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The Victoria NATURALIST

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Contents

Message from the Board.....	4
Tracking Animals on Easter Monday <i>By Mikhail Belikov</i>	5
Hat Tricks <i>By Adam Taylor</i>	9
The Panama Canal Cruise – a Blend of Bingo and Birding <i>By Ken Sohm</i>	10
Activities of Rocky Point Bird Observatory <i>By Stacey Hrushowy</i>	14
Deer Proof Calypso Orchids! <i>By Joy Finlay</i>	16
Fun Finds at Harling Point <i>By Tina Kelly</i>	17
BC Nature AGM <i>By Ann Nightingale</i>	18
Amazing Wildlife Sounds For All Ears.....	19
Welcome to New VNHS Members	20
Odds and Ends <i>By Gail Harcombe</i>	20
Letters	21
Bulletin Board/Classifieds	21
Calendar of Events.....	22

COVER PHOTO by Bob Orchard

Great Blue Heron about to eat a penpoint gunnel.

I was down on the beach, just off Sidney, watching this Great Blue Heron. He wasn't doing much and then flew to a different destination. I followed and then I saw him catch this large penpoint gunnel – about the biggest gunnel I've seen one of them eat. It took him a bit of time to arrange the gunnel correctly before he was able to swallow it. In the meantime I took about 12 photos. I was using a Canon 100–400 lens, my favourite lens for nature photography. –Bob Orchard

Recently we on the editorial team have received several trip reports. In the last edition, we had the blow by blow account of the Parkville field trip coincident with the Heron spawn written by Agnes Lynn. This time we have the equally fascinating forest tracking story from Mikhail Belikov. In the last edition we had a short summary of the Big Trees of Royal Roads by Lise Gagnon. I feel this sort of feedback is beneficial in that it hopefully makes those of us who missed the trip keep our eyes open for a second chance. The Parkville outing happens every year and there is a possibility that the tracking outing will happen again this year. A bit of stamina is needed for the latter; should I participate I will have to double my morning ration of porridge for the weeks before the trip.

And it is nice to receive spontaneous pieces, short or long like the 'Seen by Chance' (two pictures with a brief commentary by Ali Muller), and Marie O'Shaughnessy's amusing Quail/Mallard story in the last edition. This time we have a novel habitat for Calypso Orchids from Joy and Cam Finlay, and a well-illustrated summary of the zero tide outing written by the trip leader, Tina Kelly. This latter account reminds me how fortunate we are as VNHS members to be able to profit from such knowledgeable and dedicated leaders in the various field trips on offer.

Clearly it would be unbalanced to compile a whole newsletter of field trip reports but do keep them coming. Likewise photos with their stories, articles about anything about the natural world that piques your interest, and of course letters – all are welcomed to round out the newsletter.

I wrote about my recent cruise mainly to describe a reasonably priced option to see some exotic regions and wildlife. The repositioning cruises with Holland America from Fort Lauderdale to Victoria start at about \$2100 for 23 days inclusive of all transportation. These are not stripped down cruises but have the full gamut of on-board activities and entertainment. As you will see when you read the article "The Panama Canal Cruise – a Blend of Bingo and Birding", we had some amazing wildlife viewing (admittedly mostly birds) both from the ship and on the land excursions. I was very impressed with the guides in Mexico: good English, usually with species' lists, and generous with their time. Most of the lovely birds seen will remain in my mind's eye a long time. A very nice way to see a wide range of habitats and species in one trip.

Ken Sohm

Message from the Board

Your Board of Directors held our annual retreat in early June and we thought you might like to hear our big plans for the upcoming year and beyond.

As has been mentioned in an earlier email, the Victoria Natural History Society has agreed to co-host the Annual General Meeting of BC Nature, our provincial-level umbrella group, with the Rocky Point Bird Observatory. That means that naturalists from all the different clubs from all over the province will be descending on our fair city from May 1-4, 2014. The venue is booked: Harbour Towers, and the planning is underway. VNHSers are encouraged to attend, and anyone who wants to help out with the organizing: we need you! At this writing we have not decided on a theme, and we need presentation and field trip ideas, a keynote speaker for the banquet, and silent auction items. 2014 is the 70th anniversary of the Victoria Natural History Society, so we hope this makes a great birthday celebration.

The *Connecting Children With Nature* school programs are going amazingly well: the gang of volunteers involved in these is even being kept busy on the weekends with events such as the Beaveree, as well as through regular school outings. We have decided to produce a rack card promoting these free programs to parents and teachers at public outreach events, and we hope to have a couple of training sessions in the fall to encourage more members to participate in the program- the more naturalist mentors involved the more schoolchildren will learn about the greenspaces near their school.

The first of what we hope will be a series of pamphlets about various groups of flora and fauna is in the works. Maybe you have already even sent in some images of local butterflies as part of this project. We intend to provide downloadable versions on our website, and maybe hard copies in an inexpensive format, so that these get into the hands of anyone who may be interested.

Our website is being re-vamped and we hope to launch the new site soon, potentially even as soon as this fall. Thanks go out to Adam Taylor, with input from Phil Lambert, James Clowater and Gail Harcombe. Soon the Society will present a more modern look to those exploring who we are and what we do.

Really big plans involving building a nature centre in a park in the region and constructing more viewing platforms such as the one we all enjoy at Viaduct Flats are always bandied about. We are pursuing a few options, but we are only in the very early stages. If you have any ideas or the right connections, get in touch! These sorts of projects can take a long time and usually involve various levels of government. In the end they are great additions to the community: serving nature enthusiasts of all ages and interest levels.

In the very near future we are going ahead with our annual Hawkwatch and BBQ Social out at East Sooke Park. This is our chance to get together as a club and socialize, eat, and watch birds – Fun! RSVP with your food preference and don't forget your lawnchair. Keep your fingers crossed for sunny weather and we'll hopefully see you and hundreds of migrating Turkey Vultures on September 28th (see below).



VNHS September Social *Saturday September 28, 3:00 p.m.* *following Hawk Watch* *You are invited!*

Join CRD Regional Parks and the Victoria Natural History Society for HawkWatch and then join your fellow VNHS members for a BBQ get-together at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Park. Members are welcome to a free smokie (veggie option available), beverage, cake, and camaraderie! To RSVP email or phone James: 250-544-0455, james.miskelly@gmail.com before September 20. Bring a lawnchair.

Tracking Animals on Easter Monday

By Mikhail Belikov

The rainy February was coming to its end and, like many other VNHS members, I was eagerly looking forward to the just-announced VNHS outings coming up in the spring. An unusual animal tracking trip on Easter Monday had immediately grabbed my attention. The number of participants was limited to twelve and the registration was only opening after March 3. This was done to provide enough time for the paper copies of the Naturalist to reach mailboxes, giving everyone an opportunity to register.

Photos by author



Bear claw marks on a tree, filled with black fungus.

At that time, I was studying Tom Brown's Field Guide to Nature Observation and Tracking, getting quite interested in enhancing these skills which are indispensable in my nature photography. The timing of the tracking trip was nearly perfect and I was impatiently waiting for the registration to open. I was planning to send my RSVP email immediately after midnight on Monday, March 4th. However, after a tiring day I could not stay awake and had fallen asleep before midnight. Sending the registration email was the first thing I did after waking up on Monday. There was still some space left and I got in!

Easter Monday had finally arrived and early in the morning the lucky twelve met with Gary, our trip leader and an accomplished tracker, with his indispensable tracking dog Shadow. The day was unexpectedly sunny and even warm, something to treasure in early April. Over the next several hours, Gary led us through Sooke forests pointing out various signs of animal presence, some obvious and some not. Among the most visible and numerous ones were bear claw scratches on trees, ranging from quite recent to old ones with blackish fungus filling the cuts, making their presence even more obvious.

Other signs of bear presence that we observed were bite marks on trees at human eye level and even higher, likely warnings to other bears, "Look how tall and powerful I am!"



Bear bite marks on a tree.

An unexpected discovery, at least for me, was the cougar scratch piles. They were no more than scratches on the trail complete with small piles of dirt, twigs and leaves. These piles were very easy to miss by a casual observer. If Gary had not pointed them out, we might have stepped over or on them without a second thought.

Gary's dog Shadow, a reliable tracking companion, was stopping and sniffing the cougar scratch piles, helping us discover even the most unnoticeable ones. Gary had alerted us that the piles might smell of cougar urine and the most adventurous members of our group got on their knees dutifully sniffing the dirt. Some noticed a distinct smell but there was no guarantee that this was cougar's scent. According to Gary, dogs also liked to leave their mark on cougar scratch piles. From time to time, we also found cougar's scat, usually quite old. Poking it with a stick uncovered fragments of bones, teeth, and other tell-tale signs indicating what was for dinner.

Cougars are very territorial: the scat and the scratch piles were quite likely left by the same individuals or family. Some time ago, Gary had spotted three of them in this area, a female with two grown kittens. The mother was wearing a leather tracking collar. We were sad to learn from Gary that both those kittens had been put down for preying on livestock. This was more than a year ago. Although very mature, the mother still seemed to be in good shape and Gary said he hoped that by now she might have yet another litter.

The paths that we were following were well-defined, likely hiking trails shared by humans and animals. They were sometimes almost flat, as if following an old road, and sometimes had steep climbs and descents and stream crossings.

After several hours of hiking, we finally reached a pre-selected lunch spot on a hill overlooking the forest that surrounded us on all sides. We stayed there for almost an hour, enjoying lunch and a well-deserved rest. After we had eaten, Gary shared with us more stories and passed around numerous photos confirming his observations. These included cougars, black bears and even a wolf. Finally, we packed up our belongings and left the welcoming hill. However, one more surprise was awaiting us close to the lunch area. Gary showed us elk droppings, a species very uncommon this far south on Vancouver Island.

On the way back to civilization we were still detecting numerous signs of animal presence, although everyone was getting tired and slightly less excited about each new discovery. A beautiful tiny creek running down off a mossy slope brightened our spirits. The water was falling in gentle streams from one moss-covered rock to another, almost like in a fairy tale forest. And what could be more



Top: Cougar scratch pile. Below: Checking content of cougar scratch.



Lunch stop on a hill.



Stream crossing.

refreshing than washing your face with cold creek water!

At the end, the only group member showing no signs of fatigue was the dog. Even after more than twelve kilometres of hiking, Shadow was still eagerly exploring the bushes, excitedly reacting to animal scents that only she could notice.

Everything good comes to an end. After some seven hours in the forest, we had finally reached a wide well-used hiking trail and a two-log bridge crossing a wide stream.

Soon after, we were at a noisy and smelly highway. After exchanging emails and saying goodbyes, it was time to get back home, dead-tired yet very gratified.

Unfortunately, this story does not have a happy end. A few weeks later, several news reports announced the demise of a cougar family in Sooke. Conservation officers had put down a female with two kittens after catching them eating livestock. The fourth cougar from the group had escaped. To our dismay, this was the very same collared female with her new litter.



Elk droppings.

Conservation officers highlighted that she was old and likely no longer able to hunt wild prey and that teaching her kittens to hunt livestock had taken them on a path of no return.

By tracing the collar, it was determined that the mother cougar came from the Nanoose area, some 150 kilometres north of Sooke. She was about three when collared nine years ago and this placed her age close to the upper end of a typical life expectancy for wild cougars. We can only hope that the escaped kitten will survive without its mother's protection, claim the emptied territory as its own and, most importantly, stay away from people and livestock. Who knows, maybe on the proposed VNHS tracking trip in the fall, we will discover fresh signs indicating its presence in the area.

Mikhail Belikov is a nature photographer and an avid outdoor enthusiast living in Victoria. His website: www.focusonwild.com



Mossy Creek.

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Hat Tricks

Got Bats? HAT is looking for bat colonies to practice monitoring



By Adam Taylor, Executive Director, Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)

The small, furry shapes dart through the evening air in search of insects faster than the eye can follow. Voracious insectivores, a single member of our local bat population may eat own weight in insects a night, including many mosquitoes. Despite popular folklore, bats are not blind, don't fly into your hair, are not rodents, and do not spread disease (the rare rabid bat has been found on Vancouver Island, but it is very unusual).

Beyond that, however, we don't know as much as you might expect about our local bat populations. What species occur here in what numbers, where they live, and how their populations are doing are all unknown. Biologists suspect that bat populations on southern Vancouver Island have declined in numbers. The loss of wetlands (important feeding areas for bats) and roosting sites in wildlife trees have likely taken a toll, not to mention the booming population of cats and introduced Grey Squirrels, which can predate on bats they discover roosting during the day. Still, it is not uncommon to see the Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) hunting on warm summer evenings in our area.

That's no longer the case in eastern North America. The Little Brown Bat was a common bat in most of North America until just a few years ago. Then, in 2006, a fungal disease called White Nose Syndrome started killing large numbers of hibernating Little Brown Bats in the eastern U.S. The fungus is spreading at an astounding pace across much of the north-eastern states and into four provinces. The fungus likely spreads by hitchhiking on people and equipment. An emergency meeting of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in February 2012 added three species of bats to the Canadian Endangered Species list, including the Little Brown Bat.

The good news is that White Nose Syndrome has not yet been detected in British Columbia. The bad news is that the fungus is continuing to spread west, and at the moment our knowledge about local bat populations is so rudimentary that we are not able to detect declines in population numbers until it is too late.

So HAT is initiating a Community Bat Program modeled after the successful Kootenay Community Bat Project. In this first year of the project, our goal is to start mapping out colonies in the Greater Victoria area, monitor a few maternity bat roosts, and compare bat house designs.



Anabat SD2 bat detector. *Photo: Christian Engelstoft*

We were awarded a good quality bat detector, an Anabat SD2, and training in how to use the equipment courtesy of the Bob Berry Scientific Award.

We need your help. We need practice using the detector, and we need information about bat houses. Here's what you can do:

1. If you have a bat house, please contact us, *even if it has not been successful*, to tell us about its design and placement (photo appreciated). The information will help us understand what design and environmental elements are important to successful houses.
2. If you know of a bat colony or roosts, we would like to know about it. We would like to select a few roosts to monitor, so if you are comfortable with a biologist spending a few evenings watching the colony at dusk, please contact us. The biologist would simply monitor the bats as they emerge from your shingles, attic, or tree, and record their echolocation vocalizations with our bat detector. We need to practice!

Contact the HAT Office, and speak with Peter, Todd, or Adam. We can be reached by phone at 250-995-2428, or by email at bats@hat.bc.ca. Thank you!

The Panama Canal Cruise – a Blend of Bingo and Birding

By Ken Sohm

After getting our leaves of absence from our respective wives, an old Vancouver buddy and I recently took a 23 day (mid April-mid May) repositioning cruise from Fort Lauderdale to Vancouver (Victoria for me). One appeal of this trip was the fact that there was only one air journey to undergo. And I was hoping to put a few pounds on my somewhat skinny frame.

What opportunity would there be to see birds? Marilyn Lambert assured me that I should see an albatross. Yes, I managed that. I don't keep a diary of my sightings, so what follows are simply remembered highlights. And since I am not a knowledgeable birder, especially for exotic birds, and

I only had a field guide to the birds of Costa Rica, I relied on what guides told us.

Moving slowly through the Panama Canal from the Caribbean to the Pacific, we saw many species which I was unable to identify: the occasional flock of parakeets, martins and swallows. Magnificent Frigatebirds patrol everywhere and watch the Laughing Gulls for food opportunities. Great, Snowy, and Cattle Egrets were present along the banks and identifiable from the boat. Higher in the sky, Black and Turkey Vultures showed their different and distinctive silhouettes. Brown Pelicans were present from the Caribbean ports through to Puerto Vallarta.



Magnificent Frigatebirds in formation. *Photo: Gail Harcombe*

Nearing the Pacific, I began to notice large sea birds, which I later identified as Brown Boobies. They accompanied our boat well out into the ocean, demonstrating their flying and diving skills.

Moving north up the Pacific coast, our first stop was in Costa Rica. We had no pre-planned land excursion and ended walking around the somewhat run-down town. My friend is not a birder but patiently propped up walls while I tried to study some of the birds in town. Lots of Tropical Kingbirds and White-Winged Doves (the only dove I managed to identify). Down one little lane leading to an unpromising mudflat, littered with building debris, we did find Whimbrel, some Great Egrets, a Green Heron and a White Ibis.

Farther up the coast, one of our pre-booked shore expeditions was a boat trip through the mangrove swamps. Birds were promised but had gone missing on that day. We saw crabs, massive termite nests and the occasional Iguana. We did see a juvenile Little Blue Heron and plenty of egrets and a Green Heron again. The juvenile Little Blue Heron is easy to mistake for an egret, since it is mainly white with just some dark feathers.

At Huatulco, south-west Mexico, a lovely little port, we

had another trip booked, a dedicated birding trip, binos supplied. The guide, called Pablo, looked capable and didn't disappoint. A 10 minute drive out of town found us in a parking lot where we just stayed put and waited for the birds to come to us. And indeed they did. In the 20 minutes we stayed there, we had about 15 species, most notably a Citreoline Trogon, a Russet-Crowned Motmot, and a Lesser Ground Cuckoo. The latter is a hard one to find even when it is pointed out to you, being just about a perfect match to the earth colour. I could tell from my friend's exclamations on seeing the Trogon that he was warming up to bird-watching.

The second leg of the Huatulco tour was a long walk along a road adjacent to a golf course and here too we had many rewards. Two Orange-breasted Buntings were having a bath in a culvert. These buntings are a glorious splash of complementary colours, an orangey-yellow and blue. If the buntings were lovely, the White-throated Magpie-Jay was amusing. A large bird with improbable head plumes, it is both gregarious and noisy. You see one, you soon have a group chatting busily. As we walked, we could hear the two haunting notes of an owl, which the guide identified as a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl. And as we progressed, identifying birds as they appeared, the guide periodically mimicked the owl's call.



Green Heron. *Photo: Gail Harcombe*

After several minutes of this, we had a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl directly overhead, sufficiently long enough for the guide to set up his scope so that we could all get a good look. My buddy is probably still talking to his friends, when discussing the cruise, about how this fantastic Mexican bird guide had drawn in the inquisitive owl. It may of course have been a second owl. Anyway it was a great sight. On this 3-hour outing we ended up with close to thirty species.

