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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, book reviews, etc. Please include photographs or illustrations if possible, along with a suggested caption and photo credit. If digital, images need to be high resolution: a minimum of 1200 x 1550 pixels, or 300 dpi at the size of photos in the magazine. We prefer electronic submissions in an IBM compatible word processing format. Anything submitted in hard copy will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material.

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# Contents

President's Message  
*By Darren Copley* ..... 4

Hummingbird Surprise  
*By Anita Kess* ..... 5

Bacterial Bucket List  
*By Tina Kelly* ..... 6

VNHS Field Trip: Ethnobotany Walk in  
 Gowlland Tod Provincial Park, July 10, 2011  
*By Aziza Cooper* ..... 8

Welcome to New VNHS Members ..... 9

2011 VNHS Membership Survey Results  
*Compiled by Shona Lawson* ..... 10

A Synopsis of *E-Flora BC: Electronic  
 Atlas of the Plants of British Columbia*  
*By Brian Klinkenberg* ..... 14

Chatter – Activities of the Rocky Point  
 Bird Observatory  
*By Shona Lawson* ..... 18

HAT Tricks  
*By Peter Dunsmore-Papagiannis* ..... 19

Letters ..... 19

Bulletin Board/Classifieds ..... 20

Calendar of Events ..... 20

## COVER PHOTO

To learn more about mushrooms such as these Puffballs (*Lycoperdon* sp.), check out the calendar for a fungi-focused field trip with mycologist Bryce Kendrick (p.23). *Photo: Ann Nightingale*

The membership survey results make up much of the content of this issue – check out pages 10 through 13 to find out what we learned from you.

The survey had a number of questions that related to this publication, and this issue of the magazine reflects some of your suggestions. For example, you asked for a Classified Section – the Bulletin Board now doubles as that. If you are selling or seeking naturalist-related items or information, don't hesitate to send me a few lines about it.

You also asked for calendar items from other organizations. While I really need other groups to send me those, I have added the few that I knew about. Sometimes space limits how much we can include from other organizations – our calendar takes precedence.

I was surprised people did not know they can contribute. Contribute!! I welcome any and all content, from our membership or otherwise. Thanks to Shona Lawson, we now have a regular feature about birds as part of Rocky Point's "Chatter". If there is anyone else out there interested in being a regular contributor, let me know.

When it comes to photos – please take them in high resolution and think about how they look in both black & white and colour. And if you are interested in submitting a photo for the cover here are the fundamentals: it must be in portrait format rather than landscape, be large and taken at very high resolution, and be relatively simple in terms of subject matter. And finally, for as long as I am editor, it should be relevant to British Columbia and cannot contain people.

And on that topic: any potential editors out there? The magazine would really benefit from a fresh perspective. And you could put people on the cover...

*Claudia*

# President's Message

By Darren Copley

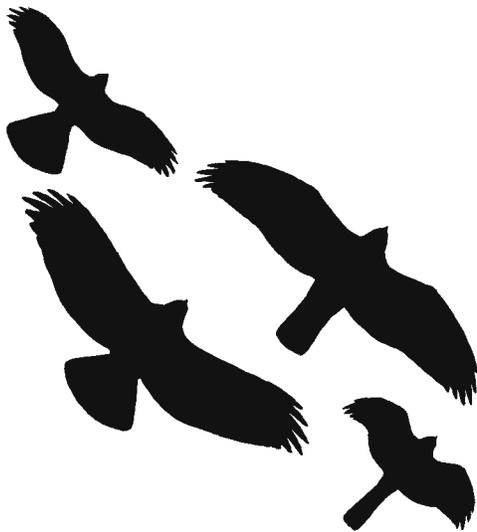
With summer winding down, we have to start thinking about regular Society activities again: getting evening programs and rooms booked, getting committees back together, planning social events, and monthly Board meetings. As you'll see in this issue, the results of our membership survey are summarized, all thanks to Shona Lawson. With feedback from members (by the way you can provide feedback to us anytime) we can now use this to guide our decision-making.

The biggest eye-opener for me was the low percentage of members that have had an opportunity to volunteer for the Society. I don't feel that people aren't interested in helping out, just that they aren't asked or given an opportunity to get involved. As with most societies, there are a small number of people doing a large percentage of the Society duties, but as I think this is only because we don't have an

effective volunteer program. Hopefully we can come up with a solution and get more of you involved in some of our great activities from the organizing side of things. It can be as simple as leading a field trip, staffing our display, helping organize an event, or becoming a Board member.

There are many reasons why people have joined our Society, but as expected, field trips and presentations come out as a high priority. With this in mind, we'll be putting together a subcommittee to make sure we are reaching people's needs with a diversity of topics and leaders. Another reason for joining that respondents cited was an interest in meeting and socializing with like-minded people while learning about and enjoying nature. We'll try to plan a few more social events or opportunities, and try to reconvene a Social Committee. With all of these efforts, we will need more participation from members.

## *VNHS September Social You are invited!*



Join your fellow VNHS members for a BBQ get-together at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Park after HawkWatch.

Members are welcome to a free smokie (veggie option available), beverage, cake, and camaraderie!

*Saturday September 24, 3-5 p.m.*

(See calendar for more details about HawkWatch.)

**To RSVP**, email or phone James: 250-544-0455, <james.miskelly@gmail.com> before September 22.

Bring a lawnchair.

Claudia and I spent a couple of weeks this summer travelling around B.C. alpine and grassland areas, surveying spiders with provincial spider expert Robb Bennett. With the late summer, it was perfect timing for wildflowers and blooms were at their peak. We also connected with other naturalists: Lillooet naturalists showed off their alpine trails, and Whistler Naturalists hosted their annual bioblitz. This network we have under the umbrella group of BC Nature can improve your travel experiences because you benefit from local knowledge.

Just one last thing to mention: I finally got to see a Vancouver Island Marmot in the wild! Local biologists and VNHS members, Melissa Frey and Dave Robichaud, invited us on a “marmoting” adventure, and we spent a couple of hours enjoying the antics of a small colony on Mount Washington. Hopefully you got to see Dave’s presentation on the Marmots of North America a couple of years ago, so you can appreciate how lucky we were to be with such enthusiasts – Thank you Dave and Melissa!

Here’s to the start of another great VNHS season, and I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events: The BBQ Social is September 24!

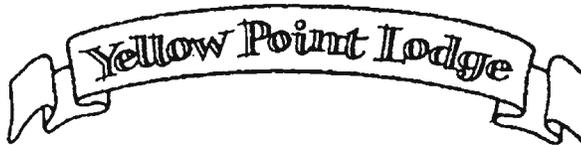
# Hummingbird Surprise

By Anita Kess

In May 2011 I had just parked my car at the Broadmead Shopping Centre when I spotted a hummingbird hovering about eight meters up, facing north. As I paused to admire it, I noticed a crow approaching from the south.

Without changing its course or missing a single wing beat, it flew directly at the unsuspecting hummingbird, opened its beak, and consumed it without any fanfare. I think that the crow had just been in the right place at the right time, and that the hummingbird had failed to execute a “shoulder check” while hovering – it never knew what hit it.

Anyway, I found this to be an interesting little piece of the wild kingdom. I had no idea that hummingbirds were on the menu for crows, and I wonder if anyone else has witnessed hummingbirds being taken by crows or other birds.



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# Bacterial Bucket List

By Tina Kelly

Jack Nicholson made one. Morgan Freeman did too. Since their 2007 movie, *The Bucket List*, it seems everyone is making a list of goals to achieve before they “kick the bucket”; each person’s list seemingly more unique and interesting than the next. To many, the item at the very top of my list would certainly be considered unique: to see up close and personal, something most people have never even heard of – stromatolites. Since learning about stromatolites – mounds of prokaryotic microbes – in first-year university, I have been fascinated by these features credited with helping create the Earth’s biosphere.

Among the few places in the world to view living stromatolites is in the intertidal zone of Hamelin Pool, Shark Bay, Australia. Most visitors are drawn to this remote area of Western Australia for Monkey Mia’s friendly and famous hand-fed dolphins or a chance to see Dugongs. Although these charismatic megafauna impress me, it was the microbial mats resembling mounds of rock which caused me to detour to Perth on my Vancouver to Auckland trip.

Hamelin Pool provides the perfect environment for these structures to flourish: hypersaline and intertidal.

The intertidal zone is considered extreme due to frequent desiccation, rapid temperature and salinity fluctuations, potentially low nutrient conditions, and high flow rates of overlying water. These conditions, along with high salinity – twice the salinity of normal sea water – exclude competitors and grazing predators, and allow microbes to thrive.

Not wanting to make the dusty and isolated 738 km trek from Perth to Shark Bay alone in a rental car, I booked a seven-day tour, ensuring it included a stop at Hamelin Pool, a stop likely no longer than 10 minutes. Needless to say, the other travelers on this tour – Germans, Americans, British, and Dutch – had never heard of these strobe-lights, stromboli, or whatever it was I was so anxious to see. Clearly this was typical of most of the tours our guide had led, as she attempted – and failed – to forgo the advertised itinerary and skip the Hamelin Pool stop altogether.

Judging from the well-marked highway signs guiding the way, it became clear I was not entirely alone in my quest to see microbial mats. A short walk from the parking lot we found the 200-metre boardwalk jutting out over the sea. The boardwalk helps shield stromatolites from damage by visitors



Hamelin Pool, Shark Bay, Australia. Photos: Tina Kelly

and interpretive signage teaches visitors about their biological and geological makeup, and their historical significance.

One website describes the look of these structures as a cross between a rock and a cauliflower. Others describe them as mushroom or cabbage-like. A vertical slice down their middle would provide a look at their characteristic layered composition. The term stromatolite has origins in Greek and Latin; *stroma* means “layer” (Greek) or “mat” (Latin) and *lithos* is “rock” in Greek. The layering occurs when colonies of microbes bind and trap sediment; the trapped sediment then reacts with calcium carbonate found in the water to create limestone. Only the surface of a stromatolite is “living”; this top layer is teaming with photosynthetic cyanobacteria which produce oxygen as a by-product. Scientists believe cyanobacteria first appeared 3.5 million years ago. They also believe their photosynthesis is primarily responsible for the rise in atmospheric oxygen 3.5 to 2.0 billion years ago.

Shark Bay’s designation as a World Heritage Site in 1991 was granted in large part because of the stromatolites’ representation of a major stage in the Earth’s evolutionary history – the role of microbes in the evolution of the Earth’s biosphere. Although similar to ancient stromatolites that formed 3.5 billion years ago, the Hamelin Pool stromatolites are aged at 2,000-3,000 years old. Regardless, they are still considered modern-day examples of life billions of years ago.

As I snapped more than 30 images of the cruciferous-vegetable-like mounds, my travelling companions took photographs of me – capturing evidence of a completely crazy Canadian who just checked one very unusual item off her list.

*Editor’s Note: Freshwater stromatolites occur in Pavilion and Kelly Lakes in British Columbia. Pavilion Lake has the largest known freshwater stromatolites and an international multi-disciplinary research team has been working with them since 2004: <<http://www.pavilionlake.com/>>.*



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# VNHS Field Trip: Ethnobotany Walk in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park, July 10, 2011

By Aziza Cooper

Seven people joined John-Bradley Williams of the Tsawout Nation for a morning at Tod Inlet. J-B shared his extensive knowledge of the uses of native and introduced plants, the history of Tod Inlet's use by natives and non-natives, and hopes for restoration of the land. We are grateful that J-B joined us in spite of a recent accident that left him wearing an arm brace.

Along the path J-B spoke of the native presence in *Snitcel*, the native name for Tod Inlet, meaning "Place of the Blue Grouse". Grouse were once common here, and their roosts filled a large fir tree from top to lowest branches each night. The late-comers on the low branches furnished a poultry dinner. This species, now called Sooty Grouse, is not present now, but could be reintroduced from the nearby population in the Gowlland Hills, and protected by the establishment of quiet zones similar to those in Goldstream Park.

*Snitcel* was rich in many foods, and we sampled Salmonberry and Thimbleberry. J-B made a leaf cup from a Thimbleberry leaf. He called it the "kissing berry" because the only way to pick the berries without crushing them is with your lips. Salmonberry are so-called because they look like salmon eggs and are used as bait for trout.

We saw Western Redcedars with long triangular scars from bark harvesting by natives. Cedar bark is used to make many useful and ornamental things, including cedar roses. Several trees had bark scars hundreds of years old.

The rare Phantom Orchid was in full bloom, white and ghostly. The Alaska Rein Orchid was nearly flowering. Many birds sang along our walk,



Phantom Orchid, Gowlland Tod Provincial Park. Photo: Pauline Davis



American Robin. *Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy*

and Purple Martins perched and chirped at their nest-boxes on pilings at the Inlet. They are amazing migrators – J-B said some of our martins had been found as far south as the Amazon.

Tod Inlet shows detrimental effects from the Portland Cement Company which operated at Tod Inlet until 1916: concrete foundations of buildings and rail system, rock dumped in the creek, and shoreline built up. Worse is the large dead zone covering most of the Tod Inlet from run-off of insecticides, fertilizer, and herbicides from Butchart Gardens, and leached chemicals from the Hartland Landfill. Both sources have been blocked – Butchart has contained its chemicals and Hartland re-routed runoff to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, but the dead zone remains. Current major pollution is sewage discharge from recreational boats moored in the inlet, in spite of *Pumpty Dumpty*, a volunteer-run boat providing pumping service by donation.

Plant life too shows a large growth of exotics. Volunteers are invited to work with SeaChange Marine Conservation Society in removing Broad-leafed Pea, Himalayan Blackberry and other exotic invasive plants. SeaChange posts work-crew dates on Facebook.

J-B's flow of information went on and on: one berry cures poisoning by shellfish toxins; another is called the "little revenge berry" because put secretly in food it induces terrible digestive upset; another berry strengthens the heart. Ocean Spray in full bloom tells that it's time to travel to the Gulf/San Juan Islands to harvest Sockeye Salmon, the only salmon which doesn't stop nearby.

J-B ended our walk by telling the Birdsong story – how Gull, Crow, Eagle, and Robin got their songs. This story is better told in person – ask me why Robin only sings at morning and evening, and all day he says "I cheated, I cheated, I cheated".

Thanks to J-B for all his lore, and we hope for better times ahead for Tod Inlet and the park lands and wildlife.

---

## 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:

**Edna Lowe**  
Cora Hill Place  
*Birding, marine life*

**Sylvia Stauffer**  
Foster Street  
*General knowledge*

**James C. Patterson**  
Carey Road  
*Photography, fishing, biking*

**Jon Carter**  
Joan Crescent  
*Birds and other natural history; conservation*

**Gillian Murray**  
Sea View Road  
*Marine life, wildflowers, history*

# 2011 VNHS Membership Survey Results

Compiled By Shona Lawson

A big thank you to everyone who participated in our 2011 membership survey! VNHS conducted the survey to understand better the needs of our members and to implement changes to our website, presentation series, field trips, and events. We had 117 people (approximately 16% of our membership), participate in the survey, and although this number may seem small, the survey was quite successful. Some survey results are provided below.

We received some very valuable comments and suggestions from the survey and the Board will be incorporating this feedback to help increase membership, our presence in the community, and make changes to presentations, field-trips, and the website.. There are several reasons why people have joined the VNHS, ranging from meeting new people with similar interests to opportunities to attend presentations and field trips. Fifty-seven percent of respondents feel that the most important role of the VNHS is natural history and nature education and outreach, followed closely by

conservation/stewardship and field trips and. Seventy-nine percent of survey participants said they promote VNHS and our events to family and friends, showing that members do a lot of public relations and promotion of the Society. In addition, 62% of members know that they can give a gift membership to family and/or friends.

## ***The Victoria Naturalist Magazine***

Members are happy with the quality and variety of *The Victoria Naturalist* and enjoy what the magazine has to offer. Currently, 41% of the membership receives an electronic form in colour of *The Victoria Naturalist* and 40% still receive a paper copy, although 16% of members expressed an interest in being able to download a colour version of the magazine from the website in the future. Suggestions from the survey indicated that members would like to see more diversity in the magazine such as articles on con-

### **Membership Survey Questions & Results**

#### **How did you hear about VNHS?**

- **36%** Friend/Family
- **9%** At an event (i.e. Field Trip, Lecture, Seedy Saturday etc.)
- **26%** Through a community/public announcement
- **28%** Other (newspaper, radio, internet, co-worker, *The Victoria Naturalist*)

#### **Why did you first join VNHS? (ratings with 1 being the highest/most important rating)**

	<b>#1</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>#4</b>
Conservation/Stewardship	36%	31%	24%	5%
Education & Outreach	57%	26%	11%	3%
Field Trips	26%	32%	33%	8%
Other	24%	20%	16%	38%

#### **What do you think the role of VNHS is? (ratings with 1 being the highest/most important rating)**

	<b>#1</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>#4</b>
<i>Conservation/Stewardship</i>	26%	36%	26%	4%
<i>Education &amp; Outreach</i>	66%	23%	5%	5%
<i>Field Trips</i>	14%	40%	47%	5%
<i>Other</i>	6%	0%	6%	87%

#### **Do you tell friends and family about VNHS? Our events and what our organization does/support?**

YES **79%** NO **9%**

**Did you know that you can give a VNHS gift membership? YES 61% NO 32%**

servation and conservation advocacy (including success stories), ecology, local flora and fauna, taxonomic information (terrestrial and aquatic), research, soils, geology, Lyme disease and ticks, and a classified sections for used equipment, books, etc., just to name a few. It was suggested that more information on events, lectures, and programs of both VNHS and other nature and natural history organizations be included in the magazine. To incorporate these suggestions VNHS members need to help by contributing and/or letting friends, colleagues, and other interested parties know that they can contribute to the magazine. Only 45% of the membership knew that they, or someone they know, could contribute both articles and pictures to the magazine, so please spread the word.

## Presentations, Field Trips, and Events

Sixty-eight percent of members attended Botany, Natural History, Birder's, and/or Marine Night presentations in the last two years. Presentations are meeting the interests of members and they are satisfied with the diversity and quality of guest speakers and presentations offered by the VNHS.

Recommendations on how to improve the presentations were minimal, however, it was suggested that more presentations be conservation-focused and/or presenters incorporate conservation information into their talks. In addition, it was suggested that there be a longer social time and perhaps the addition of an identification question and/or quiz before presentations. Currently, our presentation announcements are sent to a variety of media by VNHS' Secretary, Jennifer Ellenton. These include radio and newspapers (e.g. Monday Magazine, CFX, CBC Radio, The Ocean, CFUV, the Times Colonist, CHEKNews, and the Victoria News) just to name a few. If you are able to help with this promotion please contact Jennifer (250-388-7158, <jellenton@shaw.ca>).

The Society currently offers quite a few field trips throughout the year, and 35% of survey respondents attended one in the last two years. This is an area that members feel needs some changes. Some of the survey feedback included suggestions for an increase in both the variety of field trip leaders and the field trip subject matter. Ideas put forward included more geology, archaeology, botanical identification (i.e. tree, moss, fungi), and conservation integration and/or



VNHS field trip (21 May 2011) to Whiffen Spit. *Photo: Vanessa Kramer*

focus. Other suggestions included increasing the frequency of field trips (e.g. repeating popular field trips, having field trips on more days), offering adventurous field trips such as kayaking and hiking more often, and ensuring the atmosphere is welcoming and friendly. This is one area the Board is really hoping to make improvements to in the near future, so we are establishing a Field Trip Subcommittee that will be responsible for integrating these and other suggestions to meet the needs of the membership. One of the things that this committee will be looking into is training for current and potential field trip leaders, and the adoption of a field trip Code of Ethics for both leaders and participants. If you are interested in participating in a Field Trip Subcommittee please contact Darren Copley, VNHS President at <dccopley@telus.net>.

Since 44% of survey participants indicated they would like to have more VNHS social events, we may try to include more of these activities. After HawkWatch 2010 at East Sooke Park last year, we hosted a successful Members-Only BBQ, and we will be doing this again after HawkWatch 2011 (p. 4 and 21). Suggestions for social events included more informal activities so members can get to know each other, learn about our natural history and conservation interests, and get to know and mingle with board members. Ideas included socials before presentations, a nature fair/festival, BBQ's, potlucks, coffee socials, and socializing after field trips and other events. It was suggested we host events outside, at parks and beaches, whenever possible. Other

suggestions for activities included hands-on conservation, stewardship, and restoration projects such as putting up bird boxes, and that these events could be held in conjunction with a BBQ or potluck. If there is enough interest from members, a Social Committee may form again, so that we have people to champion this initiative. If you are interested in participating in a Social Committee please contact Darren Copley, VNHS President at <dccopley@telus.net>.

New changes for VNHS may include some family-focussed events and field trips because 40% of survey participants said they would attend events for families. This may be a good way to attract new members and give grandparents and parents opportunities to share their interest in nature with younger generations. Family event suggestions included lectures, field trips, wild-crafting events, insect programs, botany, bird, intertidal workshops/training identification, general natural history information and experiences (local, provincial, national), combination field trips (e.g. birding/kayaking, biking/field trips), beach or any child-friendly field trips with "bring your own lunch"-type picnic events. This may also be a good way for VNHS to increase our presence in the community and provide additional natural history information and experiences to youth, in concert with our already popular and successful school programs, co-led by Bill Dancer and John Henigman and a team of other volunteers.



Join us for this year's HawkWatch: 24 September, 2011. BBQ Social afterwards for VNHS Members! RSVP by September 22 (see page 4). *Photo: Claudia Copley*



Pacific White-sided Dolphin. *Photo: Wayne Swanson*

## Website

According to the survey results, 59% of respondents visit the website to keep up-to-date on the Society's presentations, events, and field trips, showing how important the website is to both our members and the community. VNHS is currently updating our website and feedback from the survey is helping to direct changes. Fifty-two percent of respondents would like to see downloadable natural history resources available from our website and 37% would like more links to other natural groups/organizations and their resources. While only 4% and 2% respectively would like links to social media and a natural history blog, other ideas for the website included an up-to-date Bulletin Board, current flora and fauna sightings, and making sure the site is simple to navigate. As we re-design our website we will be incorporating these and other suggestions. In addition, quite a few respondents (62%) receive notifications regarding VNHS events, presentations, and field trips through the Society's email notification. If you are interested in receiving these email notifications you can sign up for them on the VNHS website (<[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)>).

## Volunteers

One noticeable area that the Society seems to be lacking in is volunteers. Over the last two years, only 25% of survey participants volunteered for the Society. Many of our volunteer opportunities do not involve a large commitment of time or effort. For example, staffing the VNHS display at public events such as Seedy Saturday and the Annual Hobby Show held at the Westshore Mall involves shifts of approximately two hours. The Society is a volunteer-based organization and we rely upon members for natural history and nature education, outreach, conservation and stewardship activities, and promotion to the community. To maintain our organization it is vital that our members volunteer.



Karen Barry will be presenting the latest results of the Coastal Waterbird Survey and the BC Beached Bird Survey to the VNHS in the spring – watch the Calendar! *Photo: Karen Barry*

## Increasing VNHS Membership and Community Presence

As with many organizations, VNHS is looking for new ways and ideas to increase our membership and our presence in the community. The lack of new and younger members is something that many natural history societies and other volunteer organizations are facing. VNHS already promotes our presentations and events through various forms of media as mentioned above, however we may need to start attending other events. Survey participants suggested attending such events as club days hosted at the local colleges and universities, and at non-environmental events such as Symphony Splash, give presentations at senior centres, doing radio and TV spots/interviews on natural history, and creating partnerships and links with other clubs and organizations. Other suggestions included hosting events at more public high use/exposure areas such as parks and beaches. To do this, however, we need members to volunteer at these events by staffing displays and answering questions.

## Summary

The survey indicated that members are generally happy with the Society and that the scope of natural history topics, speakers, and publicity over the last few years has been satisfactory. Feedback also indicated that members will visit the website more and use email announcements to keep up-to-date on VNHS events, presentations, field trips, and other information. The new VNHS banner also received good reviews. Thank you to members Joanne Thompson (<[www.joannethompson.com](http://www.joannethompson.com)>) and Marie O'Shaughnessy for allowing VNHS to use their beautiful artwork and photos on our new banner to help promote VNHS. The main goal of the survey was to provide up-to-date direction from our membership to ensure that we are meeting their needs. Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out a survey online, at home, or at one of the presentations.

# A Synopsis of *E-Flora BC: Electronic Atlas of the Plants of British Columbia*

This article originally appeared in number 441 of the Botanical Electronic News (BEN) and is reprinted here with permission.

By Brian Klinkenberg

Ten years ago, if you wanted to learn about the vascular flora of British Columbia, the best source was the eight volumes of the *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* by George Douglas, Del Medeinger, Jim Pojar, and Gerald Straley (1998-2002). Yet, like other printed sources, even as it was printed, it was out of date. Today, with the development of *E-Flora BC: Electronic Atlas of the Plants of British Columbia* (<<http://eflora.bc.ca>>), things are very different. Not only is much of the *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* brought online, but, in-step with the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre and the BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer, species and nomenclature is updated

regularly. This ability to maintain a ‘living’ current record of the flora that is readily accessible is the big advantage of web-based publications, including *E-Flora BC*.

However, *E-Flora BC* provides much more than a ‘virtual’ replacement for the eight volumes of the *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia*. The tremendous power of web-based technology means that web publications like *E-Flora* can place a wealth of information at your fingertips and can tap into a considerable array of other significant botanical resources. In our case, we tap into several key resources, including records from several major herbaria and, using “deep links”, several major databases of plant information, including the



VNHS field trip sighting (June 26, 2011) near the High Jordan Ridge Bogs: A carpet of Avalanche Lily (*Erythronium montanum*). Photo: Ken Wong

USDA PLANTS database, Flora North America, the Integrated Taxonomic Information (ITIS), the BC Species and Ecosystem Explorer, and NatureServe Explorer.

In addition to this harnessing of major data sources, and making them easily accessible, technological “tools” such as digital cameras, GPS units, and Google Earth now allow botanists (amateur and professional) from across the province to contribute directly to our knowledge of the flora of the province by submitting georeferenced photographs – ultimately building a new database of information that complements traditional botanical collection data. Because identification is vetted by experts, this citizen science component has added a new edge to the *E-Flora* data presentation.

Although we had a vision of what *E-Flora BC* could become when we first developed the site in 2002, little did we anticipate how comprehensive it would become. We now have more than 14,500 verified photos of vascular plants (a growing number of which are georeferenced and can be interactively mapped and queried). These have been submitted by more than 440 photographers. We have more than 1,000,000 species records from various herbaria (including ALA, ALTA, CAN, CPNWH, V [RBCM], UBC) and from other major BC data sources (BC-CDC, BEC, IAPP). As well, *E-Flora* also incorporates several other provincially-significant floristic resources. This includes material extracted from other key BC publications in addition to the *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* such as:

- *Some Common Mosses of British Columbia* by Wilf Schofield,
- *North Pacific Seaweeds* by Rita O’Clair and Sandra Lindstrom,
- *Lichens of British Columbia* (two volumes) by Trevor Goward, Bruce McCune, and Del Medeinger,
- *Indicator Plants of British Columbia* by Karel Klinka, Adolf Ceska, Anna Scagel, and Vladimir J. Krajina,
- *MatchMaker: Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest* by Ian Gibson.

Complete details on all of the publications and databases used in *E-Flora* can be found on pages such as “About the data” <<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/data.html>>.

From its initial coverage of vascular plants (>3000 taxa), *E-Flora BC* today provides a comprehensive resource that now includes fungi (1728 taxa), lichens (1494 taxa), macro algae (593 taxa) and mosses (837 taxa). While detailed information is limited presently to common species in some of these groups, others are more comprehensive. For example, the 1723 fungi descriptions provided by Ian Gibson contain detailed descriptions compiled from major mycological works of the Northern Hemisphere and specialized monographs. There are approximately 5000 photos in the photo gallery covering more than 1600 non-vascular species. For the fungi alone we have 847 different taxa represented in 2569 photographs. Photos in each group are vetted by an expert before publication, ensuring the validity of the information provided through *E-Flora BC*.



(Top) “Downcast” – Pink Fawn Lily (*Erythronium revolutum*). Photo: Lyndis Davis  
(Below) Coltsfoot (*Petasites frigidus*). Photo: Mikhail Belikov/www.focusonwild.com



One of the “Pelt” lichens (*Peltigera* sp.) – perhaps Freckle Pelt? with fruiting bodies (apothecia) evident (the brown tips).  
 Photo: Darren Copley

As a result of the numerous databases we use for mapping, the publications we incorporate and bring online, and the growing dataset we are developing through photo contributions, *E-Flora* has evolved into a complex and significant botanical resource. Use has increased remarkably, and there is growing use of *E-Flora* outside of BC. In addition to field botanists, other groups that make regular use of *E-Flora* include high school and public school classes, as well as university courses (e.g., biosciences, geography, forestry), gardeners, invasive species groups, and the general public.

Adding to the complexity and depth of the site, and a significant complement to the comprehensive species-specific information provided in *E-Flora*, are the articles and essays on botanical themes. These include the overviews on the species groups covered in *E-Flora*, overviews on biogeography and ecology, and essays on invasive species and rare species. This material was prepared by experts on those subjects.

Unsolicited comments such as: “Thanks for the link to the beautiful *E-Flora* site. Really a treasure trove of clear prose and photos of natives and invasives” make us realize the impact that *E-Flora* has had among those of us who spend our time studying plants. But perhaps the real value of *E-Flora* lies in the growing use of the site by non-botanists and the

general public. These are users who are exploring BC plants and botany for the first time, and for a variety of reasons, and ‘get hooked’. First contact is often by way of a photo sent to us for identification. But often, now, these folks stay with us and begin sending in photos for our galleries. A new cohort of botanists is growing.

### **Some *E-Flora* Stats: Who visits *E-Flora* BC**

When you publish a book you will eventually know how many books have been sold, but finding out who bought the book and how often they refer to it is something you will likely never know. However, with websites it is possible to determine how many people visit the site, and where they come from, amongst other facts.

In developing *E-Flora*, knowing who visits, where they come from, and what hardware and software they are using, is interesting and helpful. For example, if we want *E-Flora* to work on all of the different browsers and operating systems out there, we need to know what browser software our visitors use. Because our visitors use different browsers, we need to ensure that our pages display properly in all

browsers, and in the many versions of each of these browsers. This requires us to write browser-specific routines for many of our pages, something that adds complexity to the running of the site.

By examining the Google statistics for *E-Flora BC* we can identify that, in July 2011, 1987 people visited the home page of *E-Flora BC*; those people viewed 11,868 different pages in total, spending on average five minutes and 30 seconds looking at the pages. Thirty-two percent of those visitors in July were visiting *E-Flora* for the first time, while 40% visited the site ten or more times (10% visited the site more than 100 times in July).

According to Google, 40% of the visitors used Internet Explorer when viewing the pages, while 31% used Firefox and 19% used Safari. We are seeing an increase in the number of people using mobile devices to view the site (about 5% in the past month). Over the past six months there have been more than 25,000 visitors to *E-Flora*'s home page (note that these numbers only refer to visits to the home page, not to any of the Atlas pages or to the photo gallery).

How do people find the site? Forty-four percent of visitors came to the *E-Flora* home page as a result of a Google search, using a variation of "E-Flora" as their search term. Twenty-six percent came directly to the site (i.e., they have a bookmark that leads them directly to the home page), while 30% arrived by clicking on a link on another site.

Where do the visitors come from? In the past six months, people from 92 different countries have visited *E-Flora BC*. While most are from Canada (85%), 7% come from the United States. About equal numbers of visitors came from the UK, Germany, France, India, Spain, China, and Sweden. We even have had a few visitors from Iran, Iraq, Iceland, and Qatar.

How accurate are these statistics? The data that is collected by Google only relates to people who visit the

home page. Therefore, if someone uses Google to look for a specific species and goes directly to an Atlas page, or if someone has bookmarked the *E-Flora* photo gallery page, Google doesn't track their visit. Thus, the number of people who use *E-Flora* is under-represented by the statistics presented above. Some indication of this undercounting is evident by the observation that 20% of the visitors to the home page come from "within" *E-Flora*—that is, they arrived at the home page by clicking on the "E-Flora BC Home Page" button presented at the top of an Atlas page. Thus, we can see that while *E-Flora BC* is used primarily by people from BC, there are people from around the world who have visited the site.

What is the most common request we receive? We typically get several emails a week asking if we can help identify an unknown plant and, most of the time, we are able to provide an answer (thanks, in part, to the many people in BC's botanical community who provide assistance to *E-Flora BC*). We have also received emails asking if we could provide guidance in the development of similar sites and, lately, if we were considering the development of an *E-Flora* "app." That is, in fact, something we are working on, although the process is one fraught with complications, the primary one being that the target is constantly shifting (that is, what was considered the best way to create an "app" last year is now considered not appropriate, so one has to be always aware of upcoming trends in software development).

## ***E-Fauna BC***

*E-Fauna BC* (<<http://efauna.bc.ca>>), an electronic atlas of the wildlife of British Columbia, is a companion site to *E-Flora BC*. This site is steadily growing and now contains atlas pages for many faunal groups, including bats, carnivores, fish, earthworms, land snails, dragonflies, butterflies, mosquitoes, sea stars, and crabs.



## **ANNE HANSEN**

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# Chatter

## Activities of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory

By Shona Lawson



Rocky Point Bird Observatory's (RPBO) 2011 migration monitoring season is well underway! Just as RPBO's fall migration monitoring season began in late July, the Hummingbird Project of BC ended the 2011 field season on the coast. Hummingbird banding continued into August in the Interior, and fall migration monitoring runs until October 31, 2011. As passerine monitoring starts winding down in mid-September, RPBO starts monitoring Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) on their fall migration. To keep up-to-date on the 2011 field season visit RPBO's blog <<http://rpbo2011.blogspot.com/>> where weekly banding news and bird identification quizzes will be posted to keep our volunteers and supporters updated.

The 2010 Bander-In-Charge, Brian Pomfret, returned to RPBO again this year and we are happy to have him back. RPBO received funding this year from Environment Canada's Science Horizon's Internship Program and we are happy to welcome Emily Barnewall to our team as this year's intern.

The Hummingbird Project of BC is selling Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) cards as a fundraiser. The cards are beautiful photos of a female and male Rufous Hummingbird, taken by Michael Yip. Information about the species is provided on the back of the cards. Michael Yip, a local birder and photographer <[www.vancouverislandbirds.com](http://www.vancouverislandbirds.com)>, has kindly allowed the Hummingbird Project to use these photos for fundraising. The cost is **\$10 for 10 cards** (five male, five female) plus shipping. Please contact the <[hummingbird@rpbo.org](mailto:hummingbird@rpbo.org)> if you are interested in purchasing these cards and supporting the Hummingbird Project of BC.

In addition, RPBO has several other fundraising projects: people can adopt a bird and/or sponsor one of our fall migration passerine or owl nets through RPBO Adopt-A-Bird, Sponsor-A-Net, and Sponsor-An-Owl-Net programs. If you are interested in supporting RPBO or learning more about our activities please visit our website at <[rpbo.org](http://rpbo.org)>.

### Feature Bird: Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

The Yellow Warbler is a charming, brightly-coloured bird. In fact, it is the most extensively yellow warbler in colour. The male Yellow Warbler has chestnut streaks on its chest, and southern forms have variable amounts of chestnut on the head. This beautiful warbler likes to breed in wet, deciduous thickets, particularly willows, as well as old fields and shrubby areas.



This migratory songbird has an extensive breeding range in North America that includes Alaska, every province and territory in Canada, and many of the southern United States. Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean have resident Yellow Warblers. Yellow Warblers consume insects and other arthropods by gleaning foliage, and they will occasionally eat fruit as well. Recent studies using DNA analysis indicate the closest

relative to the Yellow Warbler is the Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*). RPBO banded eight Yellow Warblers during the 2010 Monitoring Avian Productivity Survivorship season: seven at Witty's Lagoon and one at Rocky Point. During the 2010 fall migration monitoring season, 173 of these amazing little birds were banded by Rocky Point Bird Observatory as they migrated to southern wintering grounds.

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Photo: Mike Yip

# HAT Tricks

## Conservation Connection 2011

By Peter Dunsmore-Papagiannis, HAT's  
Community and Development Coordinator



Creating Conservation Legacies

Every year in Victoria, the conservation community comes together to learn, share, and enjoy a day filled with exciting workshops and speakers. Non-profits, government agencies, students, and volunteers from all over the Capital Regional District descend on Royal Roads University to take part in this one-of-a-kind event. Entering its 11th year, the Conservation Connection Forum is taking the event to a whole new level with in-demand workshops, a nature walk, and a keynote speaker that we are extremely excited about. We are pleased to announce that this year's keynote speaker will be the honourable Bob McDonald! You read that correctly, the host of CBC's *Quirks and Quarks*, scientist extraordinaire and recently named to the Order of Canada – has just moved to Victoria and what better way to introduce him to our community than by having him join us on September 30. If you are unfamiliar with Bob McDonald, we encourage you to check out the website for his radio program: you can listen to archived episodes and read his blog. His passion for science, nature, and conservation is infectious and it is something he has been doing for more than 30 years, engaging people of all ages in a way that makes complex ideas easily understood.

Aside from the excitement surrounding Bob McDonald and his talk, we have stayed focused and listened to what people want to see at Conservation Connection by reading previous years comment cards and talking with past

attendees. We are going to be having a wide range of panels and speakers that will touch on subjects such as fundraising, partnerships, inclusion of minority groups in conservation, and issues pertaining to the CRD. Conservation Connection has been growing each year and this year is set to be the biggest one yet; on behalf of everyone here at Habitat Acquisition Trust I sincerely look forward to seeing all of you at this year's forum.

### Conservation Connection 2011 Details:

**When:** Friday, September 30, 2011

**Where:** Royal Roads University

**Time:** 9-4:30 (tentatively)

**Registration:** HAT's Website – there will be an option to solely purchase a ticket for Bob McDonald's talk, check the website for information <[www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca)>.

To learn more about HAT volunteer opportunities and projects, please email [hatmail@hat.bc.ca](mailto:hatmail@hat.bc.ca) or call 250-995-2428.

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## Letters

*This letter is from a winner of a VNHS-sponsored Science Fair award. See the July/August 2011 issue of the magazine for more information.*

I am so glad I have this opportunity to thank you for this award. This was my first year at the Annual Science Fair and I am honoured to receive this award. It makes me feel like all my hard work was worthwhile. Next year I am

hoping to continue with Science Fair, and for many years after that. I am also hoping to one day go to the National Science Fair. My project was on beautiful hummingbirds. I hope to continue to do projects about nature, and I hope the Victoria Natural History Society will continue to be a sponsor.

Sincerely,  
Veronica Pollock

## BULLETIN BOARD/CLASSIFIEDS

**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. They then 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.

### **Volunteer for the Goldstream artshow**

We would like to extend a special invitation to the Victoria Natural History Society to attend the 12th biennial “*The Nature of Island Artists*” Art Show: an exhibition of nature-inspired art. Come out to the Goldstream Provincial Park Nature House from **September 17th to October 10th, 2011** to enjoy a showcase of a variety of Island artists who are inspired by the natural environment. The goal of the show is to increase the public’s awareness of the need to protect the natural world, and the role that parks play in that protection. As in previous years, proceeds from this art show will be used to provide environmental education programs for school children at Goldstream Nature House. VNHS’ involvement continues to be pivotal in the success of this art show, and we would like to further extend this invitation to members of VNHS to participate in the show as volunteer support. This rewarding volunteer experience begins with your attendance at our Wine and Cheese opening night with an opportunity to meet the artists. Duties in the days following include answering visitor questions about

the art show, providing a welcoming presence at the nature house, monitoring the art exhibits and offering assistance to demonstrating artists. The 2011 Art Show runs every day from Saturday, September 17 to Monday October 10. There are two “shifts” each day: 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. There will be two volunteers “on duty” during each shift as well as staff and regular volunteers who are familiar with the operation of the Nature House – lots of help at hand. To inquire further about this opportunity or to volunteer for a specific day and time, please contact the Goldstream Nature House at 250-478-9414. This is a fun and rewarding volunteer experience and we thank you in advance.

