# The Victoria NATURALIST

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# VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We request submission of typed, double-spaced copy in an IBM compatible word processing file on diskette, or by e-mail. Photos and slides, and diskettes submitted will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material. Digital images are welcome, but they need to be high resolution: a minimum of 1200 x 1550 pixels, or 300 dpi at the size of photos in the magazine.

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I don't try to create themed issues of our magazine; if anything, I strive for diversity of content to fulfill our natural history mandate. Without meaning to, this issue has a definite thread underpinning virtually every submission: participation.

The President's Message (p.4) starts it all off with requests for assistance on several VNHS projects: taking natural history into classrooms, field trips, etc. "Citizen scientists" can contribute in a variety of ways, as exemplified by the annual butterfly count (p.6) and Christmas Bird Count results (p.13), the revived Annual Bird Report (p.12) or the new PlantWatch (p.20). Camas Day organizers would love an additional leader for the bird walk (p.18), and Norm Mogensen has a couple of projects in mind and would welcome some involvement (p.23). The Bulletin Board (p.27) is filled with opportunities to help.

I'm happy to report that, at "press time", at least one of these many jobs has been filled. Who better to take on the role of coordinator of our butterfly surveys than James Miskelly, a recent University of Victoria graduate with extensive knowledge of British Columbian butterflies? Thanks James!

Next?

Claudia

COVER PHOTO:

Yellowlegs by Ron Hoppe, an entry in the VNHS 60th Anniversary Photo Contest.

# **President's Message**

Oh, no! Here she goes again!

Yes, indeed, this is yet another appeal for someone or for a small group of people to step forward to lead an initiative to help reintroduce natural history to the schools. We are getting lots of feedback from people that there is a real need to ensure the next generation has an appreciation for their environment. We are getting many offers of assistance, and we are certainly hearing from the teachers and the schools that there is interest in having our expertise in their classrooms and on their field trips. A couple of years back, our membership survey highlighted programs for children and families as a necessary growth area for VNHS. We have volunteer helpers, we have some funding, but where are our leaders? We now have a membership of more than 800 people. Surely there are a few out there who could provide guidance and leadership to this project. Please speak up! If you would like more information about what would be involved and what support would be available, please give me a call at 652-6450 or email me at motmot@shaw.ca.

There are two ongoing initiatives that are in need of assistance: the Butterfly Count, and VNHS field trips. Cheryl Mackie took on the responsibility for the Butterfly Count last year and did an terrific job. Rick Schortinghuis has been

coordinating our field trips for several years, and our schedule is the envy of many other natural history organizations. Both Cheryl and Rick are looking for assistance this year. Cheryl is stepping down as coordinator, but will be available to assist someone who would like to take it on. The Butterfly Count runs from April to September, and primarily involves communicating with the counters to remind them of the dates and to gather their data. Most is done by email. Rick is looking for some new ideas and field trip leaders to augment our existing list. In particular, he is seeking leaders for under-represented areas of natural history (geology, marine, astronomy, or ?????).

Other projects are also on the horizon that will need people to help out. The revitalization of an Annual Bird Report is a major undertaking being spearheaded by Jeremy Tatum, editor of similar reports a few decades(!) back. There seems to be a renewed interest in publications, with suggestions of revisions to the Naturalists' Guide to Victoria and the possibility of some new field guides. There are many great ideas floating around – but to make them reality requires the involvement of our members - hopefully, you! VNHS can only accomplish what its members accomplish themselves! Ann Nightingale



# Morehen, C.W. (Cy): 1921-2004

# By David Stirling

fter a career in the Canadian Armed Forces (he enlisted at age fourteen as a boy soldier), Cy Morehen left Ontario to settle in Victoria. He became an active member of the Victoria Natural History Society. He was the treasurer in 1965-66 and vice president 1967-69. In 1970, Cy was hired as a seasonal park naturalist. He worked at Miracle Beach and Shuswap Lake Provincial Park and spent two seasons as a travelling naturalist in the Okanagan. He worked hard to make his property, on the shore near Miracle Beach, a wildlife sanctuary and arboretum. He grew exotic trees and flowers; his deck was an excellent place to watch Harlequin Ducks, Bald Eagles, orcas and sea lions; Red-breasted Sapsuckers visited his hummingbird feeder after sapping his ornamental trees; garter snakes enjoyed his fish pond and his goldfish; and homeless river otters used his crawl space. Cy was a lifelong naturalist and conservationist. He passed away at his home on December 24. The trees, eagles and otters will miss him.



Birding at Layritz Park, New Year's Day. Photo: Vicky Scott

# What a Way to Start the Year

# By Bill Dancer

**T**aking at 7 a.m. on New Year's Day to find you have to scrape five centimeters of snow off the car in a blustery cold northeast wind inclines you to think this may not be the ideal birding day. Arriving at Layritz Park where the snow is turning to slush and the wind, if anything, is colder, you wonder how many brave souls will venture out. At 10 a.m. it says much for the popularity of birding that 20 - count them - 20 hardy souls are ready for the off. We start out accompanied by Common Ravens. The weather lowers the species count to 27, and the temperature keeps us moving. A Lincoln's Sparrow makes a brief appearance, a collection of Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers feed together in a sheltered spot in the woods at Viaduct Flats, and eating lunch at the viewing platform at Quicks Bottom is livened up by the company of a juvenile Cooper's Hawk (banded with only a plain aluminum band - Rocky Point?), a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk and a male Anna's Hummingbird in bright sunshine. Hopefully the sunshine was a sign for a great year ahead.

# Victoria Butterfly Survey Results - 2004

By Cheryl Mackie, Count Coordinator

There were six butterfly counts this year, one in each month from April to September. The area covered was north to Brentwood Bay and Island View Beach, west to Goldstream Provincial Park and south to Witty's Lagoon. There were 75 forms sent in for April, 67 for May, 75 for June, 71 for July, 54 for August and 50 for September. The total number of species seen was 33 and the total number of butterflies was 12,209.

Things started off with a bang in April – the reporting process integrated into an email based system (and a rookie coordinator not very familiar with the computer) and hot weather bringing out an eruption of 1,990 butterflies reported for the count period. It was enough to get one's heart fluttering for weeks! The warm weather brought out a total of 24 different species (as compared to 2001, which reported 14 species and a total of only 922 butterflies).

The big story in June was the discovery of Field Crescents (*Phycoides pratensis*) in the Brentwood area. This species was thought to have all but disappeared from the Victoria area, but thanks to Jeremy Gatten discovering a single Crescent in his back yard (outside the count area, but close to the Brentwood Bay border), a search ensued, resulting in the discovery of a field in Brentwood (on private land) with an estimated 1,000 found (unfortunately also outside the count area boundary). Undaunted, volