



The Victoria NATURALIST

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
2016
VOL 73.3

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





The Victoria NATURALIST

Published six times a year by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4
Contents © 2016 as credited.
ISSN 0049—612X Printed in Canada

Editor: Gail Harcombe 250-652-3508
Distribution: Laura Gretzinger
Printing: Fotoprint 250-382-8218

Opinions expressed by contributors to *The Victoria Naturalist* are not necessarily those of the Society.

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Honorary Life Members: Mr. David Anderson, Dr. Bill Austin, Mrs. Lyndis Davis, Mr. Tony Embleton, Mrs. Peggy Goodwill, Mr. David Stirling, Mr. Bruce Whittington

Officers 2016-2017

PRESIDENT: Ben van Drimmelen 250-598-0570,
ben@barristers4bears.com
VICE-PRESIDENT: VACANT
TREASURER: Gordon Hart 250-721-1264, gordh19@shaw.ca
SECRETARY: Claudia Copley dccopley@telus.net

Directors and Committees

Darren Copley dccopley@telus.net
(*Membership, BC Nature representative*)
Claudia Copley dccopley@telus.net (*Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary representative, BC Nature representative*)
William Dancer 250-721-5273, w.dancer@telus.net (*Schools Program*)
Gail Harcombe 250-652-3508, g.harcombe@shaw.ca (*Publications*)
Phil Lambert 250-477-5922, plambert@pacificcoast.net (*Publicity*)
Directors at Large
Paige Erickson-McGee 250-588-1635, pericksonmcgee@gmail.com
Vicki Metcalfe 778-433-2575 46metcalfe@gmail.ca
Stephanie Weinstein 250-598-3622 srweinstein2@yahoo.com
Charlene Wood 778-679-5238 cwood@lgl.com

Presentation/Field Trip Coordinators

Marine Night: Phil Lambert 250-477-5922, marinenight@pacificcoast.net
Botany Night: Kristen and James Miskelly 250-544-0455,
kristen.miskelly@gmail.com james.miskelly@gmail.com
Natural History Night: Stephanie Weinstein 250-598-3622
srweinstein2@yahoo.com
Birder's Night: Cohosts David Bird 778-351-7760 david.bird@mcgill.ca
and Ann Nightingale 250-514-6450 motmot@shaw.ca
Volunteer Coordinator: Vicki Metcalfe 778-433-2575 46metcalfe@gmail.ca
Field Trip Coordinator: Ben van Drimmelen

Membership

Payable online—see website www.vicnhs.bc.ca for details
Individual \$30*; Family \$35*
*less discount: Senior \$5 or Student \$10

Any donation in excess of the above fees is income tax-deductible. A copy of our membership form is available on our website www.vicnhs.bc.ca or can be requested by email: members@vicnhs.bc.ca. For additional membership information and renewal, please contact Darren Copley, 250-479-6622, or write to Membership Committee, c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4

VNHS Website: www.vicnhs.bc.ca

Twitter @VictoriaNHS

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline for next issue: December 1, 2016

Send to: Gail Harcombe

7368 Veyaness Road, Saanichton BC V8M 1M3

Phone: 250-652-3508 e-mail: publications@naturevictoria.ca

[Subject: VNHS newsletter submission]

Guidelines for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, book reviews, etc., up to 2000 words. Please note: If you are concerned about protecting your privacy when submitting an item, please notify the editors at the time of your submission and indicate whether or not you wish to use a pseudonym or have your name withheld.

We prefer electronic submissions—these can be submitted in either PC or Mac compatible word processing format—but hardcopies are also accepted. 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 300 dpi for all sizes is requested.

7.5" (2 columns) wide 2250 x 1600 pixels

3.5" (1 column) wide 1050 x 800 pixels

If you supply hardcopies, once scanned and input, hardcopy materials will be returned to the sender if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material.

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

We do our best to ensure your ad is produced accurately. Although hardcopy is accepted, we prefer print-ready high resolution digital files (PDF) as this decreases the risk of errors in reproduction of the material. Should we make an error, please contact us and a correction can be printed in the next issue. A charge is levied for typesetting. Minor alterations to existing ads cost \$10.00. Add \$15 per photo. Advertising fees are due and payable when copy is submitted. Please submit a cheque payable to *The Victoria Natural History Society*.

Ad Size	Price	Dimensions (in inches)
Back page	\$120	7.5" width x 8" height
Full page, inside	\$100	7.5 width x 9.5" height
1/2 page, horizontal	\$80	7.5" width x 4.75" height
1/2 page, vertical	\$80	3.5" width x 9.5" height
1/3 page horizontal	\$50	7.5" width x 3.25" height
1/3 page, vertical	\$50	3.5" width x 6.5" height
1/4 page, horizontal	\$40	7.5" width x 2.25" height
1/4 page, vertical	\$40	3.5" width x 4.75" height
1/8 page, horizontal	\$25	3.5" width x 2.25" height

Rates as of February, 1994. May be subject to change.

Submit advertising to:

publications@naturevictoria.ca

or phone: Gail Harcombe 250-652-3508

Thank you for your patronage.

Ask about receiving the magazine
in a digital format to see the colour version.

Contact: dccopley@telus.net

Contents

A Message from the Board	4
VNHS Award Nominations for 2017	5
Greater Victoria Green Team— Engaged Communities that Care for Nature <i>By Connie Larochelle</i>	6
Returning to Ayum Creek <i>By Alanah Nasadyk</i>	9
The 2016 Christmas Bird Count— 2015 is Going to be Tough Act to Follow <i>By Ann Nightingale</i>	11
Letters	13
Bulletin Board	16
Welcome New VNHS Members	16
Calendar	17

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The cover image for this issue of the newsletter is, I admit, a bit of a departure from the norm...it was not the case that I was unable to find another amazing photo of birds or wildlife or plants or landscapes...it was that I felt it was time to recognize the passion and commitment our dedicated volunteers bring to our program “Connecting Children with Nature” (our free nature programs for children—often referred to as our “Schools Program”).

We know schools are struggling with budgets, and we are here to help. We recognize the importance of involving school-aged children in activities and events that expose them to the incredible diversity of the natural world. Our goal is to instill a sense of wonder and a respect for nature through outdoor experiences with living organisms. To accomplish this, the Victoria Natural History Society provides, free of charge, volunteer naturalists to accompany school classes on field trips into nearby green-spaces. Two volunteer coordinators handle all the requests that come in and they organize our team of experienced volunteers who are knowledgeable in a wide variety of fields. (From the VNHS website http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?page_id=1437)

One of those two volunteer coordinators, Bill Dancer, has received the 2016 Saanich Environmental Award for Individual Achievement, but perhaps in some ways even more “prestigious”, is that he is the recipient of a collection of thank you cards from students who have attended the programs Bill has presented (See Letters, page 14) Their words speak volumes! Upwards of 900 students per year (and the number continues to increase) are involved in the nature programs coordinated and presented by Bill, his co-coordinator, John Henigman, and their team of volunteers.

And don’t forget the NatureKids program – having them join us at the annual Hawk Watch BBQ was great! (See Message from the Board, page four)

The enthusiasm with which these programs are met is encouraging, and strongly supports what we keep hearing about the value of getting outside and experiencing/ enjoying nature. By sharing our own fascination and passion for nature, those of us who are lucky enough to have children and/or grandchildren are especially lucky—we not only see the joy in the young ones, but also refresh our own joy and wonder.

Gail Harcombe

Cover Image: Thank you card sent to Bill Dancer for his presentation at one of the schools programs.

A Message from your Board

The Hawk Watch and BBQ Social was the big VNHS event since the last message from the board, and this year had an added interest: a crowd from the NatureKids club (formerly Young Naturalists Club) joined in the fun. Having the kids there helped more experienced nature lovers see things through new eyes, and allowed the kids to see that a love of nature can, and often does, become a life-long passion. It was agreed that this mingling should happen more often. Thanks to those who spoke to the group on behalf of VNHS: Stephanie Weinstein, Ann Nightingale, and Phil Lambert.

More than 40 members of the Society participated in the BBQ, and they were joined by more than 20 children and 18 adults. Feeding close to 80 people went pretty smoothly, with appreciation going out to Andrew Harcombe and Ben van Drimmelen for managing the BBQs, and to Gail Harcombe for handling everything else!

Although the weather could have been warmer, the little sprinkle of rain near the end of the BBQ did not dampen enthusiasm. For the Hawk Watch event itself: there was lots of interest and a good number of people, even one bus load arrived to participate. Because it wasn't a great day for thermals, Turkey Vultures were not much in evidence. Bill Dancer capably staffed the VNHS display on our behalf: Thank you, Bill!

At the September board meeting, it was agreed that the VNHS would increase its annual contribution to Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary to \$5000, but that this funding would be specifically allocated to special event days held monthly at the Sanctuary, providing funding for the second naturalist that works those events. The VNHS has requested a logo/acknowledgement on all posters and

other advertising for these days, and a mention of our annual contribution in reporting and in newsletters, etc. We hope that the mention of "brought to you by the Victoria Natural History Society" will help increase awareness of our organization while supporting Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary activities.

Another funding request that the board decided to honour was the Bring Back the Bluebirds project, now in its fifth year. Twenty-four adult birds returned to nest and nine pairs (at least) were nesting this year. The 2016 season ended with 30 adults and 65 juveniles. Our \$5000 contribution will help support hiring a Bluebird technician to help the Cowichan Valley Naturalists with the monitoring that is needed in 2017.

For the October board meeting we had a funding request from Habitat Acquisition Trust to provide a matching grant for their bat project fundraiser, up to \$1500. We have agreed to help with this important project, especially in light of the potential arrival of White-nose Syndrome to our B.C. bat populations. Now more than ever before, it is critical that baseline data be established to measure the impacts of this devastating disease on these fascinating insectivores.

We also said thank you and farewell to Purnima Govindarajulu, who is stepping off the board but intending to continue handling our Vertical Response messaging to our members about evening presentations and other special events. Purnima brought her wealth of herpetological experience to the board, as well as providing a critical conduit to the work of the Ministry of Environment and to the academic community. Her leaving is a loss and we hope that she will reconsider when she feels she has the time to do so. Thank you, Purnima!

Leave a Lasting Gift

Donate to The Nature Trust of BC in your will to help conserve the natural diversity of wildlife, plants and their critical habitats for future generations.

For more information, contact Deb Kennedy at debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca or call 604-924-9771 or 1-866-288-7878

www.naturetrust.bc.ca



VNHS Awards: Call for Nominations

VNHS members contribute to the Society in many ways: writing articles for the Naturalist; leading field trips; or serving on the board or committees. Some go out of their way to ensure other members can continue to be a part of Society activities by visiting shut-ins or driving others to Society functions. The Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors established the Distinguished Service Award in 1988. This prestigious award is meant to honour those members who have given freely of their time over a long period, in a variety of ways, for the Society. Any member of the Society can nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour. The VNHS Distinguished Service Award is given annually to members who have shown such dedication. The Society may also bestow Honourary Life Membership on a member whose involvement with VNHS has been exceptionally long and dedicated. Please consider nominating a member, and send your nomination to the Society's address, or give it to one of the directors. Nominations should be forwarded by February 28, 2017. All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least two members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with their address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards.

VNHS Distinguished Service Award Recipients

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

2005 Rick Schortinghuis
2006 Phil Lambert, Tom Burgess
2007 No recipients
2008 Ann Nightingale
2009 No recipients
2010 Gordon Hart, Agnes Lynn
2011 Claudia and Darren Copley
2012 Bill Dancer
2013 No recipients
2014 John Henigman, Jeremy Tatum
2015 Hans Roemer
2016 No recipients

VNHS Honorary Life Members

Dr. Bill Austin, Mrs. Lyndis Davis, Mr. Tony Embleton, Mrs. Peggy Goodwill, Mr. David Stirling, Mr. Bruce Whittington, Mr. David Anderson



Has been serving guests since 1939.

We have recently signed a conservation covenant on nearly 70 acres of our property.

www.yellowpointlodge.com
(250) 245-7422

Greater Victoria Green Team— Engaged Communities that Care for Nature

By Connie Laroche (with edits by Amanda Evans)



Amanda with volunteers. Photo: St. Joseph's Middle School student.

Citizens of Greater Victoria have a passion for green—amidst the miles of hiking and biking trails, the multitude of parks, and various other ecosystem niches are opportunities for volunteers of all ages and interests to lend a helping hand. Therein lies the key for the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT). It's remarkable what 24 months can make—such is the case with the GVGT as it celebrates its second year anniversary this fall.

The Greater Victoria Green Team is following in the footsteps of the Lower Mainland Green Team (LMGT) that began five years ago by Lyda Salatian. With a laptop and passion for the environment, Lyda started the first environmental volunteer group on the social media site, Meet-up.com, and since that first year, the success of this program inspired the creation of the full-fledged national charity, Green Teams of Canada. The innovative volunteer model, coupled with the continuous growth of the volunteer team in the Lower Mainland, helped spur the creation of the GVGT as a way to replicate and test this model with a new Program Manager in another city. The mission of Green Teams of Canada is to inspire the stewardship of nature by connecting diverse individuals through hands-on educational environmental activities.

The volunteer work of the GVGT, at first blush, does not have the sparkle of some of the other fantastic engagement opportunities the region has to offer. Pulling Scotch broom or gorse out of hot meadows, tackling English ivy that has rooted itself around native maples or picking up garbage off

of shorelines is not easy and seems not to be for the faint of heart. And yet, activity after activity, those whom you would think would be faint of heart show up and lend a helping hand. What is it then that makes volunteering with the GVGT so remarkable? The answer is as complex as the ecosystems they visit. On any given day, a volunteer's motivation for spending a Saturday morning can vary. Finding meaning is not hard though.

The GVGT's inaugural activity was a modest group of nine volunteers pulling invasive English ivy and English elm at the Point Ellice House, a provincial Heritage site. Advertised as rain or shine, nine volunteers worked along side each other on September 7, 2014 – almost one month after being established in Victoria that previous August. The model was

simple: bring yourself and the GVGT would take care of everything else. The model worked.

Connie, a transplant from northern BC who joined in September 2015, sums it up:

It's easy peasy—I get a reminder in my email box, I visit the Meetup, check the calendar, hit a button and voila—I'm in! I download dates, times and even maps into my calendar. With a bit more effort, I find people who would like to carpool with me. No fuss, no bother—I bring my own water, sunscreen and snacks—even then these kinds of things get shared. But other than that, all the tools and supplies are there including much appreciated snacks and extra water.

The GVGT truly walks the talk. Adopting a low impact philosophy, food scraps are taken away for composting, garbage is recycled and a critical eye is cast on sponsorship and donations. In some cases, sponsorship is politely declined – there is low interest in being used by corporations looking to the team and volunteers to green wash environmental atrocities. But to the delight of volunteers, thank-you gifts are shared at the end of each day—ranging from ethical chocolate from Camino, environmentally-friendly soaps from LUSH cosmetics and even organic salsa sauces from Newman's Own (who also funds the Green Teams Canada program!), you never know what surprises our partner companies have offered up.

Since that first day in September, the GVGT has expanded its volunteer base from 9 to over 1350 people from around



Maltby Lake Volunteer Activity May 14, 2016. Photo: Amanda Evans.

the region who have collectively contributed over 5940 volunteer hours. Unexpected, however, is the range in demographics. It is difficult - as any respectable statistician would support - to describe a typical volunteer. Education, occupations, family status and even cultural backgrounds are varied. Volunteers carpooling back from the Mother's Day picnic this year, for example, came from Ireland, Somalia, northern British Columbia and India. One was retired, another working in an office, the third in health care and the fourth a university student, none of whom were borne in the same decade as the others!

In the eighteen months leading up to the Greater Victoria Green Team's second anniversary, it has amassed some bragging rights – rightly so – the stats are something to be proud of:

- Run 141 activities
- Grown to 1350 volunteers
- Engaged 2500 volunteers
- Contributed 5940 volunteer hours
- Planted 7630 native plants and trees
- 2200 m³ of invasive plants have been removed
- Removed 800 lbs. of garbage from shorelines & parks
- Built relationships and worked with 46 collaborators (municipalities and environmental stewardship groups)

The Greater Victoria Green Team volunteers are both multicultural and intergenerational. After the usual round robin of introductions and the project overviews by the host organizations, people break off into groups either with old friends or pairing up with new folks who have just joined. Conversations are easy and light, and you will catch glimpses of people sharing local knowledge or visitors describing their own countries.

On any given day, you will pick up tidbits about what is trending on-line, share opinions about world events or fashion or share in the struggles of day-to-day living like finding a place to stay or wanting a stable job. The earth is not the only recipient of the helping hands of the GVGTT—the

members themselves find comfort and value with the gatherings. Some look to add to their resume in a tight labour market. Many of the working youth are faced with challenges all too common to those trying to find a career – multiple jobs, unpredictable hours, and unstable income. The GVGTT program is forgiving; allowing them to show up when they can or cancel at the last minute.

When you ask one of our dedicated volunteers why she contributes time to the GVGTT, she shrugs her shoulders and smiles like it is a silly question with such an obvious answer. She has been a retired administrator for several years now. She is drawn to the

peacefulness of being outdoors and enjoys the comfortable pace and conversations with youth and her colleagues.

A good handful of the mid-career volunteers are looking for experience to compliment their post-secondary studies. Those volunteers with an interest in sustainability and environmental issues get to participate at the grassroots level and connect with local organizations and professionals who have built their lives around projects. One visiting volunteer from the University of Northern British Columbia has a keen interest in environmental reclamation and parks; another, a desire to support and contribute to watershed restoration; and a third, plant ecology. These students have identified the GVGTT as an extension to their learning and soak in the knowledge of the experts giving presentations at the beginning of each day. Volunteer questions are insightful and inquisitive. The thoughtful responses are mindful and mirror two-way respect.

Then there are volunteers who participate “just because”. Mona, a 4th year UBC Engineering student, is finishing off her final co-op term and living in Saanich with another volunteer. This is what she has to say:

Volunteering with the Green Team has been a wonderful experience for me. I came to Victoria in early January, not knowing many people, and through my persistent roommate, I was introduced to this association. I love being able to help clean up the environment while interacting with a range of wonderful people who participate in these events. I have to admit that the snacks are pretty great motivation for getting up to volunteer at a park at 9:45 a.m. on a Saturday.

I am thrilled that I was able to apply what I learned in class as a Civil engineering student when I participated in water quality monitoring at Tod Creek. I completely understood all the concepts they were talking about since I had just taken an environmental course on water treatment about a year prior. What a great surprise!

I can now also identify invasive plant species, which is really cool! You know you are in deep when you can tell

the difference between invasive and native blackberry. I will be leaving to go back to Vancouver at the end of August, but this group has really impressed upon me the importance of protecting our environment and I will be continuing on with the Metro Vancouver (Lower Mainland) Green Team in the fall!

Things are not always so rosy, but the safety of the group allows for people to open up. One young volunteer had just returned back to Victoria and was getting ready to go back to class. The student quietly confessed that they didn't have much food in the house and hadn't had time to go shopping before volunteering. The mother hen she sat next to, pulled out a couple of sandwich bags and shared what she had with the student. One should never go hungry she told the student. Others working multiple part-time jobs, or living on couches, seek the normalcy of real conversations that happen when you have no cell service and are unable to connect to your phone.

The volunteers work well together, organically self-organizing and setting their own pace. Between the mothers, grandmothers, aunties, sisters and brothers, there is enough of a blended family with decades of knowledge to mentor, protect, advise, and well – most of the time – just be there to listen. When all is said and done, the work magically happens—time flies – and it is true - many helping hands really do make light work.

Amanda Evans, the Greater Victoria Green Team program manager, is a perfect fit for leading the GVG. You can sense from the amount of time and energy she devotes to connecting



Welland Orchard youth-focused environmental educational volunteer activity with students from St. Joseph's School, June 19, 2016. Photo: Amanda Evans.

with community organizations and municipalities, her heart is committed at time and a half. With two years under her belt, she continues to be a natural fit as the organization starts to grow. She makes providing a high quality experience for volunteers seem effortless. Using the Meetup app and other social media platforms, she chooses (along with direction from the many collaborations) locations and times that seem to be the right balance of activities and time commitments drawing groups of 10 to 20 volunteers per activity on average. Organizing this mobile and intergenerational group takes patience, flexibility and, of course, a special knack for connecting with all sorts of people. Amanda certainly has all this and more.

It is difficult to say what the tipping point was for the success of the GVG. Social media and local ongoing support definitely factor in. The local newspapers, TV and on-line coverage certainly bolster the numbers by getting the messages to the communities. Support from foundations like Victoria Foundation and Sitka Foundation corporations like Telus and Newman's Own, municipalities like Colwood and View Royal allow this program to continue to flourish in Greater Victoria. In its short time serving the region, the GVG has received three well deserved awards recognizing volunteer engagement from Volunteer Victoria, environmental stewardship from the University of Victoria, and the social innovation award from Vancity Savings Credit Union.

The Greater Victoria Green Team is well on its way to establishing itself as a solid environmental member of the Greater Victoria area in 2017. Exciting times await this group as they enter into their third year. Harnessing upon the pivotal relationships that Amanda has cultivated in the previous two years, she has created space for dialogue where volunteers can identify and shape unique opportunities to participate in other ways.

You can find upcoming volunteer opportunities through their Meet-up site: <http://www.meetup.com/Greater-Victoria-Green-Team/>

You can donate to GVG program/sponsor a volunteer activity here: <http://www.greenteamsCanada.ca/support/donate/>



HAT's 20th Birthday a Party for Nature!

November 8, 2016

7:00 to 9:00pm

Glenrosa Farm Restaurant

5447 Rocky Point Road



Habitat Acquisition Trust is kicking off celebrations of 20 years of conservation. Put on your party hats and **Join us for the: HAT Green Music Showcase and Fundraiser** in Metchosin. You'll be serenaded by biologists with guitars while we raise funds for conservation with a silent auction, foraged and local finger-foods, and drinks.

Tickets are just \$20 so bring a friend.

For tickets visit hat20thbirthday.bpt.me or call 250 995-2428.