**Every Wednesday and Sunday Bird Walk.** Meet at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary parking lot: 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. For everyone!

**Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary courses and events:** For more information <[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)> or call 250-479-0211.

**Capital Regional District Parks.** CRD Parks offers programs for nature lovers of all ages. See <[www.crd.bc.ca/parks](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks)> for more information. Programs are one to one and a half hours long and free unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is not required for free programs unless otherwise noted.

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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 Night:** the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House; **Birders’ Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., University of Victoria. Locations are given in the calendar listings. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca>>, 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.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Thursday, September 1

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

#### *Unusual Mushrooms I Have Eaten*

**Sinclair Philip** is the co-owner of Sooke Harbour House, a luxury hotel on the edge of the Pacific Ocean known for its fine dining. Sinclair has always been passionate about local food. He is now very regularly walking the forest to discover everything about mushrooms. He has a large collection of books on mushrooms and works with chefs to discover the best recipes using mushrooms. He will introduce us to many of the mushrooms he has picked and eaten, both locally and internationally.

The South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (SVIMS) is a small society interested in all aspects of mycology and mushroom appreciation. Its members include professional mycologists, mushroom growers, mushroom pickers, cooks, photographers, and other enthusiasts. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of Feb.-June and Sept.-Nov., at the Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 Burnside Road West, Victoria, B.C. Meetings consist of a short business meeting in which news, upcoming events, and mushroom forays are discussed, followed by refreshments and a presentation by a guest speaker or one of our outstanding members. SVIMS also produces a newsletter, *Fungifama*, available online or by snail mail. The cost of joining SVIMS is \$20 per family per year and includes the cost of the newsletter.

### Saturday, September 3

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

#### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca). Everyone welcome.

### Sunday, September 4

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *Waterfront Birding in Victoria*

Join **Marie O'Shaughnessy** for a walk starting at Cattle Point. We will make our way along the shoreline, stopping at the "hot spots" including: the Marina, the Clover Point area, and the Breakwater for possible Sanderlings, Black Turnstones, Surfbirds, and even a Wandering Tattler. If there are any good spots between we will visit them as well. Coffee is our reward at the Ogden Point Café, where will discuss our findings. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the main parking lot at Cattle Point, Oak Bay. Finish at 11:15 a.m. For further information call **Marie** at 250-598-9680.

### Saturday, September 10

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

#### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca). Everyone welcome.

### Sunday, September 11

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

#### *Sooke Potholes Meander*

Join **Rosemary & Sid Jorna** of the Juan de Fuca Community Trails Society as they show us a route around the Sooke Potholes area to best enjoy the grandeur of the Sooke River. The habitat is amazingly diverse. Rather than just the Red Alder and Western Redcedar that you would expect out that way, there are also Lodepole Pine and Arbutus, as well as many interesting shrubs on this mostly well-drained and rocky site. Dress for the weather. Meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. to car-pool. Bring a lunch so that we don't need to hurry on our adventure. No pets please. Contact **Agnes Lynn** at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca) or 250-721-0634 for more information.

### Tuesday, September 13

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

#### *Native Pollinator Enhancement*

The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) is leading the charge to halt the decline of pollinator species. In 2009-2010 Vancouver Island alone lost 85% of its Honeybee colonies. The more than 400 species of native bees in British Columbia could also be facing similar or worse declines. TLC acts as an information conduit between the research done by the Xerces Society (a society dedicated to the conservation of invertebrates) and the general public. Join **Nathalie Chambers** as she discusses the differences between Honeybees and native bees, the causes of pollinator decline, and three simple steps that the public can take to help bring back the bees. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

### Saturday, September 17

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

#### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at [thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca). Everyone welcome.

### Tuesday, September 20

BOTANY NIGHT

#### *The Rise and Fall of Ecological Reserves in British Columbia*

**Adolf Ceska** will give an overview of the history, recent state, and possible future development of Ecological Reserves in British Columbia, and will open a discussion of how to make this important program viable again. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

### Saturday, September 24

FIELD TRIP/EVENT (LEVEL 2-3 AND FUN!)

#### *HawkWatch and BBQ Social*

Join CRD Regional Parks, the Victoria Natural History Society, as well as staff from Pacific Northwest Raptors for live displays and activities at Aylard Farm. Experts with spotting scopes will be at the viewpoint above Beechey Head. The hike up to the viewpoint requires sturdy footwear and a 20-minute trek up a steep and rocky trail. Bring binoculars, water, and a lunch. Drop in anytime between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the parking lot off Becher Bay Road. The VNHS Saturday Morning Birding Group will be able to sleep in! **VNHS Members! – Stay afterwards for a BBQ Social – check out the invitation on the bottom of page 4 in this newsletter.**

### Sunday, September 25

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *Juan De Fuca Pelagic Birding*

We have hired a boat (the *Fantasea II*) to go from Victoria Harbour out into the Juan De Fuca Strait and to Race Rocks to find some of the pelagic species that feed there. We will follow the tide debris line that occurs between Victoria and Race Rocks as the currents cause an upwelling of nutrients from the bottom, resulting in the best feeding spots for the birds. Possible birds include shearwaters, murrelets, auklets, jaegers, Northern Fulmar, many species of gulls, phalaropes, and other pelagics. Sea mammals, including whales, are also possibilities. There is room for 20 people; the cost is \$60.00 (including HST) per person for a five-hour trip (9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.). You must pre-pay on the VNHS website or by cheque to VNHS and pre-register by phoning **Ann Nightingale** at 250-652-6450 or emailing her at [motmot@shaw.ca](mailto:motmot@shaw.ca). See more details about the trip at <<http://vicnhs.bc.ca/fantasea.html>>.

