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# The Victoria NATURALIST

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*Cover Image:* Lions on the hunt, painted 33,000 years ago in Chauvet cave, southern France (see article page six). *Photo:* Sid Tafler. (Image cropped).

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

September is often about beginnings—so many things start after a summer break—school, hockey, choir rehearsals, and of course VNHS presentation nights! This year, there are some fascinating and unusual topics to choose from—check out the listings in the calendar. Oh, and while you are reading through, choose a field trip or several to enjoy! More “beginnings” include continuing education courses at UVic in September, and Beginning Birding classes offered by Rocky Point Bird Observatory starting in October. The Bulletin Board and Calendar are chock full of great opportunities to experience natural history in many ways.

Articles included in this issue range from turtles to owls, flowers to fish (well, sea slugs...), and as the cover image shows, also include a fascinating look at how humans portrayed the wildlife around them thousands of years ago. Please read the Message from the Board describing some ideas and activities about which we would value your opinion. And don't forget to join us at the annual BBQ after Hawk Watch on September 29.

A fascinating tidbit in the Times Colonist recently: “Russian cosmonauts flung tiny satellites into orbit Wednesday and set up an antenna for tracking birds on Earth.” Four nano-satellites were released from the International Space Station as part of a German-led, animal-tracking project known as Icarus, short for International Co-operation for Animal Research Using Space. The antennae was installed on the space station, apparently an ideal “perch” compared with a typical satellite. Researchers hope to learn more about where the animals migrate, how they grow up and how they can survive. The project will start out tracking blackbirds and turtledoves already outfitted with small GPS tags, then move on to other songbirds, fruit bats and bigger wildlife, such as ear-tagged gazelle, jaguars, camels and elephants, and leg-band tags for larger birds such as storks. Wonders of technology!!

Sadly, this issue is also about endings...we say goodbye to two amazing people, David Stirling and Moralea Milne (see pages 8 and 12 respectively). Both, in their own ways, were strong advocates of conserving our natural world and enjoying it through restoration efforts, bird watching, and other pursuits. They will both be sorely missed

*Gail Harcombe*

# A Message from Your Board

Members of the board held a strategy session in July, and discussed a number of things that will likely be of interest to you as members. Among them were the use of Vertical Response to give email notice of coming presentations and field trips. For those of you that opted to get these, we would like you to let us know how things are going—if you are currently receiving them and if you would like to continue to do so.

A topic that warranted a more detailed conversation was succession planning. Firstly, our wonderful Bill Dancer will be retiring from being the co-leader of the Schools program that he has shared with John Henigman for so many years. So many children have benefitted from these programs and Bill's delightful way of sparking their interest in nature. We will be looking for volunteers to help at the school programs and possibly to assist in organizing—let us know if you are interested. Secondly, as you know, we hold four presentation nights each month, September to April, and each

of them has a host for the evening. What you may not know is that these wonderful people take on the task of finding the amazing speakers...we will be looking for some new hosts and planners in the near future, so please give it some consideration.

We sometimes get asked about restoration or other “active” projects, so the board had some discussion about this. Partnering with other conservation groups, putting on workshops (e.g., building nest boxes), and a variety of other ideas were considered. One idea was for the VNHS to act as a “Conservation Clearing House”—an umbrella that put groups and volunteers in contact with one another, and perhaps posted information on our website. Let us know YOUR ideas on projects that VNHS could take on.

Lastly—to all of you, don't forget to join us at Hawk Watch at Aylard Farm, East Sooke Park, on September 29 this year (see ad below), and stay for the member BBQ—yummy food... including cake! Contact VNHS at [members@vicnhs.bc.ca](mailto:members@vicnhs.bc.ca)



*You are invited!*

VNHS SEPTEMBER SOCIAL

Saturday, September 29, 2018  
3:00 p.m. following Hawk Watch

Join CRD Parks and the Victoria Natural History Society for Hawk Watch and then join your fellow VNHS members for a BBQ get-together at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Park. Members are welcome to a free smokie (veggie option available), beverage, cake, and camaraderie! Bring a lawn chair.

To RSVP, phone Gail: 250-652-3508  
or email: [gail.harcombe@gmail.com](mailto:gail.harcombe@gmail.com) by September 21, 2018

**A reply is only necessary if you plan to come—please specify number of smokies (regular or veggie).**

# A Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in British Columbia

By Luke Halpin<sup>1</sup> Gavin Hanke,<sup>2</sup> and JA Seminoff<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 1.** Photograph of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) found on 22 February 2015, 45 nm west of Tofino, British Columbia. Photo: L Halpin.

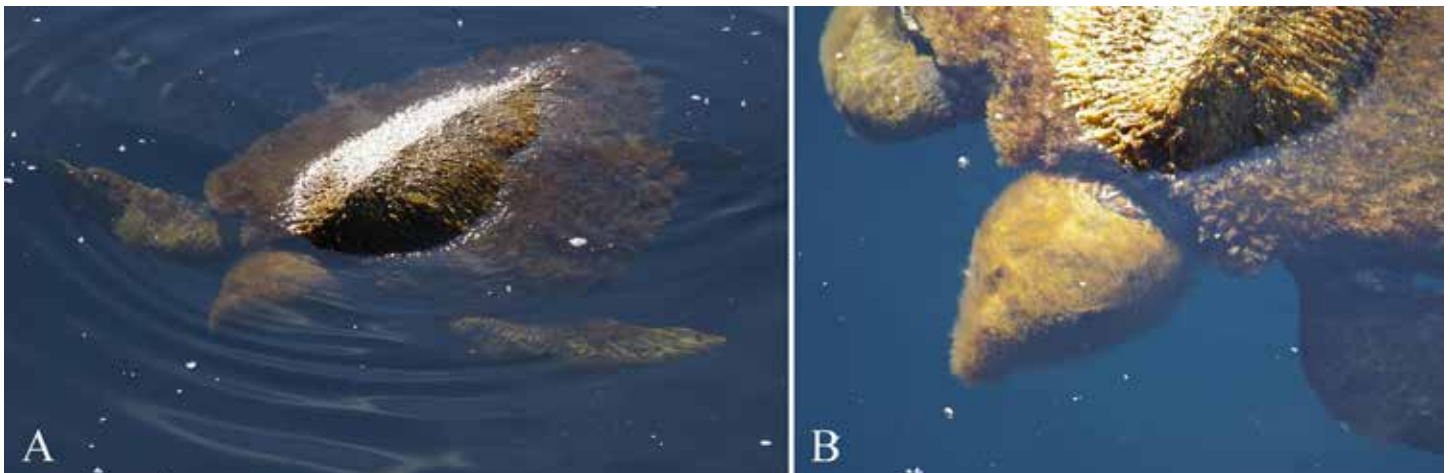
People have reported Olive Ridley Sea Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and Loggerhead Sea Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in B.C. waters, but until recently, no specimens were known, nor were there photographs to support field identifications. In the Atlantic Ocean, Loggerheads are known to stray north along the east coast of Canada off the edge of the continental shelf (McAlpine et al. 2007). In the eastern North Pacific, Loggerheads have been recorded twice—from the Gulf of Alaska and off the coast of Washington State (Hodge and Wing 2000; McAlpine et al. 2004; and Matsuda et al. 2006). Since these eastern Pacific observations bracket British Columbia, it's not surprising that McAlpine and others (2004) suggested that Loggerheads would appear in B.C.

