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The Victoria NATURALIST

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[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.

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Cover Image: Lorquin’s Admiral (*Limenitis lorquini*).
Photo: Gordon Hart

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Ah, spring in Victoria...what a lovely time, especially nice this year after the unexpected snow! Now is the time to get out and about, if winter cold and wet kept you mostly inside. The calendar lists a number of great field trips to get you started, and if you are just starting out as a birder, you can get some tips (page 20) and resources (RPBO CD, page 23).

Speaking of out and about...the article “Paths to Nature” (page 13) made me think of the joy we feel when we have the chance to take our grandkids out and share with them different aspects of natural history—at three and six, they have a great time discovering tiny crabs and other things at the beach, seeing (and already recognizing) all sorts of birds and flowers, maybe even finding a fossil. Of course, they know WAY more than I do about dinosaurs, but hopefully we can still teach them a bit about the natural world around us we have now, and instill a desire to care for and about it. Just being outside with them is delightful!

And some good news from around the world: the article posted on several websites (excerpts here from the Huffington Post)—Saving Our Planet: 10 Good News Conservation Stories From 2016¹. Number 1 is from B.C. (!) highlighting conservation of “the world’s largest temperate rainforest”—the 64,000 k² Great Bear Rainforest. Antarctica’s Ross Sea is now the world’s largest marine protected areas (#2) and the increase from 9.6% to 10.6% in Canada’s protected land and inland water areas (14.7% protected globally) is good news #3. Recovery of endangered species (e.g., Piping Plover in Manitoba and on Lake Ontario) is #5, while #6 is about habitat protection leading to restored populations of large carnivores such as wolves. The Canadian 2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, with its goals related to climate change, oceans, freshwater, wildlife and connecting Canadians to nature, rates #7, and climate change agreements and increased support rates #8. Ecosystem restoration projects and identification of key biodiversity areas rate #9 and 10, respectively. Encouraging news indeed regarding reversing loss of biodiversity and ecological services provided by nature.

Gail Harcombe

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/dan-kraus/conservation-success-stories_b_14001486.html

A Message from Your Board

When looking through the calendar, you will see that our AGM is in April rather than March this year—travel and timing made this shift necessary. We hope to entice you to attend by providing free coffee, tea, and treats before the meeting, so come at 7 p.m. and socialize. We enjoy your company and we really need quorum (40 members) so we can vote on the changes required under the new provincial Societies Act (see next page). The meeting will start at the usual time of 7:30 pm. Following the business portion of the meeting, Rich Weir will speak about mesocarnivores of British Columbia—a short but fascinating presentation about wolverines, badgers and fishers. It should be a lot of fun and we are looking forward to seeing many of you there!

In January and February, VNHS had a table at two Special Event Sundays at the Swan Lake Nature Centre. January 29 was 'Ducks' and February 26 was 'Owls'. The Society is a sponsor of these all-ages events. Thank you to John Henigman, Sally Bell, and Helen Davis for agreeing to staff the table at these two events. If you are sorry you missed them or would like to try your hand at staffing a VNHS display table, please keep in mind 12:00-3:00 p.m. May 28 'Egg-cellent Adventures' and June 25 'Bio Blitz: The Flora And Fauna Found At Swan Lake'. These Special Event

days happen all year on the last Sunday of the month, so there will be more to choose from and help out with, if you are looking for volunteer opportunities.

We also had our usual table at Seedy Saturday (February 18), but this year was without everyone's favourite social butterfly: the amazing William (Bill) Dancer. We managed without him thanks to Vicki Metcalf and Claudia and Darren Copley staffing the display. Each year we trade an advertisement in the magazine for a free table at this busy event. It is a great venue to spread the nature-lovin' gospel, sell some books, and maybe even encourage some memberships.

Many of you will have been following the Island View Beach Park Management Planning process. Your Society hasn't given up championing the idea that not every inch of every "protected area" must still allow pets, and that, in fact, conservation parks such as Island View Beach must actually put some effort into conserving, rather than just emphasizing recreation. Matt Fairbarns, a VNHS member and a well-known botanist, has been representing the Society in small panel discussions with those goals in mind. Rocky Point Bird Observatory was there representing the avian perspective with an emphasis on the marine interface, and, since many of the endangered species in the dune ecosystem are plants, it seemed appropriate to have a voice there for the flora, including the marine-influenced wetlands behind the berm. At the time of this writing the outcome was not decided.

The VNHS Nature Photo Contest ran during the first half of January. Seventeen members contributed over 150 photos of wide-ranging taxa from the south Vancouver Island! Many members provided captions detailing their experiences and observations, and some featured species-at-risk, such as Sharp-tailed Snake, yellow sand-verbena, and beach bindweed. An independent judge, who is an avid local photographer and member of the Victoria Camera Club, is currently reviewing submissions. Results will be released in the May/June issue of the Victoria Naturalist newsletter. First place photos will be showcased on the cover of upcoming *Victoria Naturalist* issues.

Notice of Annual General Meeting Victoria Natural History Society

April 11, 2017 7:30 p.m.

**Rm 159, Fraser Bldg, University of Victoria
Evening presentation to follow AGM:
Mesocarnivores of British Columbia**

**Come early (7:00 p.m.) to socialize
and enjoy coffee, tea and treats**



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Notice of Changes to Victoria Natural History Society Constitution and Bylaws

All societies in B.C. must transition (from hardcopy to digital) by November 30, 2018, in order to comply with B.C.'s new *Societies Act*. This provides VNHS with the opportunity to amend our constitution and bylaws. The VNHS Board of Directors is recommending some revisions (see summary of the proposed changes below) so we will be in compliance with the new Act. The amended constitution and bylaws will be presented to the general membership for approval at the 11 April 2017 AGM. The new version of the constitution and bylaws will serve as VNHS's transition document.

The complete 1996 bylaws and the proposed amended constitution and bylaws are available on the VNHS website for your review/comparison.

- **1996 Constitution and Bylaws**

http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?page_id=1469 and

<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?p=37>

- **Proposed Constitution and Bylaws 2017**

<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?p=3627>

Summary of recommended changes to the VNHS Constitution and Bylaws—March 2017

Please note: The sections of the proposed bylaws are in a different order than those in the 1996 bylaws. Numbers in brackets [] are those of provisions in the 1996 constitution and bylaws. The **proposed new or changed** provisions are listed below.

CONSTITUTION:

All provisions other than name and objects (objectives/purposes) of the society moved to relevant section of bylaws. All unalterable clauses in the original constitution moved to bylaws and labelled “***This provision previously unalterable.***”

BYLAWS:

PART 1 [NEW]

Addition of Definitions and Interpretation

PART 2—MEMBERS [1.0 MEMBERSHIP]

2.1 [1.01] Change from six to four classes of membership (Golden Age and Junior classes deleted). Proposed classes are:

Individual [1.01a] Age restriction removed

Family [1.01b] Revised wording—for spouses and any dependent children under 18 years of age or related individuals living in the same household.

Sustaining [1.01e] Revised wording—entitles all members

of the same household as the person who purchases a sustaining membership to life membership (membership is valid for the life of the original purchaser).

Honorary Life [1.01f] Definition unchanged

2.2 [1.02] Unchanged

2.3 [1.03] Addition of NEW (e) Any member in good standing shall have the right to inspect the books and records of the Society upon giving reasonable notice of such intention.

2.4 [1.05] Unchanged

2.5 [NEW] Addition of discount for student and over 65 in individual and family membership classes.

2.6 [1.04] Addition of statement re annual payment of dues.

2.7-2.8 [NEW] Describes conditions for member not in good standing

2.9 [1.04] Cessation of Membership and Expulsion—deleted reference to members joining prior to 1996, and changed the number of directors needed for expulsion of a member from nine to “a majority” of the Board of Directors.

PART 3—GENERAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

3.1 [4.01] Change to frequency of Annual General Meetings—now once per calendar year

3.2 [4.03] Change of word “Special” to “Additional” meeting

3.3 [NEW] Order of ordinary business at a general meeting

3.4 [4.04] Specifies notice for general meetings may now be given in digital as well as printed form; describes time frame and what notice of meetings must contain.

3.5-3.6 [NEW] Specifies who can chair a general meeting

3.7 [4.05] Change from 40 to 25 for number of members required for quorum at a general meeting

3.8-3.9 [NEW] Specifies process if quorum ceases to be present at a general meeting

3.10-3.11 [NEW] Specifies process for continuation and notice regarding adjourned general meetings

3.12 [5.09] States Robert's Rules of Order will now be a guide for proceedings of meetings of the Society rather than mandatory.

3.13 [NEW] Describes order of business at a general meeting

3.14 & 3.15 [2.05] and [4.07] New procedure for voting

3.16 [NEW] Specifies voting by proxy is not permitted.

3.17 [NEW] Describes additional ways for members to participate in general meetings (e.g., by telephone).

3.18 [NEW] Specifies process and voting threshold for ordinary vs. special resolution decisions.

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ECOLOGY AND RESTORATION OF GARRY OAK ECOSYSTEMS

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- 3.19 [5.04] Auditor: Unchanged content
- 3.20 [5.06] Special resolution: Change to percent majority required to pass special resolution
- 3.21 [5.07] Change of words: Society Act to Societies Act

PART 4—DIRECTORS

- 4.1 [2.01] Change to number of directors (from 12 to a range of 9-12), and wording regarding specific qualifications.
- 4.2 [2.04] Simplification in nomination process.
- 4.3–4.5 [2.05] Specifies election voting process
- 4.6 [2.03] Term of office—content unchanged
- 4.7–4.8 [2.06] Specifies process for filling vacancies on the board (other than at time of annual elections)
- 4.9 [5.05] Solicitor: content unchanged

PART 5—BOARD POSITIONS

- 5.1 [3.01] Scope of operations—removal of text specifying Board reports at AGM.
- 5.2 [from constitution]
- DELETED provision for Executive Committee [3.02]
- 5.3-5.5 [2.02-2.03] Specifies officers of the Society, and states that a director, other than president, is permitted to hold more than one position (e.g., Secretary/Treasurer)
- 5.6-5.10 [3.03-3.06] Describes duties of officers—minor revisions
- 5.11 [4.06] Committees: content unchanged

PART 6—DIRECTORS' MEETINGS

- 6.1 [4.2] Change from Society Meetings to Board of Directors' Meetings and change to September to April.
- 6.2-6.4 [NEW] Notice of board meetings, conduct at meetings
- 6.5 [4.05] Change in number required for quorum at a board meeting.