At the next stop, Puerto Vallarta, we attempted to organize our own bird outing. By this time we had teamed up with a couple from Puget Sound who were new birders and very enthusiastic. Amongst the many commercial groups awaiting the boat, we did find an expert birder, complete with a well-worn Mexican bird guide. Could have been a convenient prop for a masquerading huckster? Turned out he was the real deal. He was asking \$300 for a 3 hour trip and the four of us couldn't agree on the price. In the end we agreed a price for a regular sightseeing tour for eight people and he promised us to watch out for birds. He kept his word and pointed out many species while en route. At the final stop before turning around, while four of our group studied the wares on display at a market, he found Martins (not Purple but I believe Grey-breasted), four Military Macaws

disappearing fast over a distant hill, and the Yellow-winged Caciques right over our heads in the trees. Their pendulous nests are similar to mega Bushtit nests. He recorded the four Macaws as he explained his involvement in a survey/census of this endangered bird. So that particular outing had a nice mix of culture – 400 year-old churches, the location of the shooting of the movie *Night of the Iguana* – and nature.

At San Diego – our last port until Victoria – things changed dramatically. The days were getting slowly longer and distinctively chillier. The bronze types sunbathing on the observation deck were suddenly few and far between. The reading types on the promenade deck were swaddled in tartan blankets. Guests were fighting over the jigsaw puzzles in the library. But the most striking change to us as we did our 5 or 6 loops around the promenade deck at 7:30 or so, after brekkie, was the horde of bundled-up types with toques, Gore-Tex jackets, and gloves with – you guessed it – serious telescopes. We few birders who had got to know each other a bit on board were suddenly not alone. The group of about 25 were from various parts of the U.S. They were a fixture for most of the day from first light to dusk right at the front of the boat (the bow proper is not open except when transiting the canal) with, naturally, some meal breaks and



Snowy Egret in the mangroves. *Photo: Gail Harcombe*

occasional 'spell me offs'. Dirty coffee mugs accumulated in their corner and designated runners brought down light refreshments.

I chatted with a few of them; they were from places as far apart as Texas (five or more) and Chicago. One lady I chatted with for some time was a retired school teacher from Chicago, hoping to get her 700th North American species, a Eurasian Skylark. A tall Texan, probably the overall organizer, told me that he had pre-booked some rental vans to take them up to north Saanich.

These birders gave me more impetus to scan the waters and I did find lots of Sooty Shearwaters and three Black-footed Albatross, one quite close to the boat. The last day, as we came into the Straits of Juan de Fuca, I was out fairly early with them but still too late to see Tufted Puffins which they had seen at first light. By that time a heavy mist had covered the Straits. An unusual sighting that morning was three hummingbirds adjacent to the ship as it idled along at about 10 knots. And someone reported hitchhiking Brown Cowbirds up on the Observation Deck. Regarding marine life, I saw one distant Humpback Whale and for several hours moving north from Costa Rica we were moving through sea turtles. With their constant watch, the birders



Tropical Kingbird. Photo: Ken Sohm

reported both dolphins and whales. So it is always wise to keep ones eyes open. And to do any serious pelagic birding in the more northerly latitudes take some really warm layers with you – we didn't.

So a cruise doesn't have to be all Bingo, culinary demos or computer workshops, there are birds everywhere. But after all that scrumptious food, my scale still shows the same weight.



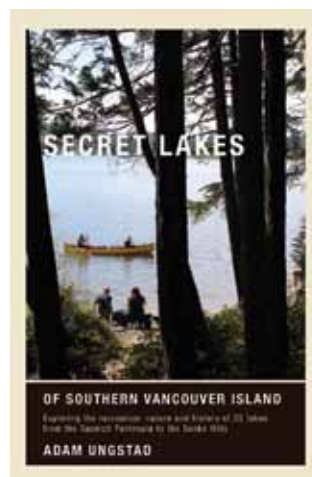
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Activities of Rocky Point Bird Observatory



By Stacey Hrushowy

Although fall migration is generally the busiest time of year for us at Rocky Point Bird Observatory there has been no time to take a breather these last two months either. Our field season for hummingbird monitoring across the western provinces and states is already well underway, as is our observational hummingbird nest monitoring. This latter program aims to address questions relating to incubation behaviours of Anna's Hummingbirds. Currently several nests are under observation in patches of Garry oak habitat in Esquimalt. This program operates on Sundays year-round, and is always in need of additional observers – training provided. Contact program coordinator Misha Warbanski mishaw@uvic.ca for more details or to report a hummingbird nest on your property.

Our Northern Saw-whet Owl nestling banding project in Boardman, Oregon, has also concluded for the year. Rocky Point has proven to be a significant site for monitoring Northern Saw-whet Owls each fall, with a record 814 individuals banded in 2012, but we've always been left wondering: where are these birds coming from? Our partnership with Greenwood Resources Tree Farm in Boardman is an opportunity to learn about this owl's post-fledging dispersal. Despite lower numbers of owls than expected nesting this year, an amazing 50% of owls encountered were banded last year. The rodent population on the property is very low this year, and without an adequate food supply, owls passing through in early March simply continued on their way to find more suitable breeding sites. The number of American Kestrels nesting, however, has stayed relatively constant over the years, opening the door to yet another study question, and this year we have begun banding them as well. Future re-sightings and genetic analysis will help us put together the bigger picture of the dispersal patterns of these birds in the Pacific Northwest. If you find any bird with a leg band make sure you report it to the Bird Banding Office at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblretrv/>.

These last few weeks have also seen us busy with public events and fundraisers. On April 20th and 21st you may have seen us at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary's Native Plant Sale where we had an information booth and gave presentations on various topics, and May 11 saw us co-hosting the 4th Annual International Migratory Bird Day celebration with VNHS and CRD Parks at Elk and Beaver Lake Park. The day kicked off with guided bird walks and also had informative displays, banding demonstrations of songbirds and hummingbirds, live birds of prey from Pacific Northwest Raptors, and the drawing of our annual raffle winner.

Congratulations to Trish Whitehead of Campbell River, winner of our \$1000 prize, and thank you to everyone who supported us by participating! If you missed it this year, stay tuned for your next chance to partake early in 2014.

If you've been following us on Facebook lately you'll also know we've had some very active participants this year in the Canada-wide Baillie Birdathon fundraiser; but our participants still need sponsors to achieve their fundraising goals! Some notable big days this May: RPBO board member Jeremy Kimm spent 19 hours birding across the entire south island encountering a stunning 102 species, while Karen Whitehouse, friend and supporter of RPBO, restricted her search to the Cowichan Valley and over 15 hours saw 78 species; in a big day of truly epic proportions, RPBO co-president Ann Nightingale covered 600km birding as she went en route to Boardman, OR, from the Creston Valley Bird Festival observing 72 species. You can learn more about our Baillie Birdathon fundraiser at www.rpbo.org/birdathon.php; as of June 1st there will be 60 days left to give to this event. All money raised supports bird studies in Canada and 75% of funds raised by our team's supporters will be retained by Rocky Point Bird Observatory for use in our projects.

Up next for RPBO: May 31st marks the first field day of breeding bird monitoring with our Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship program, coordinated through the Institute for Bird Populations, Point Reyes, CA. Constant effort monitoring* will take place every 10 days or so at our two field sites at Witty's Lagoon and Madrona Farms until early August. Last spring's field season saw the 3rd ever record of a Black-and-white Warbler for the Victoria Checklist – who knows what exciting migrants might be encountered this year! Migration monitoring at both Rocky Point and Pedder Bay is also in the not so distant future with our first day of the season on July 21st. This marks the second year of operating our publicly accessible site at Pedder Bay. Visit our website for details on the best times to visit – we hope to offer special guided site tours on certain days of the week once the season is underway.

While Rocky Point Bird Observatory is almost exclusively a volunteer-operated organization, we still have expenses, and we do need your support to continue our monitoring programs. Every little bit counts – just \$35 keeps our mist nets open at one site for one hour and \$200 keeps them open all day! Learn about how you can make a small monthly contribution to support us at <http://rpbo.org/donate.php>, and remember to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for as-it-happens updates, photos and upcoming event notifications!

Feature Bird

Black-headed Grosbeak BHGR (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

This songbird stands out as a vibrant and stocky addition to your feeder-visiting birds. Characterized by their robust bodies, massive grey conical bills, and tails that are just a little on the short side, the Black-headed Grosbeak reaches its peak of abundance in the Victoria area around the first week of June.

Breeding male BHGR are showy birds, with cinnamon-orange bodies, black heads and black and white wings. Female and immature birds are quite a bit drabber sporting brownish, washed out versions of the male's plumage with brown patterned backs and heavy white eyebrows. Females and juvenile BHGRs bear a close resemblance to Rose-breasted Grosbeaks of the same age and sex, but can be distinguished by their bi-coloured bills and the weaker streaking on their breast and flanks.

Often seen hopping through the canopy or understory on the search for food, these birds are omnivorous, gleaning insects and consuming seeds and berries, focussing heavily on the former prey items during the breeding season and favouring berry-bearing shrubs and bushes during migration. These are birds that require habitat complexity and prefer edge habitats with a diversity of plant types and access to water.

Confirmed breeders in the Victoria area, BHGRs create nests of extremely loose construction, 5-7 inches across, in the outer boughs of deciduous trees near water. The looseness of the nest is thought to aid in temperature regulation. Unusual among songbirds, the male BHGR contributes equally to the duties of incubating the nest and raising the young. In addition, female BHGRs exhibit the rare trait of singing, sometimes songs as complex as the males'. Often described as a more fluid warble of the American Robin's song, singing in both sexes is supposed to contribute to family cohesion after the young fledge. Additionally, the complex songs occasionally exhibited by females are hypothesized to mimic a rival male's song thought to keep her mate's guard up while he is on the nest.

Outside of Victoria BHGRs are found to breed from southern B.C. and Alberta to Central America. These birds winter in the tropical lowlands of Mexico and Central America with some populations living in these environments year round. Where their range overlaps with wintering monarch butterflies, BHGRs are known to be one of their few predators.

Uncommonly banded at Rocky Point and Pedder Bay (only three were banded in 2012 between the two sites), they are more readily observed during audio-visual census – 23 birds seen at Rocky Point and 39 at Pedder Bay during 2012.



HY female or juvenile Black-headed Grosbeak. Photo copyright Rocky Point Bird Observatory. (HY=hatch year – the calendar year, Jan.1-Dec. 31, in which the bird hatched)

British Columbia Breeding Bird Atlas. 2008. Data accessed from NatureCounts, a node of the Avian Knowledge Network, Bird Studies Canada. Available: <http://www.naturecounts.ca/>. Accessed: May 26, 2012.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Nd. All About Birds: Black-headed Grosbeak. Available: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-headed_Grosbeak/lifehistory#at_habitat. Accessed: May 25, 2012.

Pomfret, B. 2012. Migration Monitoring at Rocky Point Bird Observatory Fall 2012. Available: http://rpbo.org/reports/migf_2012_rpad.pdf. Accessed: May 25, 2012.

Ritchison, G. 1983. The function of singing in female black-headed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*): family-group maintenance. *The Auk*, 100(1):105-116.

Schortinghuis, R. 2013. Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival (MAPS) at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park 2012. Available: http://rpbo.org/reports/maps_2012_wila.pdf. Accessed: May 25, 2012.

** Long-term constant effort monitoring is designed to gather information on distribution and population changes (abundance and demographic) of passerine species. Standardized methods are followed, including mist netting and banding. The same number and placement of nets and the length of time that the nets are operated on each visit is kept constant at each site, and the seasonal pattern of visits is standardized across years and across sites.*

Deer Proof Calypso Orchids!

By Joy Finlay

We have discovered a fine bunch of Calypso orchids blooming on the moss-covered roof of our garden shed, growing under the shade of Douglas-fir trees, a deer proof green roof!

The orchids (*Calypso bulbosa*) are growing out of a lush mat of step moss (*Hylocomium splendens*). When I showed them to Jenny Clark, she explained that she saw the same thing in Jasper National Park! She saw Calypso orchids growing in deep step moss, also growing on the north-facing ridge of Pyramid Lake.

Now I'll pay more attention to the mosses associated with the habitat of where the Calypso orchids bloom.



A clump of the Calypso orchids growing in moss on top of the shed roof.
Photo: Joy Finlay



Photo: Mikhail Belikov



Fun Finds at Harling Point

By Tina Kelly

The VNHS field trip to Harling Point on May 25th highlighted some of the wide variety of marine invertebrates and algae found along a rocky shore – Sea Sacs, Feather Boa Kelp, Rockweed, Sea Lettuce, Yellow and Purple Shore Crabs, Decorator Crabs, Green Sea Urchins, Bread Crumb Sponge, Sea Lemon, and various species of limpets, snails, whelks, and chitons. Four seastar species were also spotted—Blood, Mottled, Six-rayed and Leather. The keen observational skills of eager participants helped locate four especially fun finds: Gumboot Chiton, Turtle (Umbrella) Crabs, Red Sponge Nudibranch and Red Sponge Nudibranch eggs (see images).