Luke Halpin observed a sea turtle on February 22nd, 2015, about 45 nm west of Tofino, during pelagic seabird and marine mammal research aboard the Canadian Coast Guard ship John P Tully. The turtle was first spotted floating at the surface approximately 300 m from the ship. The turtle's head and shell was covered with algae (and maybe some pesky invertebrates), and it submerged as the ship approached (but not before photographs could be taken).

The carapace scutes were completely hidden by the algal growth, and this eliminated many of the features usually used to identify sea turtles. Carapace shape alone indicates that this was not a Green Sea Turtle, but Loggerheads and Olive Ridley Sea Turtles both have heart-shaped shells.

**Figure 2.** Photographs (A) of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) showing the midline ridge along the carapace, and (B) scales on the nape. Photos by L Halpin.

**T**he Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) is known to stray north into British Columbian and Alaskan waters during periods of warming, especially during el Niño events. Some get trapped in cold water in late autumn and tend to strand either dead or incapacitated, probably from hypothermia (or cold stunning as described by McAlpine et al. 2007). In contrast, Leatherback Sea Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) do fine in our cold water and range along the entire British Columbia coastline, north to the Gulf of Alaska (Matsuda et al. 2006; McAlpine et al. 2007; Spaven et al. 2009). Until 2011, these two species were the only marine turtles known from B.C. with certainty.







**Figure 3.** A Google Earth image showing where the sea turtle was found relative to Vancouver Island.

However, on the back of the head we identified four narrow parietal scales and an interparietal scale which lacked algal cover. These scales were a red-brown colour with lighter cream to yellow margins. The combination of shell shape, and the red-brown parietal scales and interparietal scale indicates that the turtle found in 2015 was a Loggerhead (see Matsuda et al. 2006, and Lee et al. 2014 for features used to identify *Caretta caretta*). The scales on the nape of an Olive Ridley are grey-olive, yellow-brown to olive-brown, and the margins of the large scales on the nape are far less conspicuous. Halpin et al. (2018) have published this first confirmed Loggerhead Sea Turtle in Canadian Pacific waters in the journal *Northwestern Naturalist*.

Loggerheads are found throughout temperate, subtropical, and tropical waters of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. In the North Pacific, they nest almost exclusively in Japan (Kamezaki and others 2003). Upon hatching, they swim to the central and eastern North Pacific (Bowen and others 1995; Kobayashi and others 2008). After several years foraging in these regions, Loggerheads return to their natal nesting beaches in Japan for reproduction and remain in the western Pacific for the remainder of their life cycle (Kamezaki and others 2003). The Loggerhead found in 2015 was a young individual, estimated at 2/3rds of a metre from snout to the trailing end of the carapace, and had strayed too far north during its eastern Pacific expedition.

The presence of the Loggerhead in British Columbia increases the province's marine turtle diversity to four species. As suspected for all previous occurrences of Green Sea Turtle and Olive Ridley, this Loggerhead probably strayed north in a plume of warm water and then got stranded when it hit 10°C water. Most sea turtles that wash onshore dead or moribund are found in autumn to early winter. The presence of this animal in February is unusual, and we have no idea whether it survived.

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# Glimpses at the Lost World of Our Ice Age Ancestors

By Sid Tafler

Photo by author



Lions on the hunt, painted 33,000 years ago in Chauvet cave, southern France.

**I**t stands to reason that people whose lives depend on it are the closest observers of the natural world. In the last Ice Age that covered Europe, Paleolithic hunters shared the continent with herds of bison, aurochs, rhinoceros, mammoths and as well as lions, leopards and other predators. Today, we can witness their intense familiarity and awareness of the natural world due to the remarkable preservation of the paintings they created on the walls of deep mountain caves.

They worked with charcoal, a brush, a finger, by spitting or blowing pigments from their mouths, or by stump painting, spreading their paints with the hand or a piece of hide. And they used the surfaces of the cave interiors to advantage, turning a protruding rock into a hump on a bear's back, a crumbling wall into the head of a horse.

Nearly all the animals portrayed are long extinct, providing us with images of life forms we will never see—male cave lions without manes, rhinoceros with a black stripe around the torso. Some of the creatures are portrayed with stunning life-like realism, others in more abstract form, or even playful cartoon-like innocence. And a few works record a narrative of behavior the hunters observed and then recalled in the caves, faintly lit by torches and oil lamps: animals in pairs engaged in courtship

behavior, a pride of lions chasing their prey across the plain, two rhinoceros at battle, their horns clashing.

Like signatures on modern art works, the artists left personal marks on the walls—hand and palm prints and recurring symbols that may represent place names or the insignia of their tribes. Some images they created suggest a purpose beyond artistic expression—an attempt to influence supernatural forces to deal with everyday issues such as hunting, healing, death and the afterlife. Various engraved or sculpted human/animal composite creatures may represent mythical figures or shamans engaged in rituals. And deep inside Chauvet cave in France, a bear skull was left on the surface of a boulder resembling an altar, bringing to mind bear cults still practiced in modern times.

The Paleo-art of Europe represents an artistic tradition that persisted for 25,000 years, with some variation but a unity of style, theme and subject matter. This may have reflected a relative stability of a way of life that continued for millennia with similar tool kits, hunting techniques and tribal systems, in sharp contrast to the lightning-speed changes of modern culture.

See this issue's Calendar (page 20) for information about the presentation on the art of the Ice Age at Natural History Night on October 9, 2018.



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# In Memoriam: Dave Stirling, Naturalist Extraordinaire, 1920-2018

By Alan MacLeod



Left: Stirling at 87. Deeply into his ninth decade David is a role model for those of us who abide by the notion that life is what you make it.

Below: Rocky Point 1983. The pals—Satterfield, MacLeod, Whittington, Stirling, Hosford—pause for a wee dram during a day of prime birding at the southern extremity of Vancouver Island. Bruce enjoys the scene as Harold plays the clown.



**D**avid Stirling, the walking embodiment of what the word naturalist is all about, has departed this world. David died at Victoria August 11, nine months into his 98th year.

The initial glue in my friendship with Dave was birds and birding; in time the friendship grew to encompass much more, but birds provided a very good start to a friendship that endured forty years. We met in the late 1970s. I was a fairly recent arrival in British Columbia and had noticed soon enough that the birds of south Vancouver Island were in many cases very different from the ones I'd grown used to in my native Nova Scotia. I fell for birding, and fell hard. To the extent I could I devoted every daylight hour on the weekend to discovering the birds of the Island. I made three great friends—Harold Hosford, Ron Satterfield and Dave

Stirling—every one of them a serious birder of long standing, and sought to learn all I could from these three wise men. All three would remain my friends ever after.

Soon enough I fell victim to a peculiar kind of madness, the birding Big Day, an event in which three or four otherwise sensible people embark on a crazed rush to find as many kinds of birds as can be squeezed into a 24-hour period. It was in early May, about 1980, that Dave and I teamed up for our first-ever Big Day. We managed to list a hundred species in the inaugural try. Dave thought a hundred was a pretty good result. I thought we could do better. Before the next effort I told the late Peggy Goodwill—operator of the Rare Bird Alert at the time—that Stirling, Bruce Whittington and I would mount another Big Day effort the next day. I also told Peggy

that we would get 120 species. Dave was appalled, both at my brazenness and at the difficulty we would have in reaching that number. We got 121.

The next time, Stirling and Hosford joined me for another three-man effort. It was a glorious start: by about 1 p.m. in the afternoon we were already at 126 species, with nearly nine hours of daylight left. Visions of 135 species, 140—maybe even more—danced in my head. Then an insurrection erupted: Dave and Harold demanded we stop for lunch. I was horrified—and resisted. To no avail. We stopped for lunch. They each ordered a beer, then another. After the second beer the Big Day went right off the rails. They decided that half a Big Day was plenty enough: they quit on me. Great as my regard was for them both, I fired them on the spot. In future years Ron Satterfield and Bruce Whittington took their place and that trio eventually pushed the Big Day

tally to the mid-130s. But to this day I remain convinced that had Harold and Dave persevered we would have set a south Island mark for the ages.

As time passed the parameters of my friendship with Dave expanded greatly. We had more than birds in common: we both liked travel, books, history and politics. Not everyone does, but Dave and I also liked to argue, especially about politics. We would meet a few times a year—often at Swan's pub—to talk about our favourite things. Dave would call me a pinko, a leftie. I would call him something else. I like to think that over the years each of us forced the other to sharpen his arguments but I doubt that any of our many political rows resulted in either of us changing the other's mind. Happily, we remained friends.

Dave grew up in the wilds of the Athabaska country of



northern Alberta. He lived his boyhood in a log cabin with his parents, brother and sisters. The family survived on what they could gather, grow, trap and hunt. Young Dave spent most of his days outdoors, summer and winter. It was in those days in the wild of the Athabaska that he became a lifelong naturalist.

While still a teenager, in 1939, a war broke out. Dave enlisted in the Canadian Army. With three square meals a day, a comfortable mattress, and a roof over his head that did not leak, he decided he must be about as lucky as anyone could possibly be. He liked his time in the Army, and the officers liked what they saw of Private Stirling: he was offered a chance to take officer training. He graduated from Sandhurst and earned his lieutenant's commission. Best of all, he survived the war and returned to Canada unscathed.

In the mid-1950s he embarked on the adventure of a lifetime, crossing Australia by motorcycle with his wife Ruth. After that he arrived in Vancouver Island and played a key role in establishing B.C. Parks interpretation programs. He gave any number of young people an opportunity to learn about the natural world and to pass on what they'd learned to park users. For many of these young folks, their experience under Dave Stirling was life-altering: their summers as park interpreters would set them on a life course in natural history and science.

Dave eventually retired but his love of nature, adventure and travel never diminished. Even into his 90s Stirling traveled the world in search of beautiful wild places—and new birds. He continued to build his life list.

I made a point of seeing Dave just a day or two before departing in June for my summer place in Cape Breton. He had failed a good deal but I was struck that his love of nature remained as strong as ever. We spent an hour in the shade of his front deck, looking skyward for birds and other things that pass more slowly: clouds. Among all the other facets of nature that fascinated and absorbed him Dave left ample time for studying and contemplating clouds.

A core bias of mine is that whether we're aware of it or not, we all feel a duty to make something of our human possibilities. In my life I have known only a handful of people who have done as worthy a job of meeting that duty as did David Stirling.



The Great Stirling. Dave enters his 90th year in a few days but with a running start he still leaps over tall bird blinds in a single bound.



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# HAT's "Calling all Habitat Guardians" campaign a phenomenal success!

By Ashlea Veldhoen, Habitat Acquisition Trust



Habitat Acquisition Trust recently called for support for the creation of a new covenant on a large parcel of private land in the Highlands. This covenant would ensure the conservation of valuable wildlife habitat between Gowlland Tod and Thetis Lake parks, and create a permanent corridor for wildlife, essential for those that depend on connected, contiguous habitat in order to survive.

Part of our **Land Protection** program, our **Habitat Guardians** campaign was a tremendous success. Ending on July 31st, we can now proudly announce that thanks to the generous support of our Habitat Guardians donors, we were able to meet and exceed our goal of \$10,000—enough to cover the basic costs of creating a conservation covenant. Specifically, donations to our Habitat Guardians campaign garnered **\$18,650**—or, 86.5% more than our original goal! The additional funds support habitat assessments, planning, and legal costs associated with creating a new covenant. We are thrilled and truly humbled by the incredible support we have seen for land protection on Vancouver Island. We hope to see this support continue and grow into the future.



Wildlife on the island is continually faced with both natural stressors like predators and competition for resources, and non-natural stressors, such as habitat loss due to human development. As habitat is removed, wildlife is forced to move into smaller and smaller areas of habitat—increasing competition for resources. Faced with this threat, some may be unable to find the resources necessary to survive. That's why it is more important than ever to ensure that we are strategic in our land protection goals. By connecting and maximizing the size and number of protected natural areas throughout the region, HAT's work is helping to ensure that our natural systems are protected for generations to come.

Though this year's Habitat Guardians campaign has closed, **our work is not finished.** HAT still need your support in order to continue protecting nature on south Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands. As a non-profit whose primary method of land protection is through conservation covenants with private land owners, we depend on the continuous support of local donors to strengthen our cause. As Victoria's local land trust, HAT currently holds 33 conservation covenants with private landowners throughout the Greater Victoria Area and actively monitors and manages 16. Monitoring and managing covenant lands requires significant time and effort, and we are continually in need of funding to carry on our work. If you are interested in supporting our Land Protection program, there are many ways you can do so. Please visit our website [hat.bc.ca/our-blog/protect-my-land](http://hat.bc.ca/our-blog/protect-my-land) for more details.

Our sincerest gratitude goes out to everyone who supported our efforts to protect land on Vancouver Island during this campaign. On behalf of nature on Vancouver Island, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

**Habitat Acquisition Trust**  
Currently protects over 5000 acres of natural habitat  
We need your help to protect nearly 100 acres more

**Become a Habitat Guardian - Donate today**  
Help us raise \$10,000 for land protection by July 31  
to protect this Douglas-fir forest with a new conservation covenant!  
Visit [hat.bc.ca/donate](http://hat.bc.ca/donate) or call 250-995-2428



# Cowichan River Trail

By Pauline Davis

Photos by author



California tea or Forest scurpea.

On Sunday June 10, 2018, nine naturalists braved the ups and downs of the Cowichan river trail with botanical discoveries in mind. Our chief objectives were to find Pojar and MacKinnons “oddballs” and the blue-listed *Rupertia physodes*. Thanks to one sharp eyed participant we saw a splendid group of barber striped candysticks, *Allotropa virgata*. One lonely pinesap, *Hypopitys monotropa*, and several very small ground cones, *Boschniaka* sp, were also found. Who knew that a purplish brown ground cone would look like a small pink rosebud when first emerging from the mossy ground. There were quite a few late spring flowers especially on the banks of the river which were covered in nodding onion, larkspur, red paintbrush, stonecrop, monkey flowers, chocolate lilies, tiger



Ground cone emerging.



Candysticks.

lilies and silverback luina. The woodland trails were home to pipsissewa, *Chimaphila menziesii*, pink wintergreen, *Pyrola asarifolia*, and Prince’s pine, *Chimaphila umbellata*. Finally we saw several clumps of the rare *Rupertia physodes* although this unprepossessing plant is probably more apply described as forest scurf pea rather than California tea.



Silverback luina.



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# In Memoriam: Tribute to Moralea Milne

By Paige Erickson-McGee and Wendy Tyrrell, Habitat Acquisition Trust



Camas Hill evening view.

**P**assionate, fiercely determined, and undoubtedly kind, Moralea holds a special place in the hearts of all of us at HAT. Her dedication to the conservation of nature and to her family were in the forefront of her every move. She inspired us to continue learning and challenging ourselves, and to embody her unwavering sense of fairness—to do what is right, even if the road is long. Moralea exemplified Walking your Talk, and we at HAT came to know her through the permanent protection of her land, Camas Hill.

Over the years, our staff would join Moralea for a walk around Camas Hill; our duty as a covenant holder became a joyful and educational hike to look forward to each spring. In addition, Moralea and HAT hosted many Scotch broom pulls over the years, in order to improve habitat for the rare species that called Camas Hill home. As an avid naturalist and photographer, with a keen eye for Lepidoptera, she inspired

many with her wonderful photos and the natural history of butterflies and moths and their relationship and dependence on native plants.

Her achievements are many...She shared her enthusiasm for the natural environment by co-founding the Metchosin Foundation, a unique non-profit charity that has supported more than a few private land conservation efforts in Metchosin and Langford. In addition, Moralea co-founded the Metchosin Talk and Walks—coordinating over 100 presentations regarding all themes of biodiversity and ecology with local experts for the community. She served on the Metchosin Council for 10 years and was key in facilitating the building of positive relationships between Council and the Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation. She was a key facilitator, coordinator and contributor to the Metchosin Biodiversity Project—co-hosting many Bioblitzes and Mycoblitzes. I have met many who know Moralea, and were impacted by her in a positive way, whether it be the Scouts or the use of her land to host volunteers each year, or the care and love she shared with her family. Moralea was dedicated to making Metchosin the best community it could be, and that was her character and spirit—to be dedicated, kind and a force for family, nature and community.

So it is with great sadness and heavy hearts that all of us here at Habitat Acquisition Trust must say goodbye to our dear friend Moralea Milne. We send our love and healing to her family, friends, and community. We are truly grateful for the knowledge and dedication of spirit she shared with us. She will be deeply missed.

*The intrinsic right of  
our native species to  
flourish has become  
of paramount  
importance to me.  
Restoration of an  
ecosystem to its  
original integrity and  
self-sustainability has  
a lot of parallels to  
raising our children to  
be productive,  
caring and self-  
sustaining adults.*

—Moralea Milne



Moralea Milne



# Field Trip Notes: Harling Point Happenings

By Tina Kelly  
Photos by author



Eighteen Scale Worm.

A mid-day field trip on a scorching June 17 may have tested our stamina but distraction from the heat is easy when faced with a low-tide to explore. Clambering around boulders, looking under rocks, tweezing aside seaweed, and peeking in cracks and crevices successfully exposed some interesting finds. Along with the more prominent rocky shore inhabitants—limpets, chitons, seastars, shore crabs—the keen eyes of participants spotted a few surprises requiring a follow up on identification. Here are a few—a snailfish (*Liparis sp.*), eighteen-scaled worm (*Halosydna brevisetosa*), and a stalked jelly (*Haliclystus sp.*). The latter is a surprise to many; instead of drifting about with ocean currents, this jelly is sedentary, attached to rocks, seaweed or in our case, surf grass. Thank you to everyone who came out and helped find interesting creatures.



Snailfish.



Stalked Jelly.

## Odds and Ends

### New Species Found...

It seems there are still many things to be learned about this planet we live on...the more we investigate, the more we find... and not just historical evidence, as shown by a recent paper in Mesoamerican Herpetology describing the discovery of what is thought to be a new species of *Celestus* (Squamata: Anguillidae) from western Panama. The paper by Lotzkat et al. 2016 (Mesoamerican Herpetology. Volume 3, No. 4), explains the research and discovery of the new taxon collected in the Reserva Forestal La Fortuna, about halfway between the localities of the Panamanian endemic *C. adercus* and the Costa Rican endemic *C. orobius*. The new form is most similar to these two species, but differs from them and all other Mesoamerican in scalation and coloration. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to see one if you visit that part of the world.

### Most Poisonous Toadstool

The yellowish-olive death cap (*Amanita phalloides*) is regarded as the world's most poisonous fungus. From six to 15 hours after tasting, the effects are vomiting, delirium, collapse and death. Among its victims was Cardinal Guilio de' Medici, Pope Clemet VII (1478-1534).

*The Victoria Naturalist March 1974*

### Currency Quiz

Canadian coins feature several animals. Using the clues below, name of the creature and the number of cents that coin is worth.

- This creature has long orange teeth that never stop growing. It also has a long flat tail that it uses as a paddle and to slap the water if danger is near.
- This creature can dive up to 60 m underwater. Its chicks will ride on its back. It has a long haunting call.
- This creature survives by eating lichen and may migrate very long distances in large herds.
- This creature hunts for seals on sea ice and can swim over 100 km.