PART 7—REMUNERATION OF DIRECTORS, BORROWING and SIGNING AUTHORITY

- 7.1 [NEW] Remuneration of Directors
- 7.2 [5.02] Borrowing Powers: addition of provision from constitution
- 7.3 [3.07] Signing Authority: content unchanged
- 7.4 [NEW] Specifies process for signing contracts on behalf of the Society.
- DELETED [5.01] reference to a Society Seal.

PART 8

- 8.1 [from constitution] Procedure for disposal of assets.

Victoria Butterfly Season 2016

By Gordon Hart
Photos by author



Grey Hairstreak

Six monthly butterfly counts were held in 2016 using the Victoria Christmas Bird Count circle. There were a few additional species seen in the Greater Victoria area, but either outside the count area, or recorded between counts. The season started off well with 19 species in April 2016, compared to 15 last year (2015). May was sunnier than usual and total numbers were up, but species diversity dropped from 20 last year to 13 in 2016. June continued with 1065 butterflies of 15 species counted. Red Admirals and Cabbage Whites were up from the previous June.

July was marked by a big drop in the number of Woodland Skippers (1392 in 2015, 45 in 2016), since the continuing warm dry weather meant that some flowers had finished already. Lynda Dowling, for example, had already harvested her lavender, an important source of skipper sightings in previous years.

August showed a further drop in number of species and the September count consisted of 122 Cabbage Butterflies and one lone Grey Hairstreak. We thought of having an October count, but the weather started to deteriorate, and there were not many butterflies about.

Overall, the total number of butterflies counted was 3749, higher than all but two counts since 2006. 28 species seen in the count area was within the average range. Five species had all-time high numbers: Cabbage White: 1723; Cedar Hairstreak: 47; Brown Elfin: 19; Red Admiral: 30; and Ringlet: 212.

Back in 1992, the first Victoria counts were organized by the late Derrick Mallard, and it is interesting to see some species found then that are missing from our counts now: six Great Arctics, 74 Purplish Coppers, and three Western Meadow Fritillaries, for example. The lists are not strictly



Cedar Hairstreak

Sara's Orangetip



Anise Swallowtail

comparable, though, as there were fewer knowledgeable counters and areas covered may have been different. The list also shows 21 Monarchs, which is likely a misidentification, although at that time there was someone raising them in Sooke.

Thanks to all 2016 count participants. We will be starting counts again in April. The exact date and time will be found on the VNHS calendar, http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?page_id=1518 and also on the VNHS Invertalert <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?cat=8>. New participants are welcome. All you need is enthusiasm and binoculars (preferably with close focus). We can send out some resources for identifying local butterflies.

Please also consider coming out to the monthly butterfly walk, held on the first Sunday of the month from April to September, starting at 1 p.m. It starts at the summit of Mount Tolmie, where we then decide our destination for the day.

To add your name to the butterfly count and monthly walk email list, please contact me [hartgordon19 AT gmail.com](mailto:hartgordon19@gmail.com). Good butterflying to all for the 2017 season!

Butterfly Count Results 2016

	April	May	June	July	August	September	TOTAL
SPECIES							
Anise Swallowtail	1		10	3	1		15
Brown Elfin	19						19
Cabbage White	189	147	532	431	302	122	1723
California Tortoiseshell	4						4
Cedar Hairstreak	6	40	1				47
Clodius Apollo							0
Clouded Sulphur							0
Common Ringlet		178	2		32		212
Common Woodnymph							0
European (Essex) Skipper			180	11			191
Field Crescent							0
Great Arctic							0
Green Comma	4						4
Grey Hairstreak	6	1	2	2		1	12
Lorquin's Admiral		38	144		4		186
Milbert's Tortoiseshell			2				2
Monarch							0
Moss' Elfin	4						4
Mourning Cloak	9		1				10
Mylitta Crescent							0
Orange Sulphur							0
Painted Lady	4	4	7	6	5		26
Pale Swallowtail	4	27	13	7			51
Pine White				52	6		58
Proterptus Duskywing	7	4					11
Purplish Copper							0
Red Admiral	6	8	10	6			30
Sara's Orangetip	55						55
Satyr Comma	4	1		1			6
Silvery Blue							0
Sulphur species							0
Two-banded Checkered Skipper	2						2
Westcoast Lady		1					1
Western Pine Elfin	3						3
Western Spring Azure	325	15	1				341
Western Sulphur			1				1
Sulphur sp.					1		1
Western Tiger Swallowtail	2	67	157	47	1		274
Woodland Skipper			2	45	357		404
TOTAL	654	531	1065	611	406	1	3268
Number of Observers per month	19	12	14	15	12	12	
Number of Reports	48	40	36	42	29	22	217

Clover Point 1962 and 2009

By David Stirling and Mary Robichaud

Yorke Edwards and David Stirling visited Clover Point, Victoria, British Columbia, for one hour at noon, every week for a period of one year, 1961-62. From June to August Edwards did this study by himself as Stirling was away on naturalist field work. In 2009, 47 years later, Mary Robichaud, visited the point once every week.

Clover Point, about 2.5 km from downtown Victoria, is an extension of Beacon Hill Park. The point is about 1200 metres long by 300 metres wide and is circled by a loop road. There is a drop of about seven metres to the rocky shore. In 1961-62, we say 'A major sewage outfall a few yards off the end of the point attracts some ducks and numbers of gulls' and, 'There is possibly no other place in Canada so close to the heart of the city that is so well endowed with birds of the shore and sea.'

There have been some habitat changes. The point is "neater" now than it was 47 years ago. The area encompassed by the ring road is now a well-kept short grass "lawn" instead of the natural area of weeds and humps. Most of the

shrubbery that fringed the point has been removed. The only bit left is a small thick clump at the boat house. Disturbance has increased. More vehicles crowd the area. More walkers, joggers and dogs are a major disturbance to land birds. At low tide, visitors venture out on to exposed rocks to marvel at the marine life and the seaweed, an activity that drives away feeding and resting shorebirds, such as Rock Sandpipers, Surf-birds and Black Oystercatchers. The greatest change to the ambiance of Clover Point happened in 1980, when the sewer outfall was extended 1.1 km into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This resulted not only in a noticeable decrease in smell but also a noticeable decrease in sewer-loving birds such as wintering Greater Scaup and gulls.

One hundred and sixty-five species were seen at Clover Point in a five year period (Edwards and Stirling 1961-62; G.A. Poynter, a regular visitor to the point, 1957-62). Robichaud listed 95 species over five years, 2004 to 2009. Some species noted earlier such as Band-tailed Pigeon, California Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant and Sky Lark will be unlikely to be seen again at Clover Point as they have become scarce or local in the Victoria area. Robichaud added six species to the list: Snow Goose, Thayer's Gull (a subspecies of Herring Gull in 1961-62), Caspian Tern, Eurasian Collared Dove, Bushtit and Grey-crowned Rosy Finch. I have seen Emperor Goose, Fork-tailed Storm Petrel and Leach's Storm Petrel at the point outside of the two study periods. The late Ralph Fryer photographed a Ross's Gull over the point on November 9, 1966. One hundred and eighty bird species have been reliably reported at/from Clover Point. It is possible that a few others have been seen but not reported.

Comments

By David Stirling

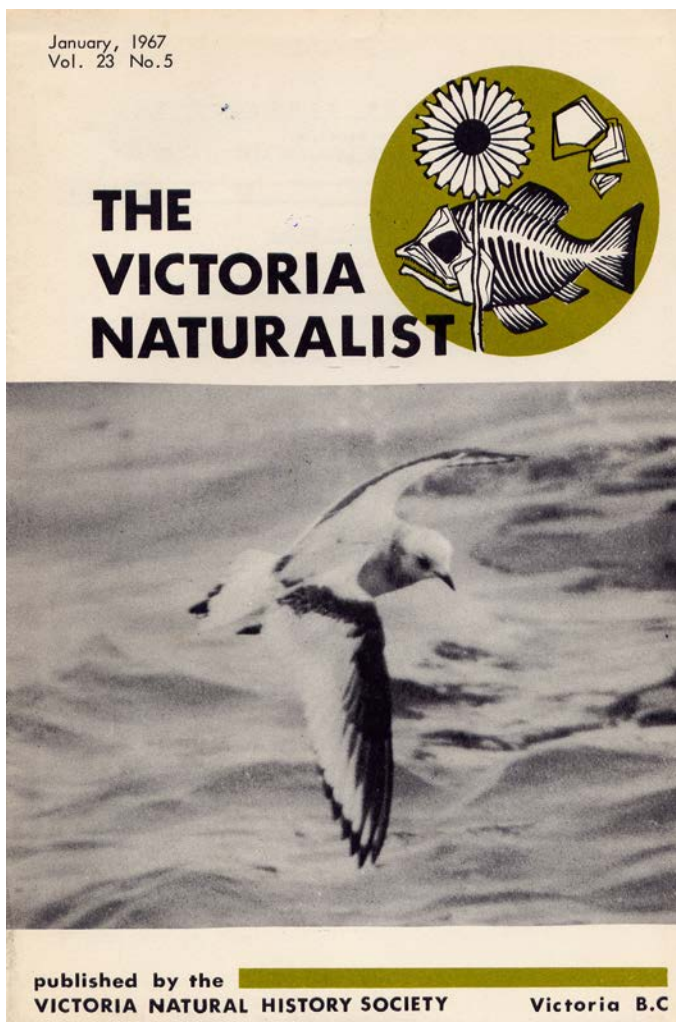
Quotes in italics from Edwards and Stirling 1962

Family order and names follow that of the AOU, 1961-62.