Returning to Ayum Creek

By Alanah Nasadyk, Habitat Acquisition Trust Volunteer Coordinator

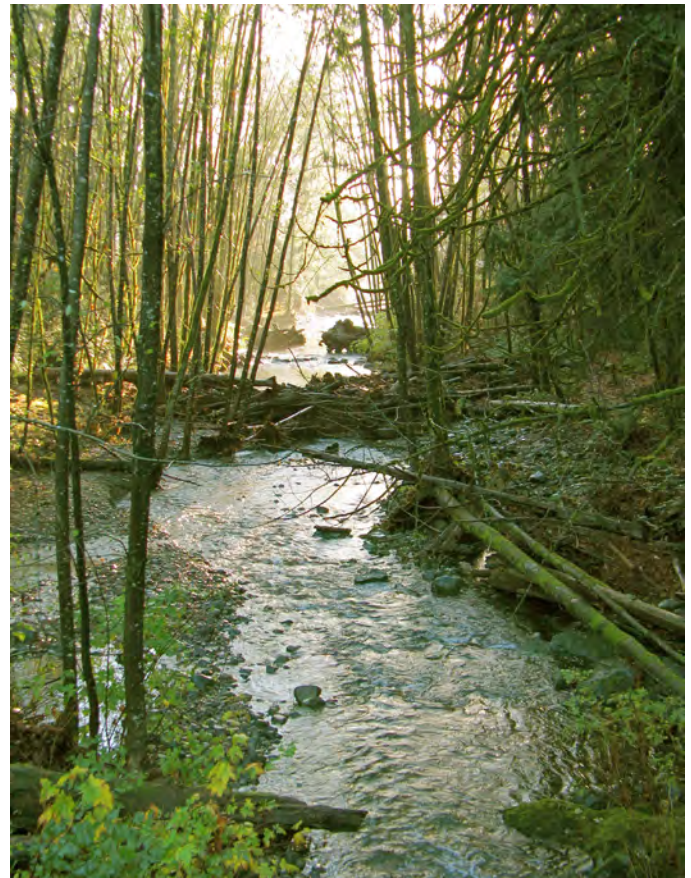


Celebrating 20 years of conservation this winter, it seems quite fitting that Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT), whose emblem is encircled with a fern, went full circle this year by returning to Ayum Creek. Protecting 14 acres of land around Ayum Creek in 1998 was one of the first major accomplishments HAT shared with the community thanks to the collaborative efforts of Capital Regional District, the Society to Protect Ayum Creek, The Land Conservancy, Mountain Equipment Co-op, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Today HAT carries on its role in collaborative conservation, working to restore habitat surrounding the salmon-bearing creek, estuary, and forest at Ayum as co-covenant holder for land along the creek.

This October, HAT hosted a two day riparian restoration event alongside the Greater Victoria Green Team and more than 33 volunteers. As anyone who has embarked on an invasive plant removal mission knows well, it is challenging work, but the results are gratifying. This is an opportunity for new comers and long-time visitors to enjoy the beautiful sights, smells and sounds of Ayum Creek and fight back the encroaching Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), Daphne laureola, and English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) that threaten the natural area. These restoration events are supported by funding from Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Pacific Salmon Foundation, and Environment Canada's EcoAction Program.

Ayum Creek and the estuary are indeed a wonderful spot for birding, with species like Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), and Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) waiting in the wings. In October, it is also a spot where you can witness the salmon run, with adult salmon displaying their vivid sunset hues, while American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) wait to snap up orange pearls of eggs in their beaks. More than 80 different types of bird have been spotted in this ecologically rich area. Ayum Creek also boasts over 107 native plants, including two rare species. For those that paddle, you can get another great perspective by launching from Cooper's Cove and working your way there by water.

Many places in Sooke are touched by a history of logging activity, and Ayum Creek is no different. The site was historically a prosperous salmon run and Olympia Oyster (*Ostrea lurida*) habitat, but in the 20th century, the landscape was significantly altered with the coming and going of a lumber mill, concrete plant, wood treatment plant, and more recently a bridge for car traffic, as well as heavy water withdrawal from wells. Low water levels have been a concern at the creek in recent years, and careful water use in the surrounding watershed can help alleviate this strain. From

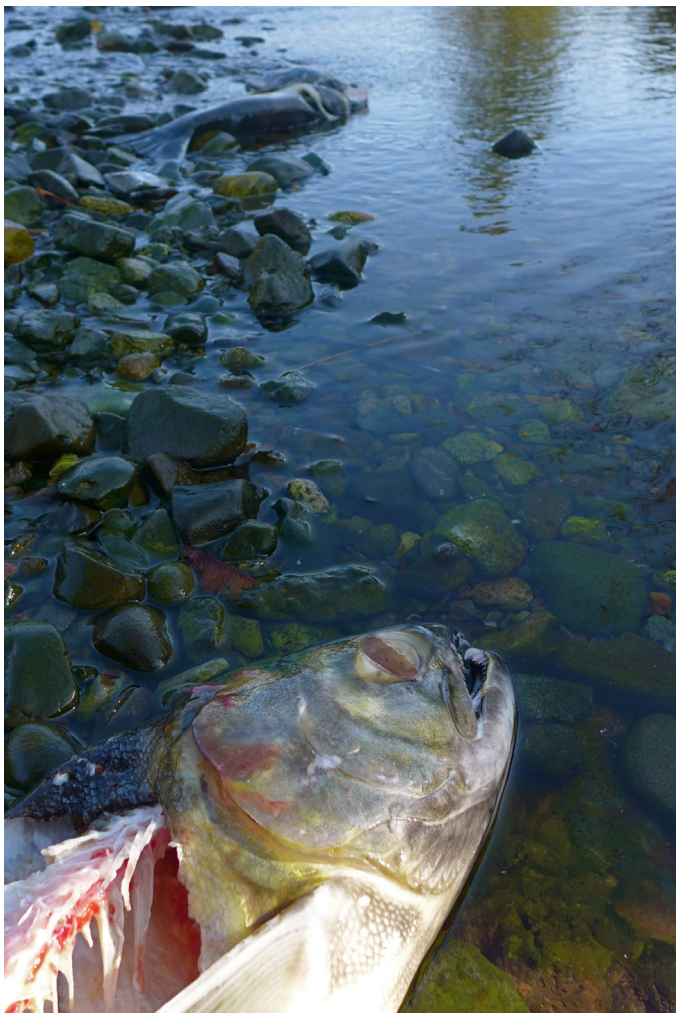


Ayum Creek: Photo: Todd Carnahan

1998 to 2001, stream restoration took place to introduce large woody debris and boulders to enhance the habitat for salmon. Reintroducing logs to the creek provides places for young salmon and trout to hide from predators, gives aquatic insects something to attach to, and stabilizes the banks.

Today salmon, trout, and Olympia Oysters, as well as many other native species, continue to survive in Ayum Creek and Estuary. However, historical accounts by First Peoples and pioneers, and evidence from shell middens littered with oyster shells, tell a story of a once much greater bounty of these culturally and ecologically important species. Up until the 1930s, T'Sou-ke Elders remember substantial runs of Chum, Coho, Steelhead and Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*). Hunting for abundant Brant, mallards, and goldeneyes was once common in the area, too.

Though they only make up 3% of our province's coastline, estuaries support a disproportionate amount of British Columbia's flora and fauna on the coast. The Creek sends important nutrients from the higher reaches of the watershed out to the ocean, and the salmon's yearly return



brings nutrients back up river, which is further dispersed inland by the bears and birds who consume the fish. This valuable cycling of nutrients shapes marine and terrestrial communities, and is important to the ecological integrity of our region. Creeks and estuaries are also important in the filtration of the water and substances that flow from the surrounding watershed. Despite the great cultural and ecological value of these habitats, only 13.5% of coastal estuaries is protected in British Columbia, making places that are protected all the more vital to restore and maintain... which is why HAT and our partners are focusing our efforts at Ayum.

Do you have a special connection to Ayum Creek? We would love to hear your story or reflections on this ecologically rich confluence of water, land, and wildlife. Send your thoughts or pictures to us at hatmail@hat.bc.ca, we'd love to hear from you.

The ongoing management of places like Ayum Creek is possible because of people like you. To contribute to the conservation of Ayum Creek and other significant local places, make a gift to HAT's Land Protection program today at www.hat.bc.ca/donate, by calling in to 250-995-2428, or by cheque in the mail to PO Box 8552 Victoria BC V8W 3S2.

If you are interested in volunteering at Ayum Creek or other restoration projects please send a message to volunteers@hat.bc.ca

Left: A spawned out salmon ends its journey at Ayum Estuary. Photo: Alanah Nasadyk.