Photos: Tina Kelly



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BC Nature AGM to be held in Victoria in May 2014


By Ann Nightingale

2014 marks the 70th anniversary of the Victoria Natural History Society and the 20th anniversary of Rocky Point Bird Observatory and the celebrations will include both organizations hosting the BC Nature AGM from May 1 to 4, 2014. We're still very much in the early stages of planning and are looking for a few more people to round out our conference committee. In particular, we are looking for a person to coordinate the ancillary fundraising (silent auction, door prizes, advertisements for the program, sponsorship for events), a publicity coordinator, someone to research and put together a guide for registrants on accommodation and to make sure the facilities are in order during the conference, and someone to coordinate displays from vendors and other conservation organizations. We will


also need volunteers to staff the registration desk during the event, but we'll be recruiting for those positions in the spring.

We'll be packing a wide variety of field trips and presentations, and of course the actual Annual General Meeting, into just a few days. We promise no shortage of fun things to do! There will also be a banquet on Saturday evening, something we haven't had for VNHS for quite some time. This will be a great opportunity to get together for a social event with lots of other like-minded people.


More details will be shared as they become available, but it promises to be a fantastic weekend! If you are interested in one of the conference committee positions, please contact **Ann Nightingale** at motmot@shaw.ca or 250-652-6450.

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Amazing Wildlife Sounds For All Ears: World's largest natural sound archive goes digital

A recent press release – here abridged – from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

All archived analog recordings in the collection, going back to 1929, have now been digitized and can be heard at <http://macaulaylibrary.org/>. The collection contains nearly 150,000 digital audio recordings representing about 9000 species. There's an emphasis on birds, but the collection also includes sounds of whales, elephants, frogs, primates, and more. The recordings are used by researchers studying many questions, as well as by birders trying to fine-tune their sound ID skills. The recordings are also used in museum exhibits, movies, and commercial products such as smartphone apps.

"Our audio collection is the largest and the oldest in the world," explained Macaulay Library director Mike Webster. "Now, it's also the most accessible. We're working to improve search functions and create tools people can use to collect recordings and upload them directly to the archive. Our goal is to make the Macaulay Library as useful as possible for the broadest audience possible."

"Now that we've digitized the previously archived analog recordings, the archival team is focusing on new material from amateur and professional recordists from around the world to really, truly build the collection," Budney said. "Plus, it's just plain fun to listen to these sounds. Have you heard the sound of a walrus underwater? It's an amazing sound!"

A recent look shows a lovely sequence of a male Pileated Woodpecker ratcheting down a tree to feed two vociferous young begging for food from their cavity.
<http://macaulaylibrary.org/video/440601>

Editor's Note:

What the press release did not mention is that many of the audio recordings are actually videos with sound, so you not only hear the animals but see many of them as well. Visit the site at <http://macaulaylibrary.org/> and listen to samples for Brown Creeper, Great Blue Heron, Hermit Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, or Winter Wren to mention just a few.—G.H.

ANNE HANSEN

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Welcome to New VNHS Members

Stephen Morden and Marietta Mitchell
Emery Place

Amanda Sather
wildlife, edible plants, and wildlife tracking

Mohamed Benrabah
Midgard Place
Biology, Wildlife Conservation

Karen McIvor
Judge Place
Wildflowers, birds

Merle Crombie
Tuxedo Drive
*Birding, hiking, cycling,
eating delicious food,
research*

Kim Capson
Gulfview Place
Birds!

Robert Bhatia
Memorial Crescent
Birds

Odds and Ends

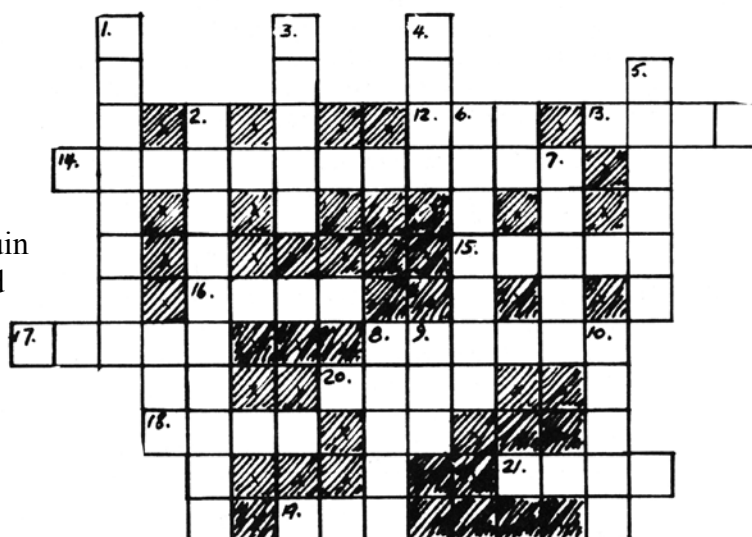
By Gail Harcombe

Recently I was given a bagful of copies of *The Victoria Naturalist*, mostly from the 70s and 80s. I found reading them to be both entertaining and interesting, not only for the actual content, but getting a bit of history of our Society (and how the world was then). So every now and then, your new issues will include excerpts from these older ones – starting with the items below. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have – let me know.

From the “Kid’s Country” section, September 1976 – this crossword created by Alex Peden first appeared in the Victoria Naturalist in 1953. Note that spelling was current at that time – might have changed since – and that clue #11 was missing in the original.

Clues:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Plover | 13. Mud-hen |
| 2. Duck, named because of its head | 14. Commonest gull |
| 3. Long-legged fish-eater | 15. Hell-diver |
| 4. Eater of eggs | 16. Meadow ---- |
| 5. “hee” at end | 17. Looks like a penguin |
| 6. Common duck | 18. small gull-like bird |
| 7. Fly in a “V” | 19. Cheeky bird |
| 8D. Blue grouse | 20. Has a necklace |
| 9. Male swan | 21. Small bird |
| 10. Bigger than a crow | 8A. Skunk head |
| 12. Bird of prey | |



December 1973

Tests on a giant tortoise (*Testudo gigantes*) in Mauritius show that even when hungry and enticed by a cabbage it cannot cover more than five yards in a minute (0.17 mph) on land. Over long distances its speed is greatly reduced.