Loons—Four species. Commonest was Common Loon frequently seen early October to June. Both Arctic (Pacific) and Red-throated were seen irregularly during the winter months. One Yellow-billed Loon, December 1961.

Grebes—Grebes have shown a catastrophic decline in Victoria waters. Western Grebes were seen mid-October to early April in numbers up to 50. Red-necked Grebes 'present without fail late September to mid-march up to seven but usually two or three. Horned Grebes late September to early May up to fifteen but usually fewer than ten. Eared Grebes, arrived in October, in numbers up to ten, until mid-April.'

Tube Noses—This group is very irregular and seen from Clover Point. None was seen in 1961-62, but several species on the check list were seen by Alan Poynter in one year prior to this study. Robichaud notes 'huge numbers' in 2009.





A normal winter's day at the point before the sewage pipe was moved off shore (circa 1964). Photo: Ralph Fryer

Cormorants—The number of Double-crested Cormorant nesting on nearby Great Chain Island peaked in the years 1974-1990. Since then there has been a rapid decline to zero in 2008-09, perhaps due to disturbance by the increased Bald Eagle population.

Ducks and Geese—‘Canada Geese are overhead migrants.’ Sewage loving wintering Greater Scaup have declined from up to 500 to zero. Buffleheads, the second commonest duck in 1961-62, are now the commonest duck species.

Birds of Prey—Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons are not mentioned in the 1961-62 report. One Sparrow Hawk (American Kestrel) and one Pigeon Hawk (Merlin) were noted.

Shorebirds—Sixteen species were seen. Surf Birds ‘up to 40 but usually under 10 late July to late April.’ Rock Sandpipers were ‘reliable from February to early May, often less than 10 but up to 35.’

Jaegers, Gulls and Terns—Parasitic Jaegers were ‘regular in small numbers....’ Mew Gulls, up to 420, were abundant. Common Terns, 20 on May 9 and ‘reliable; up to 12, from early September to early October.’

Rock Doves (Rock Pigeon)—One only. ‘The seashore offers no attraction.’ Rock Pigeons now are present daily up to 100 or more. Feeding pigeons is a visitor attraction from Trafalgar Square, England, to Clover Point, Canada. Hand-outs to pigeons attracts loafing Glaucous-winged Gulls that monopolize the grassy area, making it less friendly for migrant and vagrants such as Savannah Sparrows, Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs.

Passerines—More species of small migratory passerines were seen in 1961-62. This could be attributed to more shrub cover and the time of day of the visits. Poynter visited the Point in the early morning before the onslaught of people and dogs.

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2009 Update: Birds Seen from Clover Point, Victoria, B.C.

By Mary Robichaud

I made four inventories a month, mostly on a once-a-week basis, for the entire year. It included birds on and visible from Clover Point. The purpose of the project was to compare inventories done now with those done in a similar study in 1961-62.

An amazing number and variety of birds can be observed at Clover Point. Some are residents, others are in migration or are vagrants. The birds present are in constant flux depending on the weather, the time of day, and the time of year. Clover Point is not only popular with birds. People come by bicycle, car, motor cycle, scooter, and on foot to enjoy the view, to eat lunch, to fly kites or remote-controlled planes, to search the horizon for whales, seals, or sea lions, to collect kelp, to exercise dogs or children, to watch sunrise or sunset or storms, or to party. Busloads of tourists are brought to Clover Point, but it is also a favorite with Victorians.

There is a resident population of Northwestern Crows and Rock Pigeons. The numbers of pigeons has swelled to nearly 70, even though Bald Eagles and a Peregrine Falcon do their best to reduce the populations. Gulls are always present. They congregate on the central grassy area and the peripheral rock formations. Some stay year-round. These are Glaucous-winged Gulls and hybrid gulls. There is a pair of resident Song Sparrows which produced one young in the breeding season of 2009. A small number of Harlequin ducks can be seen all year. Black Oystercatchers might be seen at any time of year.

Clover Point attracts rare birds. In the five years I have been visiting Clover Point (2004-2009), I have seen Eurasian Collared Dove, Short-eared Owl, Snowy Owl, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. I have observed ninety-three species of bird during this time. There are also seasonal birds, including gulls such as Heermann's Gull, and shorebirds in the spring and fall migration.

Species

I have kept a record of birds seen at noontime over the course of one year (2009). Counts could differ significantly from year to year. It does give an idea of the species that frequent Clover Point now compared with almost 40 years ago. I did all the counts, except for two which my son, Dave Robichaud, took for me.

Loons—Only two species seen: Common and Pacific. They were present in small numbers.

Grebes—Western Grebes are seldom seen now. There are small numbers of Red-necked Grebes and Horned Grebes, except in summer. Eared Grebes are not seen here now.

Tube-noses—There was a huge presence of Sooty Shearwaters and Pink-footed Shearwaters in the Victoria area in the fall. Sooty Shearwaters were seen from Clover Point on several occasions, although it was not a typical year.

Cormorants—Three species still occur. Large numbers of Brandt Cormorants often fly by the point in the early morning and late afternoon. Except in summer, Pelagic Cormorants and

Double-crested Cormorants can usually be seen in small numbers.

Hérons—One or two Great Blue Herons can usually be seen from mid-May to mid-October.

Ducks and Geese—Small numbers of Canada Geese can often be seen on or from Clover Point. The largest group in 2009 was 20 that flew by on August 14th. You do not see the large groups like those that congregate in other areas of the lower Vancouver Island. Black Brant (10) were present from February 19-April 17. On April 17, a large group of about 400 Brant flew by. There were often 10-20 floating off the point.

Mallards are often at Clover Point in the early morning. They leave when the humans and dogs start arriving, which can be before daylight. Buffleheads are now the most abundant duck. They departed in the third week of April and returned to Clover Point at the beginning of November. Few or no Scaup are observed at Clover Point anymore. Ducks observed April-November: Red-breasted Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, and Long-tailed Duck. None of these were seen between May and October.

Birds of Prey—Bald Eagles are common in the area now. A Peregrine Falcon seems to visit at least once a week. I have also seen a Cooper's Hawk at the point.

Rails—No rails were seen this year.

Shorebirds—Twelve species were observed during the inventory. Black Turnstones are the most common, often present until mid-April. They returned to the point in mid-August. The other shorebirds were Dunlin, Surf-bird, Sanderling, Black Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Red-necked Phalarope, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Killdeer, and Pectoral Sandpiper.

Other shorebirds observed in the last five years include Spotted Sandpiper, Wandering Tattler, Rock Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, Baird's Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Golden Plover, Red Knot, and Ruddy Turnstone.

Jaegers—Jaegers are rarely seen. These, and similar species, stay farther offshore now. When the sewage pipe was extended, but it had an effect on how close to shore some of the birds come. I didn't see any this year.

Gulls and Terns—Caspian Terns have replaced the Common Tern in the Victoria area. One flew by Clover Point on May 16.

Species	Arrival	Departure
Glaucous-winged Gull	present year-round	
Mew Gull	Oct 1	beginning of April
Bonaparte's Gull	large flocks occasionally seen in the fall (not this year)	
Heermann's Gull	July 9	Nov 5
California Gull	July 9	Nov 12
Thayer's Gull	Oct 1	March
Western Gull	Nov 17	end of March
Herring Gull	rare	
Glaucous Gull	rare	

A Glaucous Gull stayed at Clover Point from mid-March until end of May. This is atypical. There were more than 500 California Gulls on August 14, and 65 Mew Gulls on Oct 22. Numbers of gulls, near the point and at a distance, varies greatly.

Auks—Pigeon Guillemots can be seen all year, in numbers up to 25. Rhinoceros Auklets are not usually seen from Clover Point until mid-March, and numbers swell toward summer. In summer evenings, they can be observed with mouthfuls of small, silver fish. They may be waiting until dark to fly to their nests. On August 14, there were more than 100 off the point. Numbers decrease in October. Marbled Murrelets are present in very small numbers for the winter months, starting in September. Ancient Murrelets fly by the point early in the morning. So numbers in a noontime count don't give a true reflection of their presence. Common Murres are few in number in the early months of the year. There were more than 100 off the point on August 14, but the number decreased through the rest of the year.

Pigeons—Rock Pigeons are now always present. Their numbers increase each year. People come to feed them every day. The highest count during this year was 105 on October 22.

Passerines—The Song Sparrow is still a resident after all these years. Four or five Northwestern Crows are usually present. There were more present in September and October, but the highest number observed was 14. Barn Swallows arrived in mid-April and departed in mid-September. They nested at or near the point. Adults can be seen bringing food to juveniles that wait on the steps on the east side of the point by mid-July. In the summer, a solitary Violet-green Swallow was usually present. Savannah Sparrows can be observed in the spring and fall. In spring, I saw small numbers on April 24 and May 16. In the fall, they were present from August 31-November 5. I saw 20 on October 1. There was only one Lapland Longspur in 2009, seen in mid-April. Usually, one or two are seen in the fall, but it didn't happen this year. Occasionally, up to six House Finches and up to 16 House Sparrows were present. There was only one American Pipit observed on the inventory. But they are often seen or heard earlier in the morning in the fall. A pair of White-crowned Sparrows was present near Dallas Road for a few weeks in June and July. There was a flock of 25 Bushtits at the point on August 14. This was very unusual. There are often European Starlings at Clover Point. Sometimes, there are only a few—other times, there are large flocks. Brown-headed Cowbirds are not often seen at Clover Point. This year, I saw one juvenile in July. A Snow Bunting over-wintered at Clover Point this year. It arrived in November 2008 and departed at the end of March in 2009.