Leave a Legacy Gift and Enhance Financial Security



*In the end you're either endowed...
or extinct.*

*BEQUESTS,
SECURITIES,
LIFE
INSURANCE,
and
RETIREMENT
PLAN
DESIGNATIONS*



To discuss the possibility of leaving a planned gift to Swan Lake, please contact kburton@swanlake.bc.ca or phone: 250.479.0211 today.

The 2016 Christmas Bird Counts— 2015 is Going to be a Tough Act to Follow

By Ann Nightingale



Redwing. Photo: Jody Wells.

Seriously, how do you top a Redwing (second record for B.C.) and a Yellow-breasted Chat (4th record for Victoria) on a single Christmas Bird Count? The teams have their work cut out for them this year! Are you up for the challenge? One of the things many of us are wondering is if either of these birds will make a repeat appearance.

Last year, a record 241 field counters faced moderate weather and turned up the highest number of species for a Christmas Bird Count in Canada in 2015. A total of 71,761 individual birds of 141 species made it to our tally, which is a fairly average count for us. Cackling Goose (381), Canada Goose (6860), Bufflehead (2947), Turkey Vulture (40), Mourning Dove (76), Barred Owl (13), Downy Woodpecker (234), and Peregrine Falcon (16) all had record counts in 2015.

We also have the largest participation in the field of any Canadian count, and are always near the top for all of North America. The place we fall short, though, is on our feederwatchers. Here is my annual plea for someone to take on spearheading an active Feederwatcher Program. StatsCan reports that more than 1/3 of the households in Victoria spend money to feed birds, yet we typically only get about 50 feederwatch reports. This is an area ripe for the picking for someone who would like to be involved but may not want to or be able to spend the day in the field. I have no doubt that we could get 1000 feederwatchers with a little bit of effort and public relations. If you are even the tiniest

bit curious about what would be involved to coordinate the feederwatch, please give me a call at 250-514-6450. Ideally, I'd like to see a feederwatch organizing team to share the responsibility and success. If you'd like to participate in a feederwatch on the count day, a feederwatch list (with photos) and report form are posted at vicnhs.bc.ca/archive/cbc/feederwatch.html.

I'm also looking for people to let me know if they have an interest in being a team leader, or even a substitute team leader. It seems that holiday travel is on the rise, and most years, I need two or three people to take a leadership role, at least for the short term.

The Counts—Everyone is Welcome!

The Victoria Christmas Bird Count is on Saturday, December 17 this year, the latest day that our count occurs. The BCVI 15 mile diameter circle is centred on the Marigold/Interurban area.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. I'd also be interested in recruiting some groups—walking groups, school groups, scout groups, or any other group that would like to support the activity. Anyone can help out by acting as a tally person or as a spotter. Most teams spend all of the daylight hours out in the field, but there is room for people who can only spend part of the day too. Come out for as long as you can! There are a few “keeners” who go out looking and listening for owls in the pre-dawn hours. There may be boats on the water again this year, so if that is your particular specialty, please let me know.

If you are curious, interested, would like to see lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, or just need more information, please check out the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?p=28) and the Christmas Bird Count site (birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count). If you have a preference to count in a specific area, you may contact the team leader for the area directly.

Feederwatchers don't have to register—just report your birds on the appropriate count day!

Welcome New Leaders:

There are a few changes in leadership this year. Visiting postdoc David Marques is participating in his first Christmas Bird Count by taking a leadership role in Zone 4. Matt Cameron will be coordinating the Sooke Christmas Bird Count (even though there's a chance he might not be in town on the count day!) And as always, a very special thank you for the Zone leaders, some of whom have been doing

this for decades. It sure makes a coordinator's job easier when so many great people have stepped up to lead a team.

The End of an Era

For many years, our post-count gathering has been held at Gordon Head United Church. Sadly, that location is no longer being rented out so we'll have a new venue this year: Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Road. We'll be meeting at

around 5 p.m. on count day to warm up, share stories and find out how the day went. You are welcome to join us, even if you don't come out on the count itself. If you can bring a plate of goodies, so much the better!

If you'd like to be a bird counter this year, please contact the leader for the zone you'd like or register on the VNHS website. The updated leader list and meeting times and places will be posted on the website. Feel free to invite a friend!

COUNT	DATE	COORDINATORS
Victoria	Sat, Dec 17, 2016	Ann Nightingale 250-652-6450; victoriabc@naturevictoria.ca
South Salt Spring Island/Sidney; North Salt Spring Island/Galiano; Pender Island	Sun, Dec 18, 2016	Daniel Donneck 250 744-5615; sidneycbc@naturevictoria.ca (South Salt Spring/Sidney); Tim Marchant tim@villagecobbler.ca (North Salt Spring); Mike Hoebelm hoebel@telus.net (Galiano Island); Gerald McKeating geraldmckeating@shaw.ca (Pender)
Sooke	Mon, Dec 26, 2016	Matt Cameron 250-580-0573; sookecbc@naturevictoria.ca
Duncan	Sun, Jan 1, 2017	Derrick Marven 250-748-8504; marven@shaw.ca

	AREA NAME	LEADER	PHONE	EMAIL
1	Butchart Gardens - N. Highlands	Warren Drinnan	250-652-9618	cbc1@naturevictoria.ca
2	Central Highlands	Warren Lee	250-478-7317	cbc2@naturevictoria.ca
3	Goldstream - Finlayson Arm	Robin Robinson	250-391-5995	cbc3@naturevictoria.ca
4	Thetis Lake - Hastings Flat	David Marques	778-677-3434	cbc4@naturevictoria.ca
5	Langford Lake	Barbara Lake	250-652-6450	cbc5@naturevictoria.ca
6	Albert Head - Triangle Mountain	Rob Gowan	250-592-8905	cbc6@naturevictoria.ca
7	Esquimalt Lagoon - Mill Hill	Rick Schortinghuis	250-885-2454	cbc7@naturevictoria.ca
8	Esquimalt Harbour	Don Kramer	250-995-9369	cbc8@naturevictoria.ca
9	Portage Inlet - The Gorge	Jeff Gaskin	250-381-7248	cbc9@naturevictoria.ca
10	Victoria Harbour	Christian Kelly	778-426-4285	cbc10@naturevictoria.ca
11	Beacon Hill Park	Mary Robichaud	250-507-8760	cbc11@naturevictoria.ca
12	Oak Bay	Geoffrey Newell	250-598-0158	cbc12@naturevictoria.ca
13	University - Cadboro Bay	Val George	250-208-0825	cbc13@naturevictoria.ca
14	Ten Mile Point - Arbutus Rd	Agnes Lynn	250-721-0634	cbc14@naturevictoria.ca
15	Gordon Head - Mt. Douglas	Margie Shepherd	250-477-5280	cbc15@naturevictoria.ca
16	Swan Lake - Cedar Hill	Bill Dancer	250-721-5273	cbc16@naturevictoria.ca
17	Blenkinsop Lake - Panama Flats	Jessie Fanucchi	250-818-1226	cbc17@naturevictoria.ca
18	Elk Lake - Cordova Bay	Mike McGrenere	250-658-8624	cbc18@naturevictoria.ca
19	Prospect Lake - Quick's Bottom	Dave Fraser	250-479-0016	cbc19@naturevictoria.ca
20	Martindale - Bear Hill	Ian Cruickshank	250-382-1652	cbc20@naturevictoria.ca
21	Zero Rock (ocean)	Jim Cosgrove	250-658-5687	cbc21@naturevictoria.ca
22	Chain Islets (ocean)	Marilyn Lambert	250-477-5922	cbc22@naturevictoria.ca
23	Juan de Fuca (ocean)	Ross Dawson	250-652-6450	cbc23@naturevictoria.ca

LETTERS

Rocky Point Bird Observatory could not exist without support from people like you!