March 1974

Most Poisonous Toadstool: The yellowish-olive death cap (*Amanita phalloides*) is regarded as the world’s most poisonous fungus. From six to fifteen hours after tasting, the effects are vomiting, delirium, collapse and death. Among its victims was Cardinal Giulio de’Medici, Pope Clement VII (1478-1534).

Letters

Dear Mr. Embleton,

I was the recipient of The Victoria Natural History Society award which was a book entitled "Nature Guide to the Victoria Region". I read in the letter that you were the donor and I can't even tell you how grateful I am. I love the natural world and have always treasured our beautiful ecosystem.

My experiment was on the effect of ethylene gas from bananas on pears ripening process in three different environments: a sunny window, a fridge, and a normal counter-top. In each environment I had two sealed plastic Ziploc © freezer bags: one with a pear, and one with a banana and a pear. Each day I measured the brown spots on each of the pears (not the bananas) and placed them back in their bags. I did this for eleven days straight.

Thank you so much. You are such a kind gentleman to have been the donor of this award to young, budding scientists in our regional fair.

Thanks again,

Charlotte P. Brady

Grade 5, St Margaret's School, Victoria BC

And this from Mom:

Hello,

Charlotte was so thrilled to be acknowledged at the UVic Science Fair awards for participating in the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair. Thank you very much for your generous donation and support.

Sincerely,

Wendy Newell (Mom)

BULLETIN BOARD/CLASSIFIEDS

Small Suite Sought

Female VNHS member with native plant gardening experience seeks a small but bright quiet suite in the James Bay/ Fairfield area. Please contact leijne at telus.net for more information.

Bird Checklists

The updated Victoria and Southeastern Vancouver Island Checklist of Birds should soon be available in all of the usual places. Right now, they can be bought at the Wild Birds Unlimited store on Shelbourne. They will also be available at our meetings beginning in September.

The Robert Bateman Centre Opens in Victoria

Supported by the Bateman Foundation, the Centre opened in May and displays the largest exhibit of original works (160 pieces spanning seven decades of work) by one of the world's greatest and most famous wildlife artists. The Centre has a mission to inspire and educate on all things wild and natural and to provide a multipurpose meeting place for collaboration, creative thinking, and networking about in-nature education initiatives. Located at 470 Belleville Street, downtown Victoria, this is well worth the visit if you have not already been. Also, they are looking for volunteers for their Docent Training Program, hoping to recruit people who are environmentalists that may be interested in participating. Contact Kimberly Bitensky, Assistant Manager – Gallery Operations, 250-940-3628. <http://batemancentre.org>

ADVANCE NOTICE:

HawkWatch and VNHS BBQ Social September 28, 2013

Join CRD Regional Parks and the Victoria Natural History Society for HawkWatch and then join your fellow VNHS members for a BBQ get-together at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Park. Members are welcome to a free smokie (veggie option available), beverage, cake, and camaraderie! To RSVP email or phone James: 250-544-0455, james.miskelly@gmail.com before September 20. Bring a lawnchair. (Look for more details about HawkWatch in the Calendar of the September/October issue).

Coastal Waterbird Monitoring Workshop: October 20, 2013



Bird Studies Canada is offering a free workshop to learn about BC waterbirds and Citizen Science monitoring programs, co-sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society. This workshop will include an indoor classroom session and a guided walk to review the techniques to conduct Beached Bird and Coastal Waterbird Surveys, two of several monitoring programs coordinated by Bird Studies Canada in BC. Everyone is welcome to attend, including those interested to volunteer or those already participating who would like some extra training. The workshop will be held Sunday October 20: 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m., at the University of Victoria (room TBD). Pre-registration is required as spots are limited. To sign up, contact Karen Barry (bcprograms@birdscanada.org) or 604-350-1988. Please dress for the weather and bring a bagged lunch and binoculars if you have them.

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 Christmas Hill 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 or steeper grades, requiring agility. LEVEL 4 – Very steep, insecure footing, or longer hikes requiring good physical condition. **Please – no pets on VNHS field trips.**

JULY

Sunday, July 7

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Dragonflies of Greater Victoria Wetlands

Join entomologist **Gord Hutchings** to learn more about these miniature marvels. The success of this field trip depends on it being a sunny day as these creatures are only active when it's nice out. He will discuss a bit about the lifecycle, biology, basic identification and behaviour of these miniature flying machines, maybe catch some in a net so we can examine them at close range (turn your binos upside down to check them out) and help us sort out the different dragonflies and damsel flies that we encounter in this area. Dragonflies are an indicator of a healthy aquatic environment and he'll also give us some ideas how we might attract them to our own yards. Gord is the co-author with Dave Halstead of "Dragonflies and Damsel Flies in the Hand". This book was written for the boreal forests of the prairie provinces, but many species overlap so it would be of interest in this area as well. He will have a few copies for sale. He also recommends Rob Cannings' book "The Dragonflies of BC". Meet at the Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds at 1:00 pm. To reach the ponds, go north along West Saanich Rd. and turn right on to Beaver Lake Road. After you enter the park, turn left when you see the sign "Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park Beaver Lake Ponds". Contact **Agnes** at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or 250-721-0634 if you need more information.

Sunday, July 14

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Washington State Birding Trail

To savour some of the spots described in the excellent brochure entitled "The Great Washington State Birding Trail – Olympic Loop", we have arranged for a bus in Port Angeles to take us to a number of interesting birding stops for the day. **This is a completely different trip from the Puffins and Pelican trip from previous years.** We may not see any different birds than at home but the varying habitats make for a very enjoyable experience. Locations will be mostly near sea level and will range from Clallam Bay in the west to near Port Townsend in the east. Although we will not trek all the way out Dungeness Spit, we will stop there and at the nearby Dungeness Bay. Highlight from the last trip to Dungeness Spit was a close-up encounter with a Humpback whale! Itinerary will be firmed up closer to the date to take advantage of any last minute reports of interest. Still time to put in your request for a potential stop! Although the weather is generally sunny and clear, it could possibly be quite cool or it might rain, so be prepared. Also wear sturdy footwear as we will be on uneven ground and rocky beaches.