Most species: January 21: 25, December 20: 25

Most individuals: December 04: 1893

Fewest species: June 18: 7, June 27: 7

Fewest individuals: June 27: 45

Clover Point Birds 1957 to 2009

Greater White-fronted Goose	Brandt's Cormorant	Heermann's Gull	Sky Lark
Emperor Goose	Double-crested Cormorant	Mew Gull	Horned Lark
Snow Goose	Pelagic Cormorant	Ring-billed Gull	Purple Martin
Brant	Great Blue Heron	California Gull	Tree Swallow
Canada Goose	Turkey Vulture	Herring Gull	Violet-green Swallow
Gadwall	Bald Eagle	Thayer's Gull	Rough-winged Swallow
American Wigeon	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Iceland Gull	Cliff Swallow
Mallard	Cooper's Hawk	Western Gull	Barn Swallow
Northern Shoveler	Red-tailed Hawk	Glaucous-winged Gull	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Northern Pintail	American Kestrel	Glaucous Gull	Bushtit
Green-winged Teal	Merlin	Sabine's Gull	Bewick's Wren
Canvasback	Peregrine Falcon	Black-legged Kittiwake	Pacific Wren
Ring-necked Duck	American Coot	Ross's Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Greater Scaup	Sandhill Crane	Caspian Tern	Swainson's Thrush
Lesser Scaup	Black-bellied Plover	Common Tern	American Robin
Harlequin Duck	Golden Plover sp.	Elegant Tern	Varied Thrush
Surf Scoter	Semi-palmated Plover	South Polar Skua	European Starling
White-winged Scoter	Killdeer	Parasitic Jaeger	American Pipit
Black Scoter	Black Oystercatcher	Long-tailed Jaeger	Cedar Waxwing
Long-tailed Duck	Spotted Sandpiper	Common Murre	Yellow Warbler
Bufflehead	Greater Yellowlegs	Pigeon Guillemot	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Common Goldeneye	Lesser Yellowlegs	Marbled Murrelet	Wilson's Warbler
Barrow's Goldeneye	Wandering Tattler	Ancient Murrelet	Spotted Towhee
Hooded Merganser	Whimbrel	Cassin's Auklet	Chipping Sparrow
Common Merganser	Marbled Godwit	Rhinoceros Auklet	Brewer's Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Ruddy Turnstone	Horned Puffin	Savannah Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Black Turnstone	Tufted Puffin	Fox Sparrow
Ring-necked Pheasant	Surfbird	Band-tailed Pigeon	Song Sparrow
California Quail	Red Knot	Rock Pigeon	Lincoln's Sparrow
Red-throated Loon	Sanderling	Eurasian Collard Dove	White-crowned Sparrow
Pacific Loon	Semi-palmated Sandpiper	Snowy Owl	Dark-eyed Junco
Common Loon	Western Sandpiper	Short-eared Owl	Lapland Longspur
Yellow-billed Loon	Least Sandpiper	Common Nighthawk	Snow Bunting
Pied-billed Grebe	Baird's Sandpiper	Black Swift	Red-winged Blackbird
Horned Grebe	Pectoral Sandpiper	Vaux's Swift	Western Meadowlark
Red-necked Grebe	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Rufous Hummingbird	Brewer's Blackbird
Eared Grebe	Rock Sandpiper	Belted Kingfisher	Brown-headed Cowbird
Western Grebe	Dunlin	Downy Woodpecker	Grey-crowned Rosy Finch
Northern Fulmar	Short-billed Dowitcher	Northern flicker	Purple Finch
Flesh-footed Shearwater	Long-billed Dowitcher	Eastern Kingbird	House Finch
Sooty Shearwater	Wilson's Snipe	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Pine Siskin
Short-tailed Shearwater	Red-necked Phalarope	Northern Shrike	American Goldfinch
Fork-tailed Storm Petrel	Red Phalarope	Steller's Jay	Evening Grosbeak
Leach's Storm Petrel	Franklin's Gull	Northwestern Crow	House Sparrow
Brown Pelican	Bonaparte's Gull	Common Raven	

NOTE: as of Oct 2016: four more birds have been added to this impressive list:
Say's Phoebe, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Bank Swallow, Cackling Goose.

Paths to Nature

By Alanah Nasadyk, Community and Development Coordinator,
Habitat Acquisition Trust



(above) An Ensatina (*Ensatina enscholtzii*) photographed while crossing the road. Photo: Dr. Kristina Ovaska

(right) Alanah stands on Camas Hill with a view to Sooke Basin and Scotch Broom loppers in hand. Photo: HAT



A little girl hops along the stepping stones of her Grandmother's garden. Stopping under a tree she spies the lovely blue of a cracked egg shell. "A Robin's egg!" says Grandma. It is around this time that the girl decides, blue is my favourite colour, Robin's egg blue.

Later Grandma laments the small, dark and speckled birds, "Starlings, those awful things. They'll kick other bird's young out of their nests." Somewhere in the mind of that little girl the concept of an invasive species takes a very rough form, waiting to be molded and put to good use.

A father who loves to hunt and fish, takes his little girl out to forests and lakes in search of game. She loves to reach into the water, leaning in a bit too far. "There's not a lake in the CRD you haven't fallen into," says Dad.

The not-so-little girl explores the Sooke Hills collecting wildflowers. She names plants along the way. Squid Flower is her name for Miner's Lettuce with its pink to green radiating tentacles of foliage. Presenting her collection to Daddy, he remarks, "Those are beautiful, but you shouldn't pick them." Afterwards, she learns to take photos instead of plucking flowers, and eventually learns their proper names.

This little girl was me. Today, I am glancing back at the tracery of paths that brought me to nature. Whether you are an outdoorsman, a gardener or a parent, everyone has their own paths to the land.

I first became involved with Habitat Acquisition Trust

(HAT) two years ago when I went listening for Western Screech Owls with biologist Christian Engelstoft. Alas, after two nights, we were not rewarded with a single call. This was a testament to the rarity of these once bountiful creatures. I came away glad to learn the calls of our owls and to contribute to important, local research.

Almost a year later, I became a staff member of HAT. Since then, I have had the pleasure of helping people find ways to connect with their own paths to nature. I am happy to say my mission is to conserve natural habitat on the land where I grew, doing something tangible to protect the place we call home.

One of my greatest memories so far with HAT, was at a habitat restoration party, reaching to pull an invasive plant, I saw something incredible: a little blue slug. Dr. Kristina Ovaska confirmed this as one of only 15 sites in Canada documented to have the rare Blue-grey Taildropper. I was overjoyed!

These are a few special nature moments. I encourage you to reminisce on some of your own. As we spend time outdoors, we better understand nature's wonders, and appreciate what it means to care for them. I have many people to thank for nurturing an interest in the great outdoors. You never know when you might become someone else's role model. From hopping along stepping stones in grandma's garden to the work I do with HAT today, I continue to pursue my passion for nature.

Looking back, what were your paths to nature?

New Species for Victoria Christmas Bird Count: Clay-coloured Sparrow

By Ann Nightingale

The 2016 Victoria Christmas Bird Count took place on December 17, a cold day, with ice and snow on the ground in many spots around Victoria. The winds were too strong for one of our boats, but two teams managed to get out on the water. I am continually delighted by the turnout of birders and helpers for the count. Despite the chilly temperatures, 239 people participated as field counters (just below our record of 242) and 91 feeder watchers (admittedly, some of them field counters who were at home for part of the day).

Our total of 73,050 individuals was about average for the last few years, and our species total, 141, was exactly the same as the last two years. The species total was the top in Canada again this year, but we shouldn't rest on our laurels. More about that a little later. Despite being average, we once again had a good number of species with record numbers: Brant(8/old record 5), Canada Goose (6972/6860), Mourning Dove (100/76), Northern Pygmy Owl (8/5), Downy Woodpecker(240/234), Hairy Woodpecker(38/37), Northern Flicker (661/645), American Dipper (15/11), Hermit Thrush (76/58), Spotted Towhee (1501/1247), Clay-coloured Sparrow (new species), White-throated Sparrow (21/13), and White-crowned Sparrow (432/384).

It seems that at least one species of woodpecker has a new record most years. This may be due to the effects of climate. Many of our fir trees are dying due to drought conditions, setting up the perfect environment for infestations which the woodpeckers would love. The chart below shows how



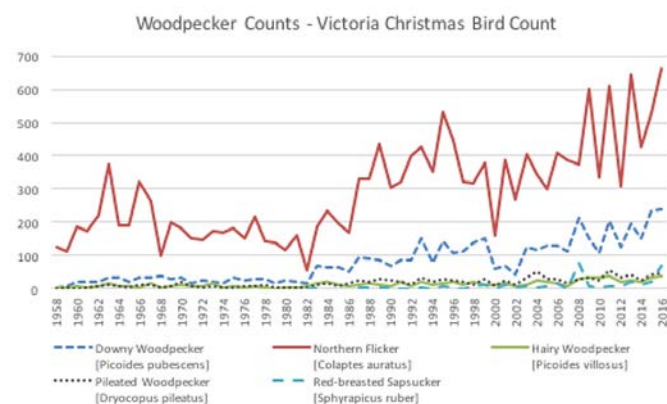
Townsend's Warbler. Photo: Doug Kolot

and Townsend's, missed by the field counters were found by feederwatchers. Misses included Brown-headed Cowbird, Skylark, Red Necked Pheasant and most surprisingly, Cedar Waxwing. Count week birds included the waxing and cowbird, as well as Short-eared Owl, Hutton's Vireo and Rock Sandpiper. Or was it a Purple Sandpiper? Anna's Hummingbirds fell to the lowest level in four years, but they may have been hunkered down, given the cool temperatures. For the third year in a row, Skylark was not found during the Victoria count, but several were found during the Sidney/South Salt Spring count.

Results for all of the counts, including those from the southern part of Vancouver Island can be found on the Audubon Society's site, birds.audubon.org. You can review statistics going all the way back to the very first official Christmas Bird Count, graphs, maps and find all sorts of other cool information. If you want to search by count circle, the codes for the local counts are BCVI (Victoria), BCSO (Sooke), BCSS (Sidney/South Salt Spring), BCGS (Galiano/North Salt Spring), BCPI (Pender Island) and BCDU (Duncan).