### Fun Facts

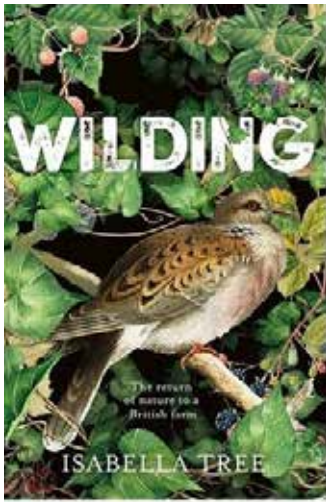
The largest of all ants is the general black ant (*Dinoponera gigantea*), found in the Amazon delta in South America. Females measure up to 1.3 inches overall.

*The Victoria Naturalist December 1973*

- Answers:
- Bever – Nickel (5 cents)
  - Common Loon – Loonie (100 cents)
  - Caribou – Quarter (25 cents)
  - Polar Bear – Toonie (200 cents)

# Book Review

By Ann Tiplady



**Wilding:**  
*The Return of Nature to a British Farm.*  
Isabella Tree. 2018.  
Picador Press.

This is the most important book I've read for years; it's a must read for anyone who cares about how we use the earth and the future of nature.

Isabella Tree writes clearly and engagingly about the rewilding of 3500 acres of

intensively farmed land in Sussex, forty-four miles from London. Tree, and husband Charlie Burrell, are driven to the painful decision to stop farming when they finally accept that the chronic financial hemorrhage of farming marginally productive clay soils can only be staunched by taking the land out of farming.

Now begins the story of the intentional rewilding of the farm. Tree weaves the story close to home, then ventures further afield, always returning to the farm, and specifically the fate of turtle doves on the farm and in Britain. With help from an impressive team of experts and advisors they embark on a grand experiment, including introducing large free-living grazing animals to mimic the wild megafauna that once shaped the British landscape.

The changes on the farm are phenomenal: once dead soils return to life; insects, small mammals, birds, return and thrive. Water systems improve: ponds filter and treat runoff entering the farm; flood management improves.

But nay-sayers are very unhappy with the changes. They accuse them of vandalism in breaking from the centuries' long tradition of farming this land. They don't like the way it looks. Fortunately, they have cheerleaders and advisors who help them through the negativity, and through the significant hurdles created by glacial government bureaucracies.

Tree always looks beyond the farm, at the larger picture. This is just one small recovering area in a much larger landscape that is dying.

And she discusses the financial realities of owning land, the government incentive programs that drive the system away from sustainability, and seemingly well-intentioned regulations that nonetheless are terribly destructive.

Exhaustively researched and engagingly written by a highly-skilled writer, this is a must read.

# Salish Sea Creatures

By Tina Kelly

Photo by author

When working with kids, species with food-themed common names are particularly fun to talk about—Sea Lettuce, Sea Cauliflower, Sea Cucumber, Sea Peach, Fried Egg Jelly, Strawberry Anemone and Peanut Worm to name a few. Immediately these names conjure up a mental picture of their appearance whether it is colour, size, texture or all three. Another one for the list is the Sea Lemon (*Doris montereyensis*). As you'd expect this nudibranch, or sea slug, is yellow—various shades from pale, almost white to orange—and appears textured like citrus rind. Nudibranch translates to “naked gills” and the gills can be seen on the dorsal surface (when submerged).

This Sea Lemon (nestled nicely under Sea Lettuce!) was spotted on Canada Day at Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Site. Sea Lemons are found attached to rocks, intertidally down to 50 metres deep and feed primarily on sponges. Look closely and you will see a mass of yellow eggs. Nudibranchs are hermaphrodites; Sea Lemons can lay 2,000,000 eggs but less than 1% is thought to survive to adulthood.



Sea Lemon.



# What Will 2018 Bring?



Northern Saw-whet Owl. Photo: Kim Beardmore.

**A**s Rocky Point Bird Observatory continues its annual songbird migration monitoring (July 21-18 October), we also are gearing up for owl banding starting mid-September. Last year was amazing...what will this year bring?

Excerpts from the final report for Northern Saw-whet Owl Migration Monitoring Project 2017 Report

**“A record-shattering total of 1848 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded in ... 2017 Nocturnal Owl Monitoring. This is 6% greater than the number of owls banded in 2016, and 154% greater than the previous record of 1195 from the year 2015.”**



RPBO's first Long-eared Owl. Photo: Patti Swan.



The Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) (NSWO) is thought to be simultaneously one of the most abundant and most difficult to observe owl species in the forests of southern Canada and northern USA. On the eastern half of the continent, a wide array of banding stations participating in Nocturnal Owl Migration Monitoring as a part of Project OwlNet provide an ever-increasing understanding of post-breeding movements in the autumn months. West of the Rocky Mountains, however, there are relatively few banding location contributing data, and thus our understanding of the species' fall movements is comparatively lacking. As one of a very limited number of Northern Saw-whet Owl banding locations west of the Rockies, the Rocky Point Bird Observatory contributes valuable data toward understanding the fall migration movements of western populations of NSWO.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory has been banding Northern Saw-whet Owls for the Nocturnal Owl Migration Monitoring Project for 15 years, commencing in 2002. Since the project first began, a total of 9527 NSWO have been banded. The goals of this project are to collect data on NSWO to contribute to a better understanding of the movements of the western population, and to increase public awareness of conservation issues regarding owls on Vancouver Island. The Rocky Point banding location is situated on the grounds of the Rocky Point Ammunition Depot, which is inaccessible to [unauthorized] visitors. The Pedder Bay banding location was added as a full-time banding location in 2014, with the goal of increasing visitor access to banding operations, and allowing more volunteers the opportunity to observe and



Western Screech-owl. Photo: Ann Nightingale.



Photo: Jody Wells.

gain owl banding and extraction experience. Having both banding locations allows for better monitoring of the species, the opportunity to note differences between the two sites, and testing of the suspected Rocky Point corridor.

A record-shattering total of 1848 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded in 3543 net hours during 2017 Nocturnal Owl Monitoring. This is 6% greater than the number of owls banded in 2016, and 154% greater than the previous record of 1195 from the year 2015. An additional 67 Northern Saw-whet Owls were recaptured as banded birds. A total of 39 Barred Owls were banded, representing a 463% increase from 2016. Four additional Barred Owls were recaptured. Rocky Point banded two new owl species this year: one Long-eared Owl and one Western Screech-Owl.