Bring a lunch, snacks and lots to drink as we will not stop at any facilities. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the M.V. Coho. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$35 CDN return. The ferry cost is not included in what you prepay. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will return on the 5:20 p.m. sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing). Also there is usually good birding from the ferry, a slim chance to pick up a Jaeger or a Fulmar. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$60.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Book before Jul 7. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay through Paypal on the VNHS website (vicnhs.bc.ca) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Spaces remaining on Pay Pal do NOT indicate that spaces still remain on the bus. Contact **Agnes** at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

Saturday, July 20 and Sunday, July 21

EVENT

Victoria Butterfly Count

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers to submit butterfly records. If you would like to participate, please contact **James Miskelly** at 250-544-0455, james.miskelly@gmail.com

Sunday, July 28

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Olympic National Park Deer Park Area

To enjoy the amazing wildflowers and the scenery in Washington's Olympics National Park, we have arranged for a bus in Port Angeles to take us up to travel along a scenic high elevation road to Deer Park in the eastern section of the park which is a drier area than the south west of the park known for its rain forests. The timing of the trip is planned for peak wildflower displays. Due to the snow pack, we have chosen to do this area first as it is lower (around 5500 ft) than the later trip as described on August 4. You will find different flowers on each trip and you may recognize many of them from previous trips up Hurricane Hill in previous years. Rather than one long hike, we will stop at a number of places and do several short excursions in search of sub-alpine flowers, not too far from the road in a lot of cases. We will end up with plenty of time to explore the area around Deer Park including the short walk up Blue Mountain. We hope to find some flower and maybe animal species endemic to Olympic National Park. Be prepared for travel on unpaved twisty roads. Although the weather is generally sunny and clear, due to the high elevation, it could possibly be quite cool or it

might rain, so be prepared. Also wear sturdy hiking boots and hiking poles would be an asset. Bring a lunch, snacks and lots to drink as we will not be near any facilities. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the M.V. Coho. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket which costs about \$35 CDN return. The ferry cost is not included in what you must prepay. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will return on the 5:20 p.m. sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing). Also there is usually good birding from the ferry. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$60.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 4 or after July 21. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay through Paypal on the VNHS website (vicnhs.bc.ca) or you can pay by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4. Spaces remaining on Pay Pal do NOT indicate that spaces still remain on the bus. Contact **Agnes** at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or 250-721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

AUGUST

Sunday, August 4

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Olympic National Park Obstruction Point Road

To enjoy the amazing wildflowers and the scenery in Washington's Olympics National Park, we have arranged for a bus in Port Angeles to take us up to travel along the scenic high elevation Obstruction Point Rd. The timing of the trip is planned for peak wildflower displays. Due to the snow pack, we have chosen to do this area second as it is higher (around 6000 ft) than the earlier trip as described on July 28. You will find different flowers on each trip and you may recognize many of them from previous trips up Hurricane Hill in previous years. Rather than one long hike, we will stop at a number of places and do several short excursions in search of sub-alpine flowers not too far from the road in a lot of cases. We hope to find some flower and maybe animal species endemic to Olympic National Park. Be prepared for travel on unpaved twisty roads. Although the weather is generally sunny and clear, due to the high elevation, it could possibly be quite cool or it might rain, so be prepared. Also wear sturdy hiking boots and hiking poles would be an asset. Bring a lunch, snacks and lots to drink as we will not be near any facilities. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the

Inner Harbour at 5:45 a.m. for the 6:10 a.m. sailing of the M.V. Coho. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket – about \$35 CDN return. The ferry cost is not included in what you must prepay. **IMPORTANT!! YOU WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENCE FOR GOING THROUGH US CUSTOMS.** We will return on the 5:20 p.m. sailing from Port Angeles (90 minute crossing). Also there is usually good birding from the ferry. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is \$60.00 CDN. Limited number of participants so reserve your spot early. VNHS members get priority. Do not book before July 4 or after July 28. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay through Paypal on the VNHS website (vicnhs.bc.ca) or by cheque. Send cheque to VNHS, Box 5220, Victoria BC, V8R 6 N4. Spaces remaining on Pay Pal do NOT indicate that spaces still remain on the bus. Contact **Agnes** at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or 250-721-0634 to reserve or for more information.

Saturday, August 17 and Sunday, August 18

EVENT

Victoria Butterfly Count

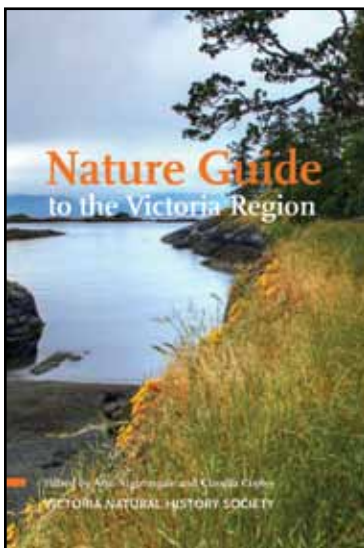
We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers to submit butterfly records. If you would like to participate, please contact **James Miskelly** at 250-544-0455, james.miskelly@gmail.com

Saturday, August 24

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Sidney Spit Birding

Each year about this time, we make the trek over to Sidney Spit to look for interesting shorebirds on their southern migration. There have been some good ones reported from there – Baird's Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plovers, Sanderlings, Whimbrels and we always hope for that illusive Buff-breasted Sandpiper! Also close-ups on Purple Martins and enjoy other passerines that nest on the island. **Mike McGrenere** will be our leader. Bring a lunch and your own drinking water plus a jacket as it can be cool over there or a hat and sunscreen if it's sunny. We will go over on the ferry from Sidney that leaves at 10:00 am but you should be there about an hour early to buy your ticket as it can sell out. Cost is \$19 for adults (\$16 seniors). Ferry leaves from the foot of Beacon Ave. Allow enough time to find a place to park. Parking rates vary depending on how far you are willing to walk. The return ferry leaves the island at 1:00, 3:00 and 4:30 pm so you can choose how long you wish to stay. Contact **Agnes** at 'thelynns at shaw.ca' or **Mike** at (250) 658-8624 if you need more information.



New to Victoria? Or know someone who is?
Consider giving them...

Nature Guide to the Victoria Region

Edited by Ann Nightingale and Claudia Copley

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned naturalist, this book will give you the knowledge you need to get the most out of your explorations of southeastern Vancouver Island.

\$15 at Society evening presentations. Look for them in your local bookstores!



Brown Pelican. *Photo: Gail Harcombe*