Thanks again to everyone who participated. I am especially grateful for the fantastic zone leaders. The count would be an impossible task without their continued support.

And now for the challenge. 2017 is Canada's 150th birthday. Back in 2014, we set a goal to celebrate the Victoria Natural History Society's 60th anniversary. I propose that we set a goal of 150 species for the 2017 count to finish off the year with a bang. In the process, we just might go beyond and set a new Canadian record. We currently hold the record with 154 species, but we haven't come close since. The Victoria 2017 count will be on **Saturday, December 16**.



woodpecker sightings on count day have changed.

In addition to the Clay-coloured Sparrow on Dooley Rd, which was new for our CBC list, other rarities included a Harris's Sparrow near the Michell Airpark at Martindale Flats, a Bonaparte's Gull in Esquimalt Harbour, a Cassin's Auklet from our Victoria boat crew, and a Sora at Olympic View Golf Course. Two warbler species, Orange-crowned

2016 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

Species	Count Areas																				Feeder	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Prev High	
	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Martindale / Bear Hill				Cordova Bay (offshore)
Brant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	23		8
Greater White-fronted Goose																								14
Snow Goose																								17
Cackling Goose																								3
Canada Goose	821		50	162	32	64	155	299	253	90		364	38	30	176	16	57	70	405	457	3500			224
Mute Swan																								883
Trumpeter Swan	69	1			1												1							4
Tundra Swan						2																		200
Wood Duck		2																						456
Gadwall																								2
Eurasian Wigeon			1			18																		70
American Wigeon	17		13		4	65	218	7	72	288	188	96	303	4		120	9	740	2	542				833
American Black Duck																								224
Mallard	532	2	45	11	20	98	148	150	243	136	653	233	657	39	242	525	332	241	104	221		2	41	4,675
Northern Shoveler	24					10	6					10						11	31	2				94
Northern Pintail	19					23	182	12	6		1	1	1	1			2				4			251
Green-winged Teal	127					8	6	214	6	1		2						1	2	13				380
Canvasback																								14
Ring-necked Duck	5	3		62	9	24	13						1			8	38		8	82	19			272
Greater Scaup							10																	11
Lesser Scaup			3				2		181	1											15	5		216
Harlequin Duck						7		35		15	42	36	6	18	6			4			6			179
Surf Scoter						23	58	12		22	37	96	35	126	2			42			10	148		646
White-winged Scoter						10	1			11	2	29	3	7	6						1	150		237
Black Scoter													1											1
Long-tailed Duck																								194
Buffhead	24		1	116		11	125	273	94	244	322	105	178	52	65	142	4		217	3	87	1	80	2,144
Common Goldeneye	15		14				45	51	29	1	8	5		2	16	5		51			19			291
Barrow's Goldeneye	3		6									17												26
Hooded Merganser	18	17	4	3	10	22		45		8	52	2	24	3	21	13	16	58	14		1	4	345	
Common Merganser	16		8	23	151	10	14	63		54	22	43	1	4	6	6	6	902	21	5	5	15	1,370	
Red-breasted Merganser						23	72	78		50	12	45	11	28	4			165		9		50	547	
Ruddy Duck																2							12	
California Quail	39	3	17	14		30	20								5		2	10	15	24			45	
Pied-billed Grebe				2	21		5	1		3		1				3		46	7				89	
Horned Grebe						27	24	3		4	18	2	1	8	9			113		23		11	243	
Red-necked Grebe							3	6		10	11	14	1	6	11			2		1	2	29	96	
Eared Grebe																							1	
Western Grebe						4	44	3		6	2	1									3	26	89	
Rock Pigeon	5	25		4	51		48	71	123	88	166	45	26			8	77	2	3	1	1	2	5	
Eurasian Collared-dove	2			12	4	2	3		6					7					11	88		2	750	
Mourning Dove	4	3		4																74		2	13	
Anna's Hummingbird	13	12	3	11	3	9	22	39	13	53	22	24	6	27	18	7	50	19	19	32			15	
Sora						1																	161	
Virginia Rail																							1	
American Coot																							5	
Black-bellied Plover	5				18											10		4	1362	20	8		1,427	
Killdeer	4			9		6	8	16	9	6	1	15	2	1	10	3	4	1	2	83			114	
Black Oystercatcher																							182	
Greater Yellowlegs																							93	
Spotted Sandpiper																							6	
Black Turnstone																							2	
Surf Scoter						12	7	1		32	26	38	2	6	6								70	
Dunlin							3			2	51	17											71	
Wilson's Snipe	2		4				3	2			1	56											31	
Common Murre							2	1		5		21			6						50	102	187	

2016 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

Species	Count Areas																							Total #	Prev High	New Records in Bold
	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Martindale / Bear Hill	Cordova Bay (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders			
Pigeon Guillemot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	147		
Marbled Murrelet						5	2	7		17	12	54	2	10	15						8	12	10	147		
Ancient Murrelet						9				5	56	105			190						234	321	915	6401		
Cassin's Auklet																								1		
Rhinoceros Auklet							1			2	3	1												16		
Bonaparte's Gull						151	283	16		14	12	596	1	12	20			3		1	9	1316	2434	16375		
New Gull			16			4	2				1	2	1											35		
California Gull																								4		
Herring Gull	1																							2		
Thayer's Gull	1					8	6			3	4	7	2			6	3							4		
Western Gull							1				1	1					1							4		
Glaucous-winged Gull	1143	14	135	23	23	49	192	177	236	308	145	136	55	161	82	110	114	261	64	97	43	45	13	3626		
Red-throated Loon						2	3	5		5	17	61	1	4	3	8		5		6	2	5	39	140		
Pacific Loon						8	6	6			6	13	1	4	2		1			4		17	133	488		
Common Loon						7	2	1		1	6	108	3	16	6	2		2		2		3	40	109		
Brandt's Cormorant						4	1	2		1	9	108	3	29	6	4		1		1	37	53	242	3549		
Double-crested Cormorant	4				182	9	9	15	103	124	16	49	14	29	7		2	50	5	9	5	9	641	1181		
Pelagic Cormorant						3	4	3	26	16	68	5	28	12				12		4	40	35	256	2300		
Great blue Heron		1	1	1	1	5	15	25	4	10	1	5	2		1	3	1	12	2	2	5			95		
Turkey Vulture				2		3		3			1													10		
Bald Eagle (adult)	16	3	17	2	2	7	5	3	2	5	3	7	5	7	3		2	6	11	1				109		
Bald Eagle (immature)			5	1		2	3			2		2		1	1	2	1	4		3				30		
(unaged)	16							1																4		
Northern Harrier																								1		
Sharp-shinned Hawk						1					1					1								7		
Cooper's Hawk		1				3				3	2	1				1		9	1	4			1	40		
Red-tailed Hawk	7	4	2	6	1	3	2	2	2		2	1			1	1	7	2	6	7				56		
Golden Eagle																				1				2		
Barn Owl	1																							1		
Western Screech-Owl																								2		
Great Horned Owl		2	6	4		2	1					1			2				8					26		
Northern Pygmy Owl		2		4															2					8		
Barred Owl											2	2			1	1								13		
Northern Saw-whet Owl																								4		
Belted Kingfisher	2	1	4		2	4	4	5	1	9		2	1		1		1	6	2					45		
Red-breasted Sapsucker	1	14	1	2		3	1	5	3	2	3	1			4	2	2	4	13	6			3	79		
Downy Woodpecker	14	11	6	8	1	11	8	6	8	3	13	11		4	9	8	17	12	17	25				48		
Hairy Woodpecker	2	3	3	2		4	1				1				7			4	6					38		
Northern Flicker	26	20	10	40	1	44	32	50	21	14	9	16	5	20	70	10	51	45	56	47				74		
Pileated Woodpecker	6	3	2	4		2	1	1	1						7			5	4	2				46		
American Kestrel	2																							3		
Merlin	4	2				2	1									1								15		
Peregrine Falcon	4	2	1			1						1					1		1					12		
Northern Shrike																								1		
Stellar's Jay	4	6	13	1		6											1							37		
Northwestern Crow	40	6	6	18	30	4	22	61	241	134	92	68	44	74	1453	63	122	134	10	167				490		
Common Raven	38	36	10	16	6	8	9	5		1	6	1	4	8	9	3	3	10	41	23				10		
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	85	63	13	81	2	78	76	63	47	63	105	88	30	68	136	44	206	70	342	77				181		
Bushtit	12	20		30	2	25	10	8	109	71	27	60	12	42	72	30	142	80	18	56				402		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	21	30	1	23	2	9	12	27	14	5	11	9	1	16	57	6	16	19	85	19				37		
Brown Creeper	1	5	2	12	1	10	2	16	6	2	9	8	2	3	13	10	9	5	17	15				2		
Pacific Wren	15	41	13	30	3	22	46	17	6	15	11	23	10	19	93	2	30	12	57	36				6		
Marsh Wren	8	1					2	1					4				10	2	1	12				42		
Bewick's Wren	4	7	2	15	1	4	8	17	16	20	13	26	12	10	18	4	39	11	23	18				58		
American Dipper			3																					3		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	43	127	36	111	3	41	86	31	49	5	38	31		9	105	15	64	16	337	71				8		

