 2008, has great potential to provide long-term benefits to Canadians. Indicators tracking the health of Canada's water and air were, importantly, renewed in *Budget 2009* and point the way towards further information which Canadians and their political leaders need to support decisions with the greatest long-term benefits. *Natural Capital Indicators* highlights the best next steps on this path.

The Green Budget Coalition expects to continue promoting and refining these recommendations until they are adopted.

*For further information, please contact:*

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\* Bird Studies Canada • Canadian Environmental Law Association • Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society • Centre for Integral Economics • David Suzuki Foundation • Ducks Unlimited Canada • Ecojustice • Environmental Defence • Équiterre • Friends of the Earth • Greenpeace Canada • International Institute for Sustainable Development • MiningWatch Canada • Nature Canada • Nature Conservancy of Canada • Pembina Institute • Pollution Probe • Sierra Club Canada • Social Investment Organization • Wildlife Habitat Canada • WWF-Canada



# Restoring Millstream Creek, and Our Spirits

By Beth Cruise, Executive Director,  
Canadian Earth Institute



Creating Conservation Legacies

There's something special about doing physical work in a forest of moss and fern-covered maple trees. The smell of musty fallen leaves fills your nostrils, fresh cool air brings pink to your cheeks and the background burble of rushing water in Millstream Creek reassures your ears. With all senses alive, twenty volunteers came together to give their time, physical energy, enthusiasm, and laughter to a native plant restoration event. It took place at Atkins Avenue in Langford on Sunday October 18, 2009 and was organized through HAT with Todd Carnahan and the Millstream Good Neighbours Project, the Canadian Earth Institute and Anne Piazza, Climate Champion of HSBC.

Being connected with each other *and* with nature makes conversations friendlier, laughter easier, and we think better

about all species while the work unfolds magically. In four hours, a four foot pile of spurge-laurel and periwinkle was removed; a ten by twenty foot Himalayan blackberry patch was chopped down and the roots mulched with cardboard and chipped trees, and one hundred native plants were added to the properties backing on Chan Creekside Park. Now that is efficiency.

Add to this, a detailed and colourful explanation about the area systems by Todd Carnahan to start the day and a salmon barbecue wrap up. Could it get any better? Yes. Two weeks later in the same area a coho salmon was seen spawning – we can make a difference.

**Habitat Acquisition Trust:** 250-995-2428  
hatmail@hat.bc.ca, <www.hat.bc.ca>



Photo: Beth Cruise

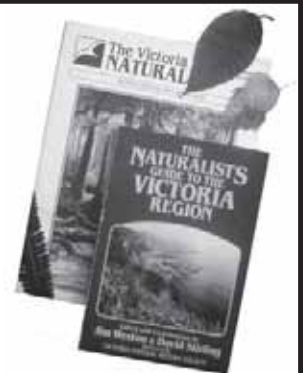
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Ask at a meeting, or contact Darren at 250 479-6622



# Flathead Visit by United Nations Scientists Complete

*October 2009 press release from the Flathead Wild coalition*

Two international scientists sent to investigate potential mining activities in the Flathead River Valley wrapped up their fact-finding tour at a meeting in Fernie, B.C., in late September. They were sent by the United Nations World Heritage Committee.

Fernie is just north of the Flathead Valley, which is threatened by coal and gold mining as well as future coalbed methane development. These threats caused heads to turn at the annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Spain earlier in the year, prompting the committee to recommend that there be an investigation in the Flathead as soon as possible.

“B.C.’s portion of the Flathead is right beside the Waterton-Glacier World Heritage Site and Biosphere


Reserve,” said Casey Brennan, Wildsight’s Southern Rockies program manager. “Alberta and Montana have protected their parts of this amazing ecosystem, but B.C. has not. Mining in B.C.’s Flathead could create devastating consequences to the heritage site – as well as to the Flathead River Valley itself.”

Brennan said even though the B.C. Flathead has escaped a number of attempts to industrialize it, pressures to mine there are as strong as ever. “A company just recently got the go-ahead to explore for gold in the Howell Creek,” he said. “It’s a main tributary in the Flathead Valley watershed.”



In June, the World Heritage Committee also asked Canada and the U.S. to work together on a report – due



This pristine wilderness is threatened by mountaintop-removal coal mining, strip mining, clear-cut logging, and coalbed methane drilling. *Photo: Purnima Govindarajulu*




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VEGETARIAN.	NOT VEGETARIAN.
LOVES SMALL FURRY ANIMALS.	LOVES SMALL FURRY ANIMALS.
WANTS WORLD PEACE.	NEEDS A LITTLE PIECE OF THE WORLD.

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this February – that examines all Flathead energy and mining proposals and their cumulative impacts.