Thank you so much for your generous donation. It helped us reach our goal for matching funds from the Gosling Foundation, so our education program is now well supported.

Treasurer, RPBO

To Victoria Natural History Society

I just wanted to personally thank you for your timely donation to RPBO Education Matching Funds Campaign. We would not have reached our goal without you!

Sincerely,

Andrea Neumann

Lead Educator, RPBO

June 28, 2016

To William Dancer

Purnima Govindarajulu

As the MLA for Saanich South, it is my great pleasure to write to you today and congratulate you on winning the 2016 Saanich Environmental Award for Individual Achievement.

This is truly an accomplishment worth celebrating. Your enthusiasm, years of volunteer time and passion to connect children and all members of the community with nature is admirable. Thank you for your dedication to educating children and youth on Victoria's natural history and your extensive involvement in removing invasive species in our treasured parks.

On behalf of the fifty-five thousand residents of Saanich South, I want to acknowledge your civic spirit and let you know that it is very much appreciated. I would encourage you to keep up the hard work on behalf of our community and the environment we so treasure.

Sincerely,

Lana Popham, MLA

Saanich South

**Tilley** GOES WITH ANYWHERE

A symbol of Canadian quality, Tilley hats are now available at Wildbirds Unlimited. Great for any of your outdoor adventures, from a day birding to 2 months in Africa these hats won't let you down.



Bird Feeders - Custom Seed Blends - Optics - Gifts

**Wild Birds Unlimited®**
Nature Shop

3631 Shelbourne St., Victoria - 250-595-3595

*Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten...
Visit our store for your very best value!*

**We keep it natural.
For you, for them.
Forever.**

**Invest in nature for future generations
Call 250-995-2428 today
to set up your monthly donations**



Habitat Acquisition Trust
hatmail@hat.bc.ca | 250 995 2428 | hat.bc.ca

LETTERS

Thanks sent to Bill Dancer, VNHS Schools Program, from South Park School



Dear Bill
Thank you for your wonderful
contribution to South Park School's
Outdoor-A-Thon in April. We
greatly appreciate your time and
effort you shared with the children.
It was a great learning experience
for them with so many items to
see and touch. Thank you for
sharing your knowledge. We hope to
see you again!
The Staff and Students at South Park

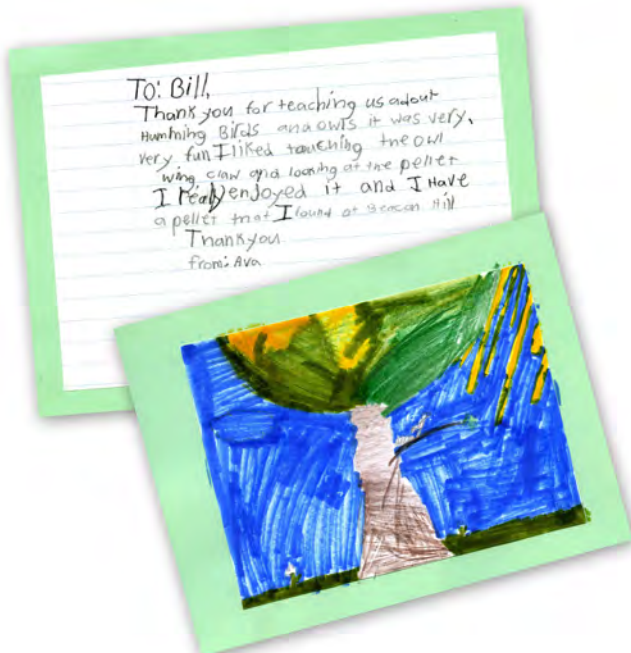
Thank you for your wonderful contribution to South Park School's Outdoor-A-Thon in April. We greatly appreciate your time and effort you shared with the children. It was a great learning experience for them with so many items to see and touch. Thank you for sharing your knowledge. We hope to see you again!

The staff and students of South Park School

To Bill
I like the skulls and the eggs
From Anya



From Anya
to Bill I like
The skulls
and the
Eggs
Eggs

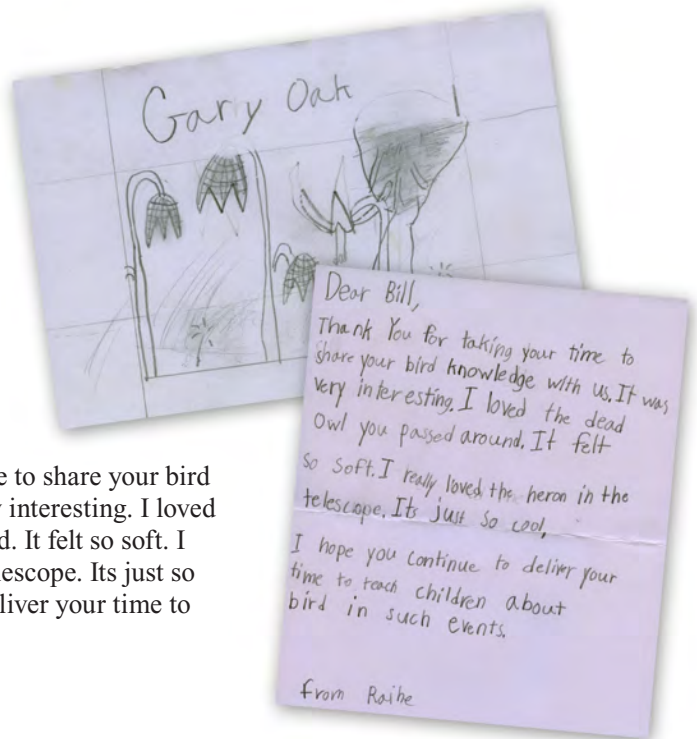


To: Bill,
Thank you for teaching us about
humming birds and owls it was very
very fun I liked touching the owl
wing, claw and looking at the pellet.
I really enjoyed it and I have
a pellet that I found at Beacon Hill.
Thank you
From: Ava

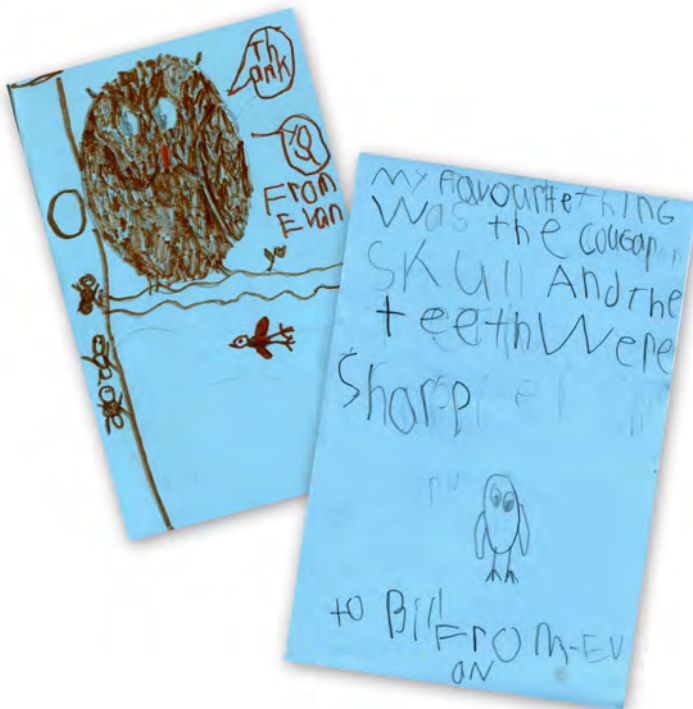
To Bill
Thank you for teaching us about
humming birds and owls it was very,
very fun I liked touching the owl
wing claw and looking at the pellet
I really enjoyed it and I have
a pellet that I found at Beacon Hill
Thank you
From: Ava



Thank you!
Dear Bill thank you for teaching
us about Birds and letting us hold
and see amazing things.



Dear Bill,
Thank you for taking your time to share your bird
knowledge with us. It was very interesting. I loved
the dead owl you passed around. It felt so soft. I
really loved the heron in the telescope. Its just so
cool, I hope you continue to deliver your time to
teach children about
bird in such events.
From Raihe



My favourite thing
was the cougar
skull and the
teeth were
sharp

to Bill from Evan

BULLETIN BOARD

Musical HATs Charity Gala Tuesday, November 8. 7–9 p.m. Location TBA

The beginning of Habitat Acquisition Trust's 20th anniversary celebrations: featuring the musical stylings of Andy Mackinnon, a fundraiser silent auction, foraged and local food canapés by Nature's Chef Tom Kral, and organic wine sponsored by DeVine Vineyards. You won't want to miss this one! Enjoy yourself, and benefit nature preservation. Contact alanah@hat.bc.ca about tickets.

WANTED: Metal slide boxes (six or so)

To be used for storing micro molluscs that have been mounted on 35 mm slide-sized cards. These cards are used for reference and photography. We know there are 300+ intertidal species of clams and snails along our coastline, many as small as a millimetre or two. Having them fasten down on a card sure simplifies retrieval and comparative observation. Contact Bill Merilees, e-mail: bmerilees@hotmail.com or 250 758-1801

Outerbridge Park Sunday Bird Walks Sundays, November 13 and December 12 at 9 a.m.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) hosts bird walks at Outerbridge Park in Saanich on the 2nd Sunday of each month. The walks begin at 9:00 a.m. at the parking area off Royal Oak Drive. This is an easy walk and suitable for people with mobility concerns. For dates and details, see <http://rpbo.org> and download the bird list http://rpbo.org/outerbridge_park.pdf

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary Guided Bird Walks Every Wednesday and Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Bring your binoculars and walking shoes and meet in the parking lot for this informal and informative walk around

the lake area (usually led by VNHS members). Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Store in Shelbourne Plaza posts the bird reports from the Sunday walk. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary is at 3873 Swan Lake Rd, off Ralph St. Donations are appreciated. For more information, see <http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/adult-programs.php> Download a copy of the sanctuary bird checklist: <http://tinyurl.com/birdchecklist>

A Guide to Bird Calls of Southern Vancouver Island (set of CDs and booklet) available from Rocky Point Bird Observatory!

Want to improve your birding by ear? This guide provides an introduction to the call notes of common birds found on southern Vancouver Island (the species included can also be found throughout the Pacific Northwest). When learning to bird by ear, many people concentrate on learning the songs of birds. This is understandable, because songs tend to be complex, conspicuous, and often beautiful to the human ear. However, songs are generally only given by breeding males in the spring and summer, and there is a whole world of simpler "chips" and "seeps" that are given year-round by songbirds of all ages and sexes. Being familiar with these could enhance your birding year-round! For information or to purchase (discount available for RPBO members), contact RPBO at rpbo@rpbo.org

Black Widow Blog:

For VNHSers who attended the black widow presentation at the September Natural History Night, here is a way for you to stay in touch, read more, and even support Catherine's research: <http://spiderbytes.org/2016/10/05/crowdfunding-black-widow-research/>). Catherine would like to hire a field assistant next year—Island View Beach is not a great place to spend the night out by yourself, especially while doing research on venomous spiders!

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 17 new members since the last issue and the following have agreed to have their names published in this Welcome section.

David Gravelle
Salt Spring Island
Birding & Butterflying

Tracey Moss
Victoria
*Botany, native plant gardening,
general natural and cultural
history, environmental education*

Sean Rangel
Victoria
Botany, Taxonomy

Kathy Fletcher
Victoria

Rosemary Corcoran
Brentwood Bay

Siobhan Darlington
Victoria
*Birding, Nature photography,
botany, hiking*

Judith Carder
Victoria

*Biogeography, ecological
restoration, invasive species
and biocontrol*

Ken Mallory
Victoria
*Birds, insects, butterflies, bees
and wasps, and plants*

Sara Mimick
Victoria
Everything in nature

Christine Terry
VICTORIA
All of Nature!

Ken Wilson
Black Diamond, AB
*Birding, mountain bluebird nest box
monitoring, fishing, hiking.*

Robert Greggs
Sidney
Astronomy, photography, birding

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/website/index.php/calendar> and is updated regularly. PLEASE NOTE: EVENT DETAILS ARE ACCURATE AT TIME OF PUBLICATION BUT CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR ANY CHANGES OR ADDITIONS.

Remember that if you want to do a talk or know someone who might, please contact one of the presentation night coordinators. If you have an idea for a field trip or wish to volunteer as a leader, please contact any board member—contact information on page 2. Many of you do interesting things either for fun or for work, and it would be great to share!

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.**

NB. While evening presentations are open to the public, field trips are designed for members. Guests may join if invited by members for up to three trips, after which they are expected to join the Society.

Despite our best efforts to schedule events in advance, changes are inevitable. Please check the website close to the date for any changes. We sometimes also schedule additional events due to unexpected opportunities. Please be sure that VNHS has your up-to-date email address to receive these changes or notice of additional events. If you do not use the internet, team up with someone who does to keep up with changes.

TUESDAY MORNING BIRDING

Meets every Tuesday at the foot of Bowker Ave on the waterfront (off Beach Drive) at 9:00 a.m., rain or shine. Birding activities take place at various locations around Greater Victoria. For more information call Bill Dancer at 250-721-5273. Novice and experienced VNHS members all welcome. Non-members can participate for up to three trips, after which they are expected to join the Society.

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING

Meets every Saturday morning, usually at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine. Check on the Calendar page of the VNHS website (<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/website/index.php/calendar>) on the Thursday/Friday before to find out the week's location. Novice and experienced VNHS members all welcome. Non-members can participate for up to three trips, after which they are expected to join the Society. For more details, contact Rick Schortinghuis at 250-885-2454 or Agnes Lynn at thelynns at shaw.ca or 250-721-0634.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 5

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Birding the Bay

Join **Darren Copley** and **Claudia Copley** from 10:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m. on a birding trip to Cowichan Bay as part of the WildWings Nature & Arts Festival, an annual month-long celebration of the return of the Trumpeter Swans to their overwintering grounds in the Cowichan Valley. We'll have spotting scopes for up-close viewing. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at the small parking area near the intersection of Cowichan Bay Road and Lochmanetz Road opposite the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club. Suitable for ages 10 and up. See the festival website for a listing of all activities: <http://wildwingsfestival.com/>

Sunday, November 6

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Mushrooms at Royal Roads

This area has a diverse selection of mushrooms so it is always a great place to wander at this time of year. **Kem Luther**, a member of both South Vancouver Island Mycological Society (www.svims.ca) and VNHS, will lead the trip and assist us in identifying what we see. Bring your favourite field guide and we will assist you at learning more about these mysterious fungi of the forest. Please note this is an observation trip, not intended for collecting; however, the leader will choose a few specimens for closer examination. Meet at Royal Roads University (2005 Sooke Rd) by the Tennis Courts near the university entrance at 10:00 a.m. Note parking fees are in effect. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

Tuesday, November 8

NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

Badgers: The Misunderstood Mustelids

Of all the members of the weasel family, perhaps none are as misunderstood or maligned as badgers, which are most often represented in popular culture, folklore, and media commentary as aggressive, mysterious, and antisocial. Though imperilled by human intolerance, habitat loss, and destructive farming and ranching practices, these diverse and adaptable master diggers of the animal kingdom are vital contributors to ecosystem health around the world and play an important ongoing role in human ceremony, kinship, and symbolism. **Daniel Justice** will discuss his recent book *Badger* (Reaktion Books 2015) and the biological and cultural importance of these fascinating and formidable weasel-kin in the world today. For more information about his book, go to <http://bit.ly/2cVsnNv>. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Rm. 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone welcome!