2016 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

Count Areas		Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)																							New Records in Bold		
		Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Martindale / Bear Hill	Cordova Bay (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders	Total #	Prev High	
Species		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	23				
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		12	3	1	14	1	8	7	7	7	15	7	20		2	12	7	30	13	13	40				19	402	
Hermit Thrush		3	7	4	14	5	5	1	1	3	3	1	1		2	5		8	4	8	5				4	76	
American Robin		264	29	9	86	27	92	149	181	334	239	326	557	110	496	363	320	503	319	405	626				17	68	
Varied Thrush		20	108	27	47	4	73	37	24	5	1	13	10	1	7	88	3	16	37	64	24				79	1200	
European Starling		229	68		109	6	2	161	51	299	236	62	6	15	7	10	136	169	22	33	720				79	2,420	
American Pipit		1																			34				35	272	
House Sparrow		62	21		41	20	57	72	179	220	169	20	20	14	7	133	62	177	74	77	199				128	1,752	
House Finch		21	5		19	13	43	48	40	26	29	15	66	14	56	12	14	79	40	53	78				177	848	
Purple Finch		8						3	6	6			1		2	2	1	10	6	3	16				18	505	
Red Crossbill		5	185		9				2					5	6	59			1	132					5	409	
Pine Siskin		195	1		18			37	25	60	5	5	26	7	16	131		61	218	404	81				3	1,267	
American Goldfinch										21		12	26												3	62	
Evening Grosbeak																									1	187	
Orange-crowned Warbler																									1	6	
Yellow-rumped Warbler					2								2								7				1	12	
Townsend's Warbler																					4				1	1	
Spotted Towhee		68	59	17	76	13	62	72	71	25	31	41	93	24	63	109	49	141	109	134	98				146	1,501	
Clay-colored Sparrow																										0	
Savannah Sparrow												4									15				19	112	
Fox Sparrow		34	12	10	28	15	19	53	24	10	21	11	26	6	7	45	22	59	45	51	46				47	591	
Song Sparrow		65	25	11	21	2	15	46	40	18	12	19	31	12	11	26	16	57	34	27	76				34	598	
Lincoln's Sparrow		5						1	5			3	3					28		1	38					84	137
Swamp Sparrow													1					3			1				5	10	
White-throated Sparrow					1		2	1		1		1	1			1	1	2	3	2	1				6	21	
Harris's Sparrow																					1					5	1
White-crowned Sparrow		17			2	3			9	21	21		18	6		6	2	9	12		265				41	432	
Golden-crowned Sparrow		45	11	22	28	13	75	103	99	42	58	14	68	19	2	38	48	117	59	81	192				124	1,258	
Dark-eyed Junco		328	283	171	226	115	119	341	244	358	128	200	190	90	223	287	60	475	473	663	665				617	6,256	
Red-winged Blackbird		87	5		37			4					1				12	51	10	27	104				344	2,160	
Western Meadowlark																					21				21	126	
Brewer's Blackbird					22			86						3		150	30	22			149				4	466	
American x Eurasian Wigeon																					1				1	1	
WEGUXGWGU											1		70								10				42	123	
MalackPhtail												1													25	1	
GWGXHERG																									27	1	
Slate-coloured Junco																									1	1	
Undertied Owl																									1	1	
Undertied Finch																					40				40	40	
Undertied Merganser									1																	1	1
Undertied Scoter											11														10	21	
Undertied Sparrow																		80								80	14
Undertied Goldeneye											14																1
Undertied raptor									1																		1
Undertied Grebe									1																		1
Undertied Duck					5				3				6													14	14
Undertied passerine			32						21									40								93	93
Undertied Gull			3		27				24	50	42		100	7		3		2			72				18	348	
Undertied Cormorant												25													17	42	
Count Totals	4,756	1,389	861	1,580	841	1,809	3,491	2,822	3,545	3,196	2,790	4,531	1,748	1,877	4,621	1,877	3,624	6,949	4,198	9,425	861	2,958	3,331	73,050			
Species Totals	68	54	44	52	45	77	83	70	50	69	74	88	60	60	68	54	59	76	70	94	18	40	52	141			

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Field Trip Leaders & Ideas Needed

The VNHS conducts over 100 field trips per year, covering a variety of topics, and usually led by VNHS volunteers. Birding and botany trips are well covered, but some of our members have strong interest in (and possibly specialized knowledge about) other natural history subjects. We are seeking ideas for trips as well as volunteers willing to lead local field trips in:

- Archaeology
- Entomology (e.g., dragonflies, spiders, bees, other insects)
- First Nations natural history
- Fish
- Geology
- Intertidal ecosystems
- Marine botany (e.g., seaweeds)
- Non-fish (shellfish, crabs, anemones, sea stars, jellies)
- Paleontology
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Specific wildlife (e.g., bats, Cougars, bears, rabbits, Mink, otters, seals, sea lions, whales)

Leading a trip does not require a major commitment; one or two trips per year would be great. Leaders would be responsible for scouting out an area in advance, and describing the trip and its degree of difficulty (for publication in the newsletter). On the trip itself, we will help with ensuring the safety and well-being of participants, getting waivers signed and some very limited housekeeping. NOTE: You don't have to be an expert!

If you are willing to be a volunteer leader or give us an idea for a field trip, please contact either Ben van Drimmelen (barristers4bears.com or 250-598-0570) or Agnes Lynn (thelynns AT shaw.ca or 250-721-0634).



Sandstone on Newcastle Island. Photo: Dave Lynn



Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy

In Memoriam J2 'Granny'

Matriarch of J Pod, Southern Resident Orca Pod

We were so fortunate that bright sunny day, Oct 23rd, to have seen her during the VNHS mini-pelagic trip. It might well have been one of the last sightings of 'J2' in the Salish Sea. She even gave us a fluke/tail wave.

The Center for Whale research that is situated on San Juan

Island, Washington State, sadly announced December 31, 2016, that 'Granny' so affectionately known, was presumed dead. She had not been seen for some time. Historically, her sightings have been documented at the center since 1987, at which time it was estimated she was 45 years old.

She was nearly always seen as leading her pod into these familiar, summer waters and back out west after a day or so, constantly in search of food; Chinook Salmon being their favourite fish, a dwindling species of salmon these days. The pod's travels would take them as far north as Campbell River and occasionally even further, and as far south as the Washington/Oregon coast, as well as points in-between.

With the loss of five Orca from J Pod in 2016, it is now estimated that the southern resident total population (the combined three pods) has dropped to 78. This number does not bode well for the continued existence of this unique population of one of the most studied groups of Killer Whale/Orca in the world. Those of us that frequent the water will miss 'Granny' greatly, as indeed must the rest of her family at this time.

Marie O'Shaughnessy

Massive Arbutus Die-off on Observatory Hill

Request from Adolf Ceska

This winter Oluna and I witnessed a massive die-off of Arbutus trees on Observatory Hill. Have you seen a similar phenomenon elsewhere? It might have been a series of several dry years in succession that caused this die-off. Dead arbutus trees host a plethora of interesting fungi and we would like to collect those fungi at sites other than just Observatory Hill. Please reply to me at aceska@telus.net if you can point us to other locations.



Arbutus on Observatory Hill. Photo: Adolf Ceska



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anitabike@gmail.com (250) 381-7313
www.oystercatchergirl.blogspot.com

A Members' Introduction to Birding

By Ben van Drimmelen

One of the most extensive and interesting types of activities of the Victoria Natural History Society is field trips. We go on local walks to look at wildflowers, butterflies, marine and other natural history treasures, but our most frequent trips are to observe and identify birds—over 100 morning walks per year, all year-round and in (almost) any weather.

The uninitiated may be a bit leery of joining experienced, focused birders on these trips, but there is no need to feel that way; any member is always welcome come along. To encourage participation, we are offering VNHS members a free introduction to birding. Instruction is by intermediate birder Ben van Drimmelen.

The focus is on being out there birding, so there is just one evening of class time. Class size will stay small—six members. After the evening session, we will join several of VNHS' Saturday morning birding trips, which usually last about 3 hours. The group will stay a bit behind the regulars, going more slowly and talking more about what we see. After three or four Saturday morning trips as a class, you will be encouraged to join more of these walks on your own. After perhaps 10 of these walks, you will have been exposed to



some 90 species. You may not yet be able to identify them all, but that will come.

If this piques your interest and you want a bit of instruction before you get into the VNHS members' birding walks, simply send an e-mail to ben@barristers4bears.com. As soon as I have six members interested, we'll do a session—and we'll do another session whenever we get requests from another six.

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Letters

Dear VNHS,

Habitat Acquisition Trust is so grateful to everyone with Victoria Natural History Society for the donation of \$1500 in support of the bat program. We will now be able to maintain and we expect enhance interest in protecting bats and their habitat locally with the people most likely to encounter and have an impact on our wonderful winged mammals: landowners, roofers, pest control workers and cavers. We will also be able to build more maternity colony houses. Thank you!

Kindest regards,
Alanah Nasadyk
Community & Development Coordinator

Dear Mr. Darren Copley,

I am writing to thank you for the Victoria Natural History Society Bursary that I have received. I cannot express my gratitude enough!

The environment is something I am very dedicated to and passionate about. Your bursary will aid me in focusing on school to make my dream and goal of being an Environmental Scientist come true.

As I mentioned above, the environment is a passion of mine. One that I love to dedicate my free time to in the form of volunteering. Not only do I learn field knowledge and gain hands on experience, but I meet people who may be involved in future environmental projects with. And vice versa. It is great to have my volunteer work recognized, and to have it aid my tuition costs.

Thank you once more for the bursary and the opportunity that it brings!

Sincerely, Kelsey Allbee,
BSc. Environmental Science Student, RRU

Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by 23 new members since the last issue and the following have agreed to have their names published in this Welcome section.

Bonnie Gallagher
Victoria
birding-marine

Corinne Marshall
Saanichton
listening to speakers, attending meeting, easy walks and learning

Sue Olive
Brentwood Bay

Matthew and Caitlin Bingham
Victoria
birds and birding

Andrew Erickson
Victoria
botany, ornithology

Susanne Rautio
Victoria

Shelley Jomaa
Victoria

Shayne Kaye
Victoria
birds and bats and more birds. Also art, photography and hiking

Vicki Wadsworth
Victoria

Alex Schaffter
Victoria
birding, mushrooms, and local history

Jill Doucette
Victoria
birding, botany, climate change, ecology

Hugh MacIntosh
Victoria
marine biology, invertebrates, bivalves

Anne and George Clark
Victoria

Patrick Telford
Victoria
environmental sciences

Marcia Waterway
Sooke
vascular plants, mosses, lichens, birds, fungi, forest ecology, and peatlands

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BULLETIN BOARD

Outerbridge Park Sunday Bird Walks Sundays, March 12 and April 9 at 9 a.m.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) hosts bird walks at Outerbridge Park in Saanich on the second 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 at 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>

Interested in broadening your knowledge?