“Now we’ve just got to wait for the results of the fact-finding mission which are due next year,” Brennan said. “We hope the B.C. government leads the way by protecting the lower third of the B.C. Flathead as a park and by revising the management plan of the rest of the valley. Perhaps the easiest step the Province could take right away would be to put a moratorium on all mining and staking activities in the Flathead River Valley.”

Brennan said the current management plan governing the Flathead puts mining interests above water, wildlife, and all other values. “That has to change to ensure this area – one

of the continent’s most important wildlife habitats and corridors – doesn’t fall prey to the ‘too little, too late’ syndrome.”

Brennan looks forward to reviewing the recommendations made by the World Heritage Committee scientists next June, when UNESCO holds its next annual meeting in Brazil.

#### Contact

Chloe O’Loughlin, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society:  
(604) 685-7445 ext.23

Sarah Cox, Sierra Club BC: (250) 386-5255 ext.257,  
cell (250) 812-1762

Casey Brennan, Wildsight: cell (250) 423-0402



## FLATHEAD FACTS\*

**Water:** So clean scientists use it as a benchmark for purity around the world.

**Grizzly bears:** Bear population density is the highest in inland North America.

**Hoofed Species:** Mountain goat, bighorn sheep, elk, moose, mule deer, and white-tailed deer.

**Carnivores:** The greatest range of carnivores in North America. Grizzly bear, black bear, cougar, lynx, bobcat, wolf, wolverine, badger, red fox, coyote, river otter, marten, fisher, mink, and three species of weasel (long-tailed, short-tailed, and least).

**Fish:** four native fish species; bull trout, west-slope cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish and sculpin.

**Ancient Mountains:** The oldest sedimentary formations in the Rocky Mountains, containing fossils of the oldest life forms on earth, create some of Canada's most colorful peaks.

\* Information courtesy of **Flathead Wild**  
<<http://www.flathead.ca/>>

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## Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 23 new members since the last issue. The following agreed to have their names published in our "welcome" column:

**Native Plant Study Group**  
Victoria  
*native plants*

**Lyn and Jim Wisnia**  
Mill Bay

**Carol Stokker**  
Wark Street

**Charis and Brian Faught**  
Arm Street  
*birds, butterflies, mushrooms, hikes*

**Lawrence Thicke**  
Jason Place  
*birds, marine, general*

**Sandra C. Lindstrom**  
Marshall Road  
*marine, botany, birds, gardening*

**Cayla Naumann**  
Ferndale Place  
*wildlife conservation, ecology, macro-biology*

**Meherzad Romer**  
Cook Street

**Rod Hall**  
Heriot Bay  
*ecology/birdwatching/ natural world/coast/ habitat creation*



# Letters

Dear Sir/Madame,

Thank you for selecting me as the recipient of the Freeman F. King Scholarship.

As I enter my last year of undergraduate studies at the University of Victoria, my enthusiasm for biology, the arts, and my education has increased, along with tuition fees. It is exciting and energizing to know that I have the support of the university and the Victoria community, particularly with my interest in natural history. With the rising costs of tuition it has been difficult to find the time to further explore these interests and your gift will provide that opportunity.

This gift will afford me the chance to explore more options for graduate school as it will provide me with the funds to apply to multiple schools. As a result, your gift will provide me with more opportunities for my future as I hope to continue my academic career through the study of environmental law.

I am looking forward to this academic year as I enter the most challenging, yet stimulating academic semester so far. Your support has motivated me to continue with my best efforts and to expand my university experience to include more extracurricular activities to provide a more enriching experience.

Thank you again for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Amelja Zoehner

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sean Anderson, I am a biology student at the University of Victoria and a recipient of this year's Bev Glover Memorial Scholarship. I am writing to thank you for your kind generosity as the donor of this award.

I am currently writing to you from Bamfield, where I am enrolled in the fall program at the Bamfield Marine Science Centre. I have been here almost three weeks now but they have kept us so busy that it feels like one. As a native of southern Ontario, this place is like nothing I've ever really seen. It is breathtaking, and of course beautiful; but if there is a description I think best captures the feeling here it is that this place is wild. In the last few weeks I have seen just how rugged this coast really is, how quickly the weather can change, and how meager we are compared to the power of the Pacific Ocean. Last week I had a very humbling experience when I decided to take a swim along the west coast trail and was caught in a rip tide and carried for approximately 100 m in just a matter of minutes. It was cold, and I was tired, and it was only with the help of some friends that I made it back to the shore in one piece. It was then that I looked back out, exhausted, and saw that this was no epic swell or powerful storm surge that I was fighting; but a calm, sunny, September sea.