Northern Saw-whet Owls are believed to have a four-year population cycle synchronized with that of their most common prey species, deer mice. Based on that cycle, 2017 was forecast to be a crash year, with 2016 as a peak year. Instead, 2016 was a crash year with a record-low 97 owls captured between both Rocky Point and Pedder Bay, following record high years in 2014 and 2015. An incredible 1848 Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured in 2017, despite net closures due to Barred Owls and 3 nights lost to inclement weather. A record-breaking year in 2017 was unexpected, and may reflect both a very successful breeding season and possibly be the result of birds escaping the fires on the mainland of British Columbia.

For the full report, see [http://rpbo.org/reports/nswo\\_2017\\_both.pdf](http://rpbo.org/reports/nswo_2017_both.pdf)

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# Sign of Spring/Summer

Photos by Pauline Davis



Anna's Hummingbird on nest. Who could resist this lovely lady on her nest so skillfully decorated with *Platismatia*. She was spotted at Swan Lake on March 15th.



Anna's Hummingbird sitting on her nest at Swan Lake—the sequel: youngsters being fed and then growing too big for the nest.

## LETTERS

January 9, 2018

Re: Samuel Simco Bursary

I am writing to you to express my sincerest gratitude for your generosity in the form of an award. When I received the news from the financial office at the University of Victoria that I had been the successful recipient for the award I was ecstatic. This past semester I have been going through some especially difficult personal issues and this award has alleviated a great deal of the stress I was feeling. I am now able to fully contribute to science again with the project I am working on in the Juanes Fisheries Ecology Lab while also having the financial support to finish my studies in my last semester.

As a fourth year student at University of Victoria my educational journey has been studded with great moments of contributing to science. Whether it as citizen science with Rocky Point Bird Observatory or academic, with the Juanes Fisheries Ecology lab and Reimchen lab at UVic I have been lucky to be where I am in my undergraduate career to have the ability to access these opportunities. University of Victoria is also quite a special place, as an individual that had grown up on Vancouver Island I was drawn to the coastal way of living and learning about the people that have lived here thousands of years before me. These reasons and so many more are why I chose University of Victoria.

The courses I've had the pleasure of taking towards my

major are ecology-focused courses. Animal behavior and ichthyology have been my favourite courses to date. I have also been involved in the co-op program at UVic. This program assisted me in gaining employment as a Wildlife Technician with Okanagan Nation Alliance and the provincial government. With Okanagan Nation Alliance I developed strong technical and field skills on a diverse set of projects within wetland habitats consisting of bird and herptile monitoring. In 2016, I was working a western painted turtle monitoring project where daily duties consisted of activities such as predator monitoring, recapture of adult females via VHF-telemetry, visual surveys for neonates, juveniles and adults, nest surveys, and habitat assessments. With the provincial government I surveyed caribou, mountain goats, moose, elk, and stone sheep from helicopter.

Thank you again for your generosity, my graduation date of June 2018 would not have been possible without you. I plan to graduate and continue to work as a Wildlife Technician moving into a Wildlife Biologist position shortly after graduation.

My sincerest gratitude goes to...the Victoria Natural History Society.

Kindest regards,

Ms. K. Zelmer

Fourth Year Student, Biology

## 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](mailto:debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca)  
or call 604-924-9771 or 1-866-288-7878

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## BULLETIN BOARD

### CRD Walk: Birds of Beechey Head

**Saturday, Oct 6, 2018**

9:00 am—12:00 p.m. and beyond, if weather permits.

If you have not had enough with the Hawk Watch, come to this second event with expert birder Geoffrey Newell. This event is good for the beginner and advanced birder, alike. Meet at Aylard Farm parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Geoffrey will also be leading up top at Beechey Head during the Hawk Watch the weekend before, on Saturday, Sept. 29.

### Bird Watching for Beginners

Do you love birds? Want to know more about local species?

Rocky Point Bird Observatory volunteers will introduce you to the basics of birding, including equipment, identification and viewing techniques. Each week features a different location to view different types of birds. The course runs on Wednesday mornings from 10:00 am to 11:30am, October 10-31. The first session will be at Kings Pond. To register, visit [https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/saanich/Activity\\_Search/8462](https://ca.apm.activecommunities.com/saanich/Activity_Search/8462)

### CRD Parks Survey

CRD Parks is conducting a survey to seek input on what the public's priorities are for acquiring parklands, repairing and maintaining existing facilities and related aspects of park management over the next few years. The survey will be open until early October. Please provide your valuable input, and forward to others in our region: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-parks-funding-priorities>

### Outerbridge Park Sunday Bird Walks

Sundays September 9 and October 14 at 9 a.m.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory hosts guided bird walks at Outerbridge Park in Saanich on the 2nd Sunday of each month. The easy walks, suitable for people with mobility concerns, begin at the parking area off Royal Oak Drive. For dates and details, see <http://www.rpbo.org> Download the bird list [http://www.rpbo.org/outerbridge\\_park.pdf](http://www.rpbo.org/outerbridge_park.pdf)

### Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary Guided Bird Walks

Every Wednesday and Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Bring 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). Donations are appreciated.

For information, see <http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/adult-programs.php> Download the sanctuary bird checklist: <http://tinyurl.com/birdchecklist>

### University of Victoria Continuing Studies courses

The Ecology of Historic Gardens is three weekly sessions (September 15-29) exploring the value of historic gardens and the challenges faced by restoration projects. For more details, please see <https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/science-and-ecological-restoration/courses/the-ecology-of-historic-gardens> or contact Tusa Shea, Program Coordinator, [ecore Restoration@uvic.ca](mailto:ecore Restoration@uvic.ca)

**Exploring the Forest Canopy** is two classes and a field trip (September 20, 27, 29) that introduces participants to forest canopy ecology, and offers an opportunity to work with tree climbers during a field day. More opportunities to train as a tree climber will be discussed as well. For more details, please <https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/science-and-ecological-restoration/courses/exploring-the-forest-canopy> or contact Tusa Shea, Program Coordinator, [ecore Restoration@uvic.ca](mailto:ecore Restoration@uvic.ca)

### Photography Exhibition

**October 28 to November 10, 2018**

MACCA (Metchosin Arts and Cultural Centre Association) and MF (the Metchosin Foundation) have partnered to bring you *Metchosin, Naturally! Seasons through the Lens*, a photographic exhibition. The exhibition (comprised of the winners of the photography contest) will be at the Arts Centre and the Old School Gallery, 4495 Happy Valley Road,. The goal of this exhibition is to represent the biodiversity of Metchosin through photographic skills.

The exhibition features photos by both amateur and professional photographers, of all ages. For more information, go to [http://metchosinbiodiversity.com/menu\\_photocontest.php](http://metchosinbiodiversity.com/menu_photocontest.php)

### Get yours now! Limited number available...

A Guide to Bird Calls of Southern Vancouver Island (CD/booklet set) by Rocky Point Bird Observatory This guide provides an introduction to call notes of common birds found on southern Vancouver Island. Being familiar with the simpler sounds given year-round by songbirds of all ages and sexes could enhance your birding year-round! For information or purchase (discount for RPBO members), contact [rpbo@rpbo.org](mailto:rpbo@rpbo.org)

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## Welcome to New VNHS Members

Our Society grew by six new members since the last issue. Only the following has agreed to have their name published in this Welcome section.

### Veronica Goidanich

Fort McMurray

*Field trips, native species of both fauna and flora learning, environment restoration*

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**REGULAR MEETINGS** are generally held September–April on the following days: **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake 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](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 Claudia Copley. 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](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.

## SEPTEMBER

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### Sunday, September 2

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Monthly Butterfly Outing*

Join **Gordon Hart** on our monthly Butterfly outing. Each outing is intended to help us learn more about our local butterflies. This outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will start at the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Rd). Meet at 1:00 p.m. in the lot by the reservoir where we will have an initial look for butterflies and then decide where to go from there. Contact Gordon at (250) 721-1264 or [butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca](mailto:butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca) for more information.

### Saturday, September 8

#### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Waterfront Birding*

This is a good time to check out the waterfront for birds. **Marie O'Shaughnessy** will be the leader. Meet at Cattle Point (Beach Dr between Rutland Rd and Dorset Rd) at 7:30 a.m. We will wander around Cattle Point and make a few stops between there and Clover Point. Finally we'll end up at the Ogden Point Breakwater. There will be birds on the water as well as shorebirds to watch for. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.



## Tuesday, September 11

### NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT

#### *The Hills of Kumaon—Nature and Culture in the foothills of the Himalayas*

**Jay Rastogi** spent his childhood in the small village of Bhimtal in the Kumaon Hill of the Himalayas, where the influence of Human habitation is always visible on the landscape—most visibly in the terracing of the hillsides for agriculture, but also in the composition and structure of plant communities. In this presentation we join Jay as he revisits his old stomping grounds and shares photos of birds, plants and people. (This is the same area described by Jim Corbett in his books.) Program begins at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## Saturday, September 15

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

#### *Pedder Bay Birding*

Come join the VNHS Saturday Birding Group at Pedder Bay Marina. To reach Pedder Bay Marina, go out Rocky Point Rd and watch for a left on to Pedder Bay Rd. There is a big sign for the marina. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the grass parking lot behind the RV registration kiosk on the right. Rocky Point Bird Observatory operates a banding station there and several interesting birds have been reported from there. We will walk around the area for a couple of hours and after that you will have an opportunity to visit the banding operation if you are interested. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

## Saturday, September 15 to Sunday, September 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.

## Sunday, September 16

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)

#### *Urban Forest Walk—St Ann's Academy*

This will be another one in a series of walks to areas where the cover of vegetation consists of both native and introduced trees and shrubs. We need to be reminded that these areas of Urban Forest are very important to our wild creatures and to us. As we wander, we'll talk about why trees are important. The Academy was built between 1871 and 1910 as a school and convent by the Sisters of St Ann and it is now a National Historic Site. The grounds have been in existence since then and are now maintained by volunteers. We will have **Jennifer Howard-Gibbon** as our guide. She runs the volunteer garden program. We will concentrate on looking mainly at the trees, both the native and introduced varieties. Some of the introduced trees have been there for almost 100 years. For more details on the grounds, go to [http://www.stannysacademy.com/programs\\_and\\_tours/self-guided\\_tours.php](http://www.stannysacademy.com/programs_and_tours/self-guided_tours.php). Wear good walking shoes and bring binoculars if you wish. Best to park on the street but a small pay parking lot exists off Blanshard St. Address is 835 Humboldt St. Meet at the bottom steps of the main entrance by the large flower bed at 10:00 a.m. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

## Tuesday, September 18

### BOTANY NIGHT

#### *Mycorrhizas of Garry oak ecosystems*

Local mycologists know that if you want to find big, beautiful mushrooms, avoid Garry oak ecosystems. This is not because Garry oak ecosystems are any less dependent on fungi than the conifer forests adjacent to them but more likely because of the kinds of fungi involved. Join **Shannon Berch** as we explore the mycorrhizal fungi associated with Garry oak ecosystem plants, such as Garry oak itself, western buttercup, bunch grass, and shootingstar, and consider the role these fungi may play in restoration efforts. Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

## Monday September 24

### MARINE NIGHT

#### *Lessons Learned from Killer Whales*

Presenter **Jackie Hildering** is an acclaimed educator and co-founder of the Marine Education and Research Society based in Port McNeill. Many of you will remember her highly engaging and motivating presentation on Humpback Whales last September. Jackie will trace human social evolution with Killer Whales, discussing how these whales are powerful indicators of human value systems. It will be all about capacity for positive change and common solutions to socio-environmental problems. And yes, she will discuss the dilemma of naming them "Killer Whales" vs. "Orca". As an educator, avid diver and underwater photographer, Jackie is also known as "The Marine Detective" and is featured on Animal Planet's "Wild Obsession" series and in the BBC productions "New threat to Canada's Pacific humpback whales?" and "Ingenious Animals". See [www.mersociety.org](http://www.mersociety.org) and [www.TheMarineDetective.com](http://www.TheMarineDetective.com). Program begins at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## Wednesday, September 26

### BIRDERS' NIGHT

#### *Madagascar—Birds, Lemurs, Chameleons and more!*

**Rhys and Terry Harrison** made a month long tour of Madagascar in November 2017. The primary objective was to see and photograph the wonderful assortment of endemic birds on the island—291 species of which 99 are endemic. However, there is so much else to see and learn about this fascinating place. Join us to look at their images of birds, mammals, bugs, scenery and street life. You'll hear about some of the highs and lows of travelling in this remote and very poor country but also about the rewards that await the intrepid. We meet in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic at 7:30 p.m. Come early to socialize! Presentation begins after VNHS announcements and coffee. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

## Saturday, September 29

### FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 3)

#### *Hawkwatch*

The VNHS Saturday Birding Group will join the combined VNHS and CRD Hawkwatch event at East Sooke Park. To come to the vantage point above Beechey Head to watch for raptors, meet at the Aylard Farm parking lot at the end of Becher Bay Rd at 9:30 a.m. (earlier than when the crowds appear!). **Rick Schortinghuis** will lead the way up to the lookout (although the route will be

marked if you wish to come later) and Rick and others will be available up there to help you find those illusive raptors till about 3 p.m. The hike up to the viewpoint requires a 20-minute trek up a steep and rocky trail. Bring binoculars, water and perhaps a lunch if you plan to stay for the day. You can stay as long as you like and then return to the parking lot whenever you wish. If you do not want to make the trek up to the hill, there are good opportunities in the field near the parking lot to look for raptors as well. After 11:00 a.m. there will also be live raptor demonstrations and other activities and displays right near the parking lot as well. You may wish to stay for the BBQ for VNHS members following the main event at 3 p.m. but please pre-register for this (see ad elsewhere in the magazine for details on BBQ). Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