UVic Continuing Studies would like share their latest newsletter with you. The link to the newsletter is: <https://secure.campaigner.com/CSB/public/archive.aspx?args=MTk0MDUyMzI%3d>

A Guide to Bird Calls of Southern Vancouver Island (CD and booklet set) 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. But 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

In Bloom 2017

Saturday April 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Nature Conservancy Canada would like to invite you to In Bloom 2017. Come and experience the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve at the height of its beauty at this family-friendly nature festival. For information, contact Lesley at lesley.neilson@natureconservancy.ca or toll free: 888.404.8428 x 245.

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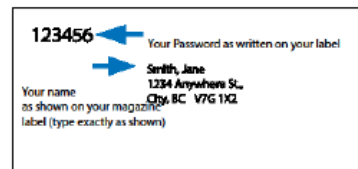
As VNHS members, you are also members of BC Nature, and will all be getting the magazine from our provincial

umbrella organization as well as the VNHS bi-monthly newsletter. To receive a full-colour pdf version of the **VNHS newsletter** instead of a paper copy, email your VNHS membership director at members@vicnhs.bc.ca

If you wish to switch to the electronic version (pdf) of the **BC Nature magazine**, please email manager@bcnature.ca. The office sends out a quarterly email notification when the most current magazine is uploaded to the website. If the finished magazine file is less than 3.5MB, it will be included as an attachment in the notification. You are free to unsubscribe to this notification at any time. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the magazine—available free at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

On the BC Nature website, you can access the most current **BC Nature** magazine in the “members only” area <http://www.bcnature.ca/member-login/> under publications. You can find many years of past editions here as well.

Below is a mock-up of an address label, normally found on the back of the **BC Nature** magazine you receive via Canada Post. At the top left-hand corner is a number—this five to seven digit number is your password. Please note that your name is written surname then first name, or in some cases, with hyphenated surnames and first names. This is your access name. Please key in exactly as it is shown on your label, including punctuation, spaces, etc. If you do not have a current edition on hand to get this information, please email the BCN office manager@bcnature.ca and they will send you the information:



The e-version of the magazine is full colour and can be viewed on tablets or computers where you are able to view a PDF.

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)— Advance Notice

VNHS has partnered with Rocky Point Bird Observatory and CRD Parks to bring this event to Victoria since 2010. IMBD is an annual international event that celebrates bird migration. IMBD 2017 will celebrate the importance of the places and habitats where they stop to rest and refuel. Victoria's 2017 IMBD will be held at Elk/Beaver Lake Park on Saturday, May 13, and will be filled with fun activities for people of all ages. Stay tuned for more info.

And... a beautiful poster for this event (featuring 11 species of migratory birds) is available through Environment for the Americas <http://www.environmentamericas.org/shop/>

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/?page_id=1518 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 the Field Trip Coordinator Ben van Drimmelen. Many of you do interesting things either for fun or for work, and it would be great to share! See page two for email addresses and phone numbers.

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. If space allows, guests may participate 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 the Calendar page of the VNHS website (http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?page_id=1518) 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.

MARCH

.....

Sunday, March 5

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Looking for Signs of Spring

It should be feeling a lot like spring by this time with buds bursting open and most leaves starting to show, but it will still be challenging to identify many plants unless they are evergreen. We will wander the waterfront areas from Mount Douglas to Dallas Road to check for early flowers. Maybe the big-leaf maple will be starting to leaf out. The Orange-crowned Warbler likes to check for bugs about then and perfectly blends in with the new foliage and flowers. We'll stop by a spot to see if the salmonberry is out and maybe we can find a newly arrived Rufous Hummingbird checking out these flowers. Also hopefully the delicate satin flowers will be out in an area right near the water. We'll even try to see if some cactus still grows in between the cracks of a huge rock in one of the little known parks. It is probably

too early for the rare *Sanicula arctopoides* (which has the magical common name "Footsteps of Spring") but you'll know where it is so you check back in a couple of weeks. You never know what we'll find in a sheltered spot to give us a taste of what is to come. Bonus is that we can check out the water birds at the same time. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Mount Douglas parking lot off Cordova Bay Road near the washroom building. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, March 12

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Join seasoned naturalist Norm Mogensen on a waterfront walk where we'll discuss a myriad of topics from the diminishing habitat for ocean creatures to what the geology of the area means for the future. Check the VNHS website Calendar page for more details close to the date http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/?page_id=1518

Tuesday, March 14

NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

Stewardship for Local Species of Special Concern: Blue-grey Taildropper Slugs and Western Painted Turtles

Biologists **Kristina Ovaska** and **Christian Engelstoft**, working with Habitat Acquisition Trust (www.hat.bc.ca), will be sharing insights into the natural history, efforts towards conservation of, and research on two intriguing native species. Come to learn about the unexpectedly charismatic blue slug and Vancouver Island's turtle, as well as what's being done to better understand and protect these incredible animals in our region." We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Sunday, March 19

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Birding in Parksville

Come to see the spectacle of the annual Pacific Herring spawn. Massive numbers of sea ducks and gulls follow the herring in close to where we can observe the birds feeding on the herring roe. We can also enjoy the beginning of the congregation of Brant Geese in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area and vicinity. Bring a lunch and dress warmly as it is often chilly by the water. We will carpool and start from Victoria at 7:00 a.m. You must pre-register by contacting Agnes. First 9 people to sign up have the option of coming in her van. Others to carpool by pre-arrangement. Cost to come in the van or carpool with others will be about \$20.00 per person. Participants will be limited to minimize cars. Contact Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information and to register.

Tuesday, March 21

BOTANY NIGHT

Family feuds: impacts of the DNA revolution of the family tree of flowering plants

Throughout our history, humans have wondered at and relied upon the diversity of plants. Our drive to understand, organize and harness this diversity continues today and is the subject of large-scale international research programs. **Erica Wheeler** will explore recent developments in this quest and what we've learned about the evolution of flowering plants from the application of DNA sequencing technology. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, March 22

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Do West Coast Gray Jays Belong to a Different Species?

It is a little-known fact that the Gray Jays of the U.S. Pacific Northwest, including those living in a sliver of southwestern British Columbia and on Vancouver Island, were once considered distinct from the Gray Jays in the rest of North America. In addition to looking different, a recent U.S. study has shown they differ genetically and they may display different social behaviour as well. To find out if this suspicion is correct, **Dan Strickland** has come out to the Island to initiate a study that will settle the question. Strickland will explain how he has worked out the biology and ecology of Gray Jays in the east, and how he intends to go about applying his proven techniques to the jays on Forbidden Plateau. His findings could contribute to restoring west coast Gray Jays to the status they once held as a distinct species. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone welcome!

Come early to socialize! Presentation will follow announcements and a brief break. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Sunday, March 26

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Exploring Mary Lake Native Trees and Shrubs before Spring Flowers Burst Forth

One of the most exciting new properties to come under protection from development is Mary Lake in the Highlands. The lake sits in the midst of a 73-acre (30 hectare) parcel of carefully conserved and endangered Dry Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem. The property provides habitat for several mammals and a variety of reptiles and amphibians, as well as a diverse array of plant species. Lying between Gowlland Tod Provincial Park and Thetis Lake Regional Park, the Mary Lake property provides an important wildlife corridor between these two large areas of parkland and could provide future hiking trail connectors for humans as well. Bob McMinn, who has been involved with the preservation of the natural areas of the Highlands for many years, will be our guide. Check out the Greater Victoria Green Belt Society website www.marylakeconnections.ca for more details and also to find out how the purchase plans are moving along to protect this valuable property at last. We have partly chosen this time of year for our outing to challenge ourselves to identify the native shrubs and trees on the property. This is also a unique opportunity for those who like to enjoy the natural surroundings but have difficulty with challenging terrain. There are many gentle trails already in existence for us to follow, but good walking shoes will make your visit more comfortable. We will meet at the gate at 1772 Millstream Rd. at 10:00 a.m. To get there, follow the Trans-Canada Highway to the Millstream Rd exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Rd. This is just past the Finlayson Arm Rd. turnoff. Contact Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 if you need more information.

Monday, March 27

MARINE NIGHT

Coral Biodiversity and Climate Change

Danielle Claar, a PhD student and Vanier Scholar at the University of Victoria, will discuss the biology of coral reefs and the intimate symbiosis between coral and their symbiotic algae. She will talk about the causes and consequences of coral bleaching in the context of the 2014-2016 global coral bleaching event and specifically the 2015/16 El Niño event. Her research aims to understand how corals survive stressful events, and to learn how these "super-corals" will shape the future of coral reefs worldwide. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

APRIL

Sunday April 2

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Monthly Butterfly Outing

Join us on the first of the season's Butterfly outings! This outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will meet near the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Road) and decide where to go from there. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the main parking lot just north of the summit. The meeting time may change. Check website closer to the date for updates. Contact Gordon Hart at (250) 721-1264 or email him at butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca for more information.