In my short time here I have seen three bears, a mink, countless seals and sea lions, two transient orcas, about a dozen bird species that I'm still trying to identify, red-backed salamander, more species of seaweed than I have ever seen in one place, and an immensely rich intertidal community – the inhabitants of which I am just beginning to recognize. All this and I haven't even had a chance to open my plant field guide yet.

My point is that this is an amazing place to be, an amazing place to study, and I am tremendously grateful for your contribution which has played no small role in enabling me to be here.

So you know a little about me: I grew up in the Greater Toronto Area and have been interested in nature, particularly animals, from an early age, thanks to *National Geographic* and summer fishing trips. I knew in high school that I wanted to come out west to study marine biology, and enrolled at UVic in 2005, where my focus has been ecology and evolutionary biology. I finished my fourth year last spring, so this is my final semester and I will be graduating in December.

As of right now I plan on pursuing a career in biology, although I have not decided what area I want to specialize in. In January I will be headed to western Australia to work as a research assistant for eight months. There I will be part of an investigation into the ecology of their immense eel-grass beds, with particular focus on that community's top predator – the tiger shark.

Australia is as far as I have yet planned. My focus for the next three and a half months will be learning as much as I can in Bamfield and trying to get the most out of my time here.

And so I must thank you again and let you know that it means a great deal to me that the award I have received has come from you – passionate naturalists – during a period in which I'm spending every day trying to become a better and more well-rounded naturalist myself. You should also know that I have relied fairly heavily on student loans to pay for my education, so your generosity has been needed as well as being greatly appreciated.

So thank you – your help has meant more to me than I can express in a letter, and I am truly honoured by it.

Sincerely,

Sean Anderson



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held September-April on the following days: **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.); **Natural History Presentations:** the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House; **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria. Locations are given in the calendar listings. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>>, 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.

## JANUARY

### Tuesday, January 12

#### NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

##### *Caribou of BC*

Caribou are the bison of the North. They are an iconic species in Canada, yet many of the populations in the Arctic, across the boreal forest, and in the mountains of BC are declining. Caribou in the southern mountains of BC are at risk of disappearing and are nationally listed as threatened. **Rick Page** began working on caribou in Ontario in 1977 and he did his masters at the University of Victoria on the caribou of the Stikine in Northern BC. Rick will talk about what makes this member of the deer family unique, their role in northern cultures, and what is being done to save our southern herds. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

### Saturday, January 16

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

##### *Birding Esquimalt Lagoon*

Join **Darren and Claudia Copley** while they look for waterfowl found on fresh and salt water, as well as other species wintering in this migratory bird sanctuary. Turn off Highway 1A in Colwood, following signs to the lagoon and Fort Rodd Hill. Meet at 9 a.m. at the end closest to the bridge. No pets please. Dress warmly. \*\*\*This trip will also be promoted outside the Society

### Tuesday, January 19

#### BOTANY NIGHT

##### *New Alien Invasive Grass in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest.*

**Jamie Fenneman** will introduce you to a new alien invasive grass that he recently discovered near Cowichan Lake. He will discuss its spread in the Pacific Northwest and in the hands-on demonstration you will learn how to recognize this species. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Bring a friend.

### Monday, January 25

#### MARINE NIGHT

##### *Antarctic University Expedition 2009*

In February 2009, **Maeva Gauthier**, a graduate student in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at UVic, took part in a International Polar Year Antarctic University Expedition 2009

ship-based field course. Using an interdisciplinary approach, they examined the uniqueness of the Antarctic continent: its political, scientific, and exploration history. She will share this unique experience and show photos and films of the expedition. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building. Everyone is welcome. Admission is free.

### Wednesday, January 27

#### BIRDERS' NIGHT

##### *Birds of Botswana's Desert and Delta*

**Brent Reed** of Letaka Safaris will detail the rich diversity of avian and mammalian fauna through Botswana's Kalahari Desert and Okavango Delta. The presentation includes a brief geological history of the area and the processes involved in the formation of the Kalahari Basin and the Okavango river system. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

## FEBRUARY

### Tuesday, February 9

#### NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

##### *Putting Fire Behavior and Fire Effects Associated with the Current Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic into Historical Perspective*

The current mountain pine beetle epidemic in British Columbia has resulted in the death of lodgepole and ponderosa pine over an estimated 15 million hectares of central and southern BC. This epidemic, coupled with previous epidemics in the 1970's and 1980's, has produced forest fuel conditions well departed from historic conditions. The result, as we saw in 2003, 2004, and most recently, 2009, is extreme fire behavior and uncharacteristic fire effects. Many of the ecosystems affected by the combination of the beetle epidemic and wildfire have evolved over the last several thousand years under a fire regime described as "mixed-severity." This means that fires occurred fairly frequently, were agents of diversity, and had a heterogeneous effect on ecosystem structure and composition. The fires we're seeing today, unfortunately, are a homogenizing influence. Join fire ecologist **Robert W. Gray** and fire and vegetation specialist **Rick Kubian** to learn more on about these current landscape-level impacts. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

## Sunday, February 14

### EVENT

#### *Valentine Couple's Birdathon*

Join us for the 12th annual homage to the joy of valentine birding. This half-day event runs from 6 a.m. to noon – or any part of that time frame that suits your fancy – during which you and your spouse or sweetheart aim to find as many bird species as you can in the VNHS checklist area. You can do your birding by car, bicycle, on foot – or perhaps by kayak if Victoria's wet weather perseveres through mid-February. Couples gather immediately afterwards to share stories and treats at the Swan Lake Nature Centre. The couple having the highest count will see their names inscribed on the admired and beloved Anderson Trophy. The organizers look forward to seeing familiar faces, but this year we also extend a special welcome to couples who have not previously joined in this fun event and we'll be offering a 'greenhorn' prize to the new birders with the highest tally. This event is fun and socially redeeming too: the \$10 entry fee goes to VNHS conservation efforts. To register or for more information contact Alan MacLeod or Jan Brown at 250-382-3854 or leotaj@telus.net.

## Tuesday, February 16

### BOTANY NIGHT

#### *Seeking the Shade in Saguaro National Park Near Tucson, Arizona.*

**Judith Holm** will introduce us to the landscapes, vegetation, and flora of Arizona deserts. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Bring a friend.

## Sunday, February 21

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *The Winter Hummers of Cadboro Bay*

Join **Dave and Agnes Lynn** in their garden in Cadboro Bay from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. to check out the Anna's Hummingbirds that stay all winter in the area. We hope to have special guest Cam Finlay to tell you about his banding of hummingbirds over the past few years as well. See what encourages them to hang around. You will also learn about their food plants, both native and non-native. There should be lots of hummers around. The male might still be doing their aerial shows although the females should be on their nests by then. Address is 3913 Woodhaven Terrace, off Tudor Avenue in Ten Mile Point. No pets please. Dress warmly. Call Agnes at 250-721-0634 or email her (thelynns at shaw.ca) if you need more information.

## Monday, February 22

### MARINE NIGHT

#### *Erosion and Climate Change Impacts in Pacific Rim National Park*

**Hawley Beaugrand**, a graduate student in the Department of Geography at UVic, will examine the changing status and function of beach-dune systems in Pacific Rim National Park and their response to extreme seasonal storms, climate variability events, and climate change trends. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building. Everyone is welcome. Admission is free.

## Wednesday, February 24

### BIRDERS' NIGHT

#### *The Bird Community of the World's Southernmost Forest*

Southern Chile is the world's most isolated forest, with the next nearest forest at least 1600 kilometers away. It has always been assumed that the windswept islands of Tierra del Fuego were desolate and lacking wildlife. South of the Beagle Channel on Navarino Island is a very young forest which was covered by glaciers from 100,000 BC until around 12,000 BC. **Steve McGehee**, a PhD candidate from the University of Victoria Biology Department, is attempting to document the use of these islands by birds and will share his research findings with us. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

## Saturday, February 27

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Birding Viaduct Flats*

Join **Darren and Claudia Copley** while they look for waterfowl and other birds that like to over-winter in this flooded lowland. The surrounding vegetation also can turn up a surprise or two. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot by the viewing tower (intersection of Viaduct Avenue West and Interurban Road). For those taking public transit, the number 21 will drop you off at 8:48 a.m., right across the street. No pets please. \*\*\*This trip will also be promoted outside the Society

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## BULLETIN BOARD

### Note of Thanks


Clive Prior would like to acknowledge all the help he received from Cari Taylor in putting together the presentation for the November 10th South African Natural History Presentation. Due to the rush of setting up and follow-up questions, I did not publicly thank her for her contribution, without which the evening would not have been the success it was. Many thanks for all your help.

### 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.



**TLC The Land Conservancy**  
*Special Places. Forever, for Everyone.*

## Help Save Madrona Farm: Your Local Food Supply



The Land Conservancy of BC is working to purchase Madrona Farm, a 27-acre organic mixed vegetable farm located only 15 minutes from downtown Victoria. This special agricultural and ecological treasure provides produce year-round to over 3,500 homes in the Greater Victoria area.

To donate, please call 1-877-485-2422  
or visit [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca)

Photo: Victoria Heritage Foundation

The final deadline to preserve this farm forever is January 14, 2010.