### **Sunday, September 30**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)**

##### ***Juan de Fuca Pelagic Birding***

We have once again hired the boat Fantasea II to go from Victoria Harbour out into the Juan De Fuca Strait and towards Race Rocks to find some of the pelagic species that feed there. We repeat this popular tour each year as it always turns up something to keep us interested in going again. We will follow the tide debris line that occurs between Victoria and Race Rocks as the currents cause an upwelling of nutrients from the bottom, resulting in the best feeding spots for the birds. Possible birds include shearwaters, murrelets, auklets, jaegers, Northern Fulmar, many species of gulls, phalaropes and other pelagics. We generally are able to go through Race Rocks to see close-up the variety of sea lions and seals who laze on the rocks there. We are sometimes treated to views of whales if they are in the area. There is room for 20 people. The cost is \$75.00 per person for VNHS members, \$95.00 for non-members. The trip is five

hours (9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.). Please book as soon as possible, by Sep 21 at the latest. First contact Agnes to reserve your spot. Then pay online (details when you register) or you can pay by cheque (address when you register). See more details about the trip at <http://vicnhs.bc.ca/fantasea.html> . Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 to reserve or if you need more information.

## **OCTOBER**

### **Sunday October 7**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)**

##### ***Monthly Butterfly Outing***

Join **Gordon Hart** on the last of the season's monthly Butterfly events. Each outing is intended to help us learn more about our local butterflies. This outing is weather dependent. It needs to be warm and sunny to make it worthwhile. We will start at the top of Mount Tolmie (off Cedar Hill Cross Rd). Meet at 1:00 p.m. in the lot by the reservoir where we will have an initial look for butterflies and then decide where to go from there. Contact Gordon at (250) 721-1264 or [butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca](mailto:butterflies@vicnhs.bc.ca) for more information.

### **Tuesday, October 9**

#### **NATURAL HISTORY NIGHT**

***In the deep past lie the answers to who we are and where we came from.***

Thirty-five thousand years ago, our ancestors created works of art on cave walls that reveal inquisitive minds in close observation of a world of natural abundance, a northern Serengeti of megafauna now lost to extinction. Writer **Sid Tafler** will share insights and images of this legacy of a long-lost world, when Ice Age hunters



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depicted these animals deep inside the darkest places on earth, often with stunning life-like realism achieved through advanced craft and technique. We meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone welcome. Please feel free to bring a friend. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

### **Saturday, October 13**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)**

##### ***Juan de Fuca Pelagic Birding***

See September 30 trip for details. Please book as soon as possible, by Oct 4 at the latest.

### **Tuesday, October 16**

#### **BOTANY NIGHT**

##### ***Theobroma cacao—A Botanical history.***

Join **David Mincey** of Victoria's own "The Chocolate Project" for an engaging and delicious look at the tropical tree which gives us chocolate. We'll examine the growth habits, pollination, propagation and cultivation of this most interesting tree. Then, we'll follow the complex path from harvesting ripe cacao to turning it into chocolate. We will also examine the role of cacao in societies from the early Mesoamerican through to the present day. And of course, there will be some chocolate to taste! Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

### **Saturday October 20**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 2)**

##### ***Birding at Viaduct Flats***

Come join the VNHS Saturday Birding Group at Viaduct Flats. Some birds will be back enjoying this area by now after the quiet summer season. As well as good birds on the water, there should be lots in the surrounding woods. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the viewing platform. This is near the intersection of Interurban and Viaduct. Contact Agnes at thelynns at shaw.ca or (250) 721-0634 for more information.

### **Wednesday, October 24**

#### **BIRDERS' NIGHT**

##### ***Birds on the Edge***

**Bruce Whittington**, author, naturalist, and founder of the Habitat Acquisition Trust, is returning to Victoria for October's Birders'

Night. Bruce's talk will focus on how birds negotiate the thin edge to survival on the western edge of our continent, and on how many species are sadly 'on the edge' in other ways. We meet in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic at 7:30 p.m. Come early to socialize! Presentation begins after VNHS announcements and coffee. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.

### **Sunday October 28**

#### **FIELD TRIP (LEVEL 1)**

##### ***SVIMS Annual Wild Mushroom Show—non-VNHS Event***

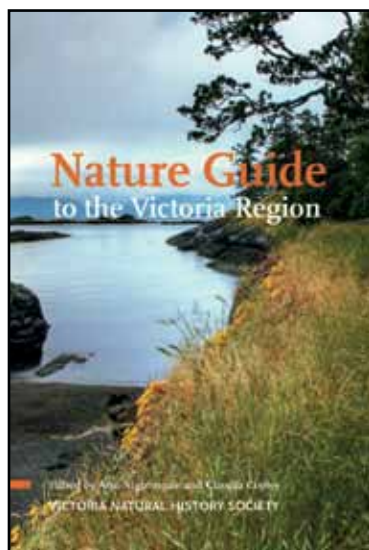
You may wish to attend the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society Annual Wild Mushroom Show. Location is at the Cordova Bay 55+ facility at 5238 Cordova Bay Rd (next to Cordova Bay Elementary School). There is lots of close parking. View edible, incredible and dangerous fungi. There will be speaker presentations throughout the day. Also probably mushroom growing kits and mushroom books for sale. Bring your mushrooms to be identified by friendly and knowledgeable experts. Admission by donation. Open 10 a.m.—4 p.m. More details at [www.svims.ca](http://www.svims.ca).

### **Monday October 29**

#### **MARINE NIGHT**

##### ***Fish and motile invertebrates of First Nations' clam gardens***

**Morgan Black** is a PhD candidate at the University of Victoria and a Hakai Scholar studying the ecology and biodiversity of ancient clam gardens. These are structures in the inter-tidal zone where rocks were piled strategically at the low tide mark to create a wall or terrace that changed the slope and composition of the beach. The conditions created were more suitable for clams to grow, and then be harvested. Clam gardens are at least hundreds, if not a few thousand years old. Habitats modified by humans are extensive the world over, and yet their effects on the local ecology are often poorly understood. Clam gardens provide a unique example of a long-standing human-caused habitat modification, and therefore an excellent opportunity to research the effects on the plants and animals that live there. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Fraser Building, UVic. Everyone is welcome. Note: UVic parking is \$3.



## **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.

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Western Sandpiper. VNHS Photo contest 3rd place winner, Birds category. *Photo: David Marques.*