### Monday, September 26

MARINE NIGHT

#### *Fish Watching in the Caribbean*

Imagine that you could watch birds while floating over the forest or gliding among the branches. That's the view of fishes offered to snorkelers and SCUBA divers on tropical coral reefs. Using photos taken by his student Katrine Turgeon, **Dr. Don Kramer**, retired Professor of Biology, McGill University, will share the discoveries revealed by this intimate view of a colourful, diverse, and fascinating group of animals. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

## Wednesday, September 28

BIRDER'S NIGHT

### *Ed and Ted's Texellent Adventure*

Come and join **Ed Pellizzon** and **Ted Ardley** as they share their pictures, videos, and stories of the birds of the Corpus Christie area of Texas, where Ed and Ted travelled for spring migration in April 2010. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

## Friday, September 30

EVENT

### *HAT's Conservation Connection Forum*

Every year in Victoria, the conservation community comes together to learn, share, and enjoy a day filled with exciting workshops and speakers. Non-profits, government agencies, students, and volunteers from all over the Capital Regional District descend on Royal Roads University to take part in this one-of-a-kind event. For more information, visit HAT's website: <www.hat.bc.ca>

## OCTOBER

### Saturday, October 1

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

#### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

### Sunday, October 2

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Geology Field Trip*

From Metchosin to Swartz Bay, see the evidence of the movement of continents and ice sheets with **Atholl Sutherland-Brown**, retired Chief Geologist of B.C. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Helmcken Park and Ride to carpool. Bring a lunch and drinks and dress for the weather. Length of outing about five-six-hours. Jointly sponsored by Victoria Natural History Society and Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society. No pets please. Contact **Agnes Lynn** at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634 for more information.

### Thursday, October 6

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY (SVMS)

#### *Amanitas*

As a college professor, **Dr. Britt Bunyard** has taught a broad range of undergraduate and graduate Biology courses, including Evolution. His research interest is on the coevolution of macrofungi and *Diptera*, the true flies. Scholarly achievements include publication of scientific papers in numerous research journals, book chapters, one patent, articles in popular science magazines, and one full-length book of travel essays from living in Southeast Asia. Until recently, he was Editor-in-Chief of NAMA's journal *McIlvainea* and newsletter *The Mycophile*, and as a Subject Editor for the Entomological Society of America's journal *Annals of the Entomological Society of America*. He is currently the publisher and editor-in-chief of *FUNGI Magazine*

See September 1 for meeting location.

## Saturday, October 8

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

### *Juan De Fuca Pelagic Birding*

See September 25 trip for details.

## Saturday, October 8

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

## Sunday, October 9

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3/4)

### *Biodiversity on the Kludahk Trail*

Join our trip leaders **Maywell Wickheim** and **Phoebe Dunbar** for a walk on the Kludahk Trail, established during the early 1990's by the Kludahk Outdoors Club. The trailheads (averaging 900 m/3000 feet) are approximately 16 to 19 kilometers (10 to 12 miles) up the Jordan River. The drive to the front-country trailheads takes approximately 30 minutes from Jordan River, with one stop at a Labrador Tea bog. Hear stories and the history of this eco-reserve, complete with ancient forests, mountain ponds, meadows, cranberry bogs, wild blueberry patches, and mushrooms. Bring lunch, water, camera to catch the fall colours, sturdy boots, and a walking stick. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Helmcken Park and Ride for car pooling or 8.50 a.m. **sharp** at the Second Cup (for a pit stop) in Sooke, located next to McDonalds. From there we will drive to the starting point together. If you intend to drive your own car, make sure you have good tires and a spare, four-wheel drive is not needed. We will arrive back in Sooke at approximately 5:00 p.m. Although this is not a strenuous hike it will be a long day. **Note: this trip is for members only.** Call Gwen Walter at 250-727-7376 to register for this trip and for further information.

## Tuesday, October 11

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

### *Advocacy and Conservation: the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt Example*

Large land-use changes have occurred and are occurring in the Capital Regional District. In 1990 the Greater Victoria Water District was still clear-cutting the drinking-water watersheds and only three parks existed in the lands between Saanich Inlet and the Sooke Basin. Join **Ray Zimmermann** as he looks at the campaigns and legal actions that led to the area now protected in the Sea-to-Sea Green/Blue Belt. He will also provide perspective on present land-use issues. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

## Saturday, October 15

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <www.vicnhs.bc.ca> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

## Tuesday, October 18

### BOTANY NIGHT

#### *Restoration of Coburn Peninsula in Colwood*

**David Blundon** will talk about his restoration work on the vegetation at Coburn Peninsula. Almost all VHNS members know Coburn Peninsula, but most turn our backs to Dave's achievements and watch the birds in the Esquimalt Lagoon instead! Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

## Saturday, October 22

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

#### *Juan De Fuca Pelagic Birding*

See September 25 trip for details.

## Saturday, October 22

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

#### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

## Sunday, October 23

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

#### *Searching for Mushrooms in John Dean Provincial Park*

Join **Bryce Kendrick**, distinguished mycologist and author of *The Fifth Kingdom*, a mycology textbook popular with both amateur and professional mycologists alike. Prepare for the trip by learning more about Bryce and fungi at his web site <[www.mycolog.com](http://www.mycolog.com)>. There is no collecting in the park: we will look at mushrooms *in situ*. Meet at 10 a.m. Directions: Take East Saanich Road, south of McTavish, turn up Dean Park Road, turn right just below park gates onto Carmanah Terrace, park at the far end of Carmanah Terrace. Warning: part of the terrain is hilly and there will be some steep climbing in parts. Wear good boots. A walking stick would be helpful and bring lunch. If the weather is cool, a good lunch can also be had at an excellent restaurant in the vicinity called "The Roost Farm House" otherwise we will stop for lunch on the trail and a discussion. We should be finished by approximately 1:00 p.m. For more information call **Gwen Walter** 250-727-7376.

## Wednesday, October 26

### BIRDER'S NIGHT

#### *Investigating the Migration of Rufous Hummingbirds*

Rufous Hummingbirds are a familiar sight to many of us living in B.C., where they arrive each spring to breed. Every year members of this species undertake a huge round trip from their wintering grounds in Mexico and the Gulf Coast to their breeding grounds in Western Canada and the U.S.A. Join ecologist **Dr. Jonathan Moran** in exploring the migration of these fascinating birds and learn how the use of feather characteristics such as colour and chemical makeup can help unravel some of the mysteries of their travels. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend and a coffee mug.

## Saturday, October 29

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL TBA)

#### *Saturday Morning Birding*

Call the Rare Bird Alert, 250-704-2555, or click "Rare Bird Alert" on the VNHS website <[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)> on the Thursday or Friday before to find out this week's location. Usually starts at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. For more details, call **Rick** at 250-885-2454 or email **Agnes** at thelynns at shaw.ca. Everyone welcome.

## Sunday, October 30

### EVENT

#### *South Vancouver Island Mycological Society Annual Mushroom Show*

A fungophile extravaganza: information, displays, experts on hand – amazing! Swan Lake Nature House, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

## Monday, October 31

### MARINE NIGHT

#### *The Unnatural History of Aquatic Invasive Species in British Columbia*

**Dr. Melissa Frey**, Curator of Invertebrates at the Royal BC Museum, will speak about the history of alien species in BC's coastal waters, including a discussion of ongoing research and monitoring efforts, recent arrival and watch list species, and public education programs. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, University of Victoria. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.



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VNHS Members!: Join us for a BBQ Social after HawkWatch (24 September 2011). RSVP by September 22 (see page 4 and page 21). *Photo: Claudia Copley*