Saturday, April 8

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Satin Flowers and Birds at Juan de Fuca

This outing is a chance to look at the early satin flowers and other emerging spring flowers as well as enjoy the birds that are telling us that spring is here at last. The shooting stars, blue-eyed Mary, spring, monkey flowers, and fawn lilies should be in bloom now. It is also a great place to check out the birds so this trip will have some of each. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre (Westshore Parks & Recreation), 1767 Old Island Highway. We will start from the end of the parking lot nearest to town. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, April 9

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Leisurely Walk up Lone Tree Hill

This little knoll is a treasure trove of spring wildflowers. It is a bit early for the full diversity of species on this hill but it's fun to see which flowers are the early ones in the long progression of blooms that we enjoy in Victoria. We can certainly take in the fantastic views from this high viewpoint, as well as listen for birds such as the Orange-crowned Warbler singing his heart out. In a previous year, we were treated to great views of a Townsend's Solitaire at the top, so don't overlook a bird just because it looks like a robin from the back. The trail is a gradual climb but is at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Starts at 10:00 a.m. To get to the park, follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Rd exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Rd. Continue to the junction with Millstream Lake Rd. Keep left to continue on Millstream Rd to the park entrance on the right. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, April 11

NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Small packages, big egos—

Mesocarnivores of British Columbia

British Columbia is well known for its healthy populations of large carnivores, including Grizzly Bear, Black Bear, Grey Wolf and Cougar. Somewhat lesser-known small carnivores, however, are vital parts of all of our ecosystems and are key drivers of many ecosystems in the province. From grasslands to mountain tops, "mesocarnivores" help keep ecosystems chugging along by being important year-round consumers of small mammals and other prey wherever they occur. Come join **Rich Weir**, Carnivore Conservation Specialist with the Ministry of Environment, as he takes us on a tour of the wonderful world of mesocarnivores, focusing on the conservation challenges facing Wolverine, American Badger and Fisher in BC. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Friday, April 14

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Magnificent Wildflowers and Birds at Mill Hill

Enjoy a Good Friday visit to Mill Hill for an early spring show of wildflowers and listen for the good selection of birds as you climb through the varying habitats. Soak up the colours of spring that are just starting as the progression of wildflowers begins for another year. It's also a good place to check for birds as you look down over the tree canopy near the top. Note that the route is steep and also rough on the way down but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat.

Meet at the Mill Hill Regional Park information kiosk at 10:00 a.m. To get to the park, take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right at the traffic light at Six Mile Road just before the bridge, then left on to Atkins Road. Turn left at the four-way intersection to continue on Atkins Avenue that leads to the park entrance on the right. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Saturday, April 15 to Sunday, April 23

VICTORIA BUTTERFLY COUNT WEEK

We are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers so get out your field guides. Contact Gordon Hart (count coordinator) at (250) 721-1264 or butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca if you would like to help out.

Saturday, April 15

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 4)

Enjoy all that Jocelyn Hill has to offer

Join us to enjoy the wildflowers and birds! Our goal is to see the gold stars in bloom but we will not be disappointed if we miss them as there is an amazing array of other delights and great panoramic views from the ridge. We might see a Golden Eagle on the ridge or hear or see a Sooty Grouse. Please note the trail is steep and challenging but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Bring a lunch. Meet there at 9:00 a.m. To reach the start, follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Rd exit. Follow signs to the Highlands and you will be on Millstream Rd. Continue to the junction with Millstream Lake Rd. Keep left to continue on Millstream Rd. Go past Lone Tree Hill Park on your right and watch for Emma Dixon Rd on the left. The trailhead is on Millstream Rd just past that intersection. Park on the right-hand-side of the road. Call Rick at (250) 885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca for more information.

Sunday, April 16

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2/3)

Early Spring Flowers and Birds at Gore and Oak Haven Parks

What better way to spend Easter Sunday morning than in these two delightful Saanich Peninsula parks with their exquisite spring wildflowers and plenty of birds. To allow more people to partake in the level section in Gore Park, we will do this park first. Oak Haven Park has a climb to the summit but it is not terribly strenuous or long. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the entrance to Gore Park. To reach Gore Park, proceed along Benvenuto Dr towards Butchart Gardens. Turn right on Amwell Dr. Follow Amwell Dr to reach Greig Rd. Turn right to the park entrance on the right. We usually walk to Oak Haven from Gore Park and return. Call Rick at (250) 885-2454 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca for more information.

Monday, April 17

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

Two for One Bargain—Bear Hill and Horth Hill Wildflowers

Enjoy Easter Monday by having two treats in one day. It is hard to fit all the good wildflower areas into the short period when they are at their peak so we'll double up. Despite the close proximity of these two areas, the flora is quite different. Bear Hill is more woody and doesn't get as much sun. If we are lucky, we'll see some pink fairy slippers there. Horth Hill is sunnier and drier. The chocolate lilies should be great there. Note that both trails are gradual climbs but will be taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. Bring a lunch and we'll eat between walks. Meet at Bear Hill at 10:00 a.m. To reach the starting point, proceed north on Pat Bay Highway #17, go past Elk

Lake on your left and then turn left at the traffic light at Sayward Road. Follow the road back around and go right on to Brookleigh Rd. Follow Brookleigh across the north end of Elk Lake. Turn right at the stop sign on to Oldfield Road. Then right on to Bear Hill Road and continue along Bear Hill Road to the parking area. To get to Horth Hill, return on Bear Hill Road to a right on to Oldfield Road, right on Keating Cross Road, left at traffic light on to Central Saanich Rd, keep right on to Saanich Cross Road, then right on to Island View Rd and left on to Pat Bay Highway #17 at traffic light. Continue north to the Wain Rd exit. Follow Wain Rd west, then turn right on Tatlow Rd to the park entrance on the right. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Tuesday, April 18

BOTANY NIGHT

From Alpine to Grassland—Plant of Waterton Lakes National Park

Ian Cruickshank and **Ali Jones** spent the summer of 2015 working as Ecological Monitoring Technicians at Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. This park, only 500 km² in size, contains over 1000 vascular plant species, as well as some spectacular landscapes and diverse wildlife. You'll see some beautiful photos of Waterton's plants as we take you on a tour of the flora across the park's ecosystems, from grasslands, to snow forests, to the dry alpine ridges that harbour many rare species such as pygmy poppy (*Papaver pygmaeum*) and Jones's columbine (*Aquilegia jonesii*). There just might be the odd non-plant surprise to look forward to, as well! Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Saturday, April 22

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Birding at Rithet's Bog

Join us as we enjoy a birding walk along the level loop trail around the bog. Rails and Anna's Hummingbirds, wetland-loving warblers, swallows, migrating Teal and other ducks are all possibilities. There should be a number of early migrants around now as well as the considerable resident population of birds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. along Dalewood Lane (just off Chatterton Way) at the northwest corner of the Bog. Leader is Marie O'Shaughnessy. Call Marie at (250) 598-9680 or email Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca for more information.

Sunday, April 23

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

The Wild Side of Thetis Lake Park

This park is overflowing with wildflowers, common and uncommon. Pause to enjoy the ferns, lichens, mosses and other supporting cast as well. Our walk will only cover a small fraction of this fantastic park. We hope this visit encourages you to come again on your own. The trail is a gentle climb but taken at a leisurely pace to enjoy the habitat. To reach the park, take the Colwood exit off the Trans-Canada Highway and follow the Old Island Highway for a short distance. Turn right at the traffic light at Six Mile Road just before the bridge. Continue on this road when it goes under the highway and you will come to the Thetis Lake Park parking lot. Meet at the main parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

Monday, April 24

MARINE NIGHT

The Hidden World of Whales

Most whale behaviour is conducted underwater out of sight where

they employ 'invisible' acoustics as their principle means of finding food, navigating, and communicating. Dr. Rianna Burnham is a post-doc in the Whale Lab at UVic who is exploring how ecology and acoustic studies can be used to 'see' into the lives of some of the largest animals on the planet. Bones, photographs, video, recordings, and results from cutting edge research will be used to aid the discussion. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Rm 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Wednesday, April 26

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Watching Birds Naked

Are birds really "bird-brains"? Do they taste "good"? Can eagles really see farther than humans? Why are most owls as blind as we are on a dark night? How does a kestrel use ultraviolet light to catch mice? Which birds smell the best? These are just some of the questions that **Dr. David Bird** will answer in his humorous but educational slide show on the sensory ecology of birds. Remove those beautiful coats of feathers and you'll discover that birds have some of the most incredible physical and physiological adaptations to keep them in tune with their environment and with each other. Once you've heard Dr. Bird's talk, you'll never look at birds in the same way again. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building at the University of Victoria. Everyone welcome! Come early to socialize! Presentation will follow announcements and a brief break. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

Saturday, April 29

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

26th Annual Camas Day

For the past 26 years, the Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society and the Victoria Natural History Society have co-sponsored this event in Beacon Hill Park. Each year, there is a wide choice of hourly walks starting with Birding at 7 a.m. till early afternoon. Themes such as Birds, Wildflowers, Archaeology, First Nations culture and other aspects of the Garry Oak Habitat will be covered. Final subjects and leaders are not yet confirmed but you can check the Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society website <http://www.friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca/> now for the typical schedule and talks. The website will be updated as soon as this year's talks are finalized. For further information, email info@friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca or call 250-592-6659.

Sunday, April 30

FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

Royal B.C. Museum Native Plant Garden Tour

Many Victoria residents do not even know of the existence of the B.C. Native Plant Garden on the museum grounds. This was planned and established in 1968 by T. Christopher Brayshaw (who passed away a couple of years ago at age 95). Many botanists associated with the museum continued the collection of plants and tried to make sure the garden was properly maintained but it fell to a number of volunteers to keep it up in these austere times. The garden is laid out in the different vegetation zones of B.C., and it has been a challenge to keep some of these plants going in our climate. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the totem pole at the east side of the garden. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.



26th Annual Celebration of the Garry Oak Habitat Camas Day

Saturday April 29, 2017

Save the date so you don't miss this full day of natural history walks! For the past 26 years, the Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society and the Victoria Natural History Society have co-sponsored this event in Beacon Hill Park. Each year, there is a wide choice of hourly walks, starting with Birding at 7:00 a.m., till early afternoon. Themes such as Birds, Wildflowers, Archaeology, First Nations culture and other aspects of the Garry Oak Habitat will be covered. Check the Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society website **friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca** now for the typical schedule and talks. The website will be updated as soon as this year's talks are finalized. For further information, email **info@friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca** or call **250-592-6659**.