Sunday, November 13

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Fungi Observations in John Dean Park

Mycologist **Bryce Kendrick** (www.mycolog.com) will lead us on an informative nature walk through the park. Mushrooms are only one of the types of organisms that he will show us. We will learn how molds and slime molds differ from mushrooms. You might ask him why fungi are more like animals than plants. As this is a park, there will be no collecting; however, the leader will choose a few specimens for closer examination. We will meet at 10:00 am at the far end of Carmanah Terrace. Follow East Saanich Rd to Dean Park Rd and right on Carmanah Terrace to the end. Although we will not cover a large distance, the ground will be uneven and occasionally steep. Contact Agnes Lynn at thelynns@shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, November 13

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Mike McGrenere will lead this trip on the MV Coho on its usual sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. He has been doing this trip for about ten years now and he says this is the best opportunity to see bird species that are usually found further out to sea, such as shearwaters, fulmars and phalaropes. The crossing takes 90 minutes. We will be birding from the bow of the boat, so dress warmly. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10:00 am for the 10:30 am sailing. We will return on the 2:00 p.m. sailing. Allow time to park and purchase your ferry ticket. Street parking is free on Sundays. Return ferry fare is \$37 US (about \$49 CD). You will require a Passport or enhanced driver's license to go through US Customs. Contact Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, November 15

BOTANY NIGHT

Lichens, Chimeras, and Superorganisms: Life On the Borderlands between Species and Ecosystems

Kem Luther explains how in certain organisms, two lines of biological thinking—the species tradition and the ecosystem tradition—come together and form a unique borderland. The

senior members of this boundary layer between species and ecosystems are the lichens. In recent decades we have begun to recognize that many other types of organisms—including humans—live as chimeras, conglomerates, and compound organisms. These novel superorganisms challenge our standard ideas of species and evolution. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome!

Saturday, November 19

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Snow Geese at Reifel Bird Sanctuary

Come and see the annual Snow Goose spectacle at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Every November, thousands of Snow Geese stop over in this part of the Fraser River delta. There is normally time to visit Boundary Bay or another site as well. Past trips have produced up to 80 species of birds for the day. Bring a lunch and drinks as we will not be stopping for refreshments. Dress warmly as it can be windy near the water. We go rain or shine. Participants will carpool from in front of the Elk-Beaver Lake Regional Park Sign on Elk Lake Drive at 5:45 a.m. for the 7:00 a.m. ferry sailing. We plan to return on the 5:00 p.m. sailing. You must pre-register by contacting Agnes. First 8 people to sign up have the option of coming in her van. Others to carpool by pre-arrangement. Cost to come in the van or carpool with others is about \$70 for the day from Victoria. Contact Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 to confirm attendance.

Wednesday, November 23

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Saving Endangered Shrikes

Cayla Naumann will be presenting on Wildlife Preservation Canada's Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program, having spent the summer in Napanee, Ontario as the area biologist. A unique program that has been running for over ten years, the program has been critical to maintaining and recovering Ontario's population of Loggerhead Shrikes. Come to learn more about why these smart and feisty birds are so unique, and why the program has been followed by bird conservation groups around the world. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Rm. 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone welcome!

Monday, November 28

MARINE NIGHT

Science Friction: Salmon farming in B.C.

Farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) is the most profitable legal agricultural export crop produced in British Columbia. Free swimming Atlantic salmon have been identified in 78 B.C. rivers, at least three of which are documented as having wild-reared cohorts. During this presentation **Dr. John Volpe**, UVic will outline the development of the aquaculture industry in B.C., including exploration of its dependence on exotic Atlantic salmon. He will argue that the extensive list of environmental challenges linked to the B.C. industry is the product of global commodity markets and failed government oversight. Finally, Dr. Volpe will position the BC salmon farming industry within the rapidly developing world of "sustainable seafood" which is increasingly demanded by consumers and which is likely to significantly shape the industry's future in the province. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Rm. 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone welcome!

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 3

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Juan de Fuca/Esquimalt Harbour Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at Westshore (Juan de Fuca) Recreation Centre Park and Ride (Ocean Blvd and Sooke Rd) at 8:30 a.m. for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the recreation centre property, parts of Esquimalt Harbour and the roadsides in between. Bring your walking shoes, fieldguide and note-pad. This is a regular Saturday Birding Group outing but it is also a great opportunity for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters to get in some practice. Contact Ann Nightingale at 250-514-6450 or motmot at shaw.ca if you need more information.

Saturday, December 10

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Esquimalt Lagoon Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at the bridge at Esquimalt Lagoon at 8:00 am for a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover the ocean birds along the lagoon and will go into the fields back behind the lagoon to provide a variety of birds. Bring your walking shoes, field guide and note-pad. This is a regular Saturday Birding Group outing but it is also a great opportunity for novice or near-novice Christmas Bird Counters to get in some practice. Call Rick Schortinghuis at 250-885-2454 or contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

December 13

NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

Antarctic Wildlife—Life in a Changing Environment

Global climate change is affecting the Antarctic and its wildlife but sometimes in unexpected ways. Enjoy many photos of wildlife and spectacular scenery in the presentation by **Dr. Alan Burger**, a recently-retired seabird biologist and university professor. He regularly goes to the Antarctic as a

naturalist/lecturer on small adventure-tourism vessels. He has done many voyages to the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia and in 2015, he completed a 31-day voyage from New Zealand to the Ross Sea – the deep south – and along the West Antarctic coast. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Rm 159, Fraser Building, UVic. Free. Everyone is welcome.

Christmas Bird Counts 2016

Saturday, December 17, 2016–Victoria

Sunday, December 18, 2016–South Salt Spring Island/Sidney; North Salt Spring Island/Galiano; Pender Island

Monday, December 26, 2016–Sooke

Sunday, January 1, 2017–Duncan

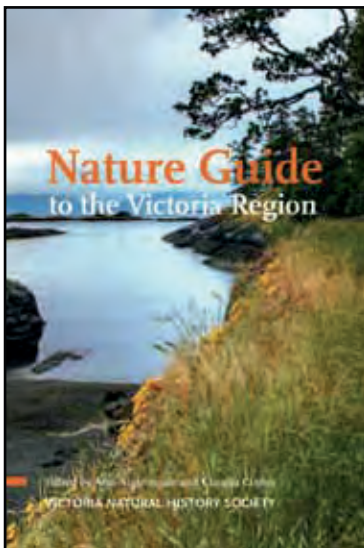
The Victoria Christmas Bird Count is on Saturday, December 17 this year, the latest day that our count occurs. The BCVI 15 mile diameter circle is centred on the Marigold/Interurban area. Everyone is welcome! You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. If you are curious, interested, would like to see lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, or just need more information, please check out the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca/archive/cbc/) and the Christmas Bird Count site (birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count). See page 11 for details.

Tuesday, December 20th

BOTANY NIGHT

Annual Botany Night Holiday Party

Join us for an informal gathering to share mini-presentations, pictures, stories, and snacks! Do you have a few plant pictures you would like to share or a small presentation you've been dying to give? Treats are appreciated but not required. If you have something you would like to present, please contact kristen.miskelly@gmail.com (778-679-3459). Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome!



Nature Guide to the Victoria Region

Edited by Ann Nightingale and Claudia Copley

With chapters by David Stirling, Alan MacLeod, James Miskelly, Robert Cannings, Bryce Kendrick, Philip Lambert, David Nagorsen, Anna Hall, Gavin Hanke and Leon Pavlick.

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!



Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*). Photo: Pauline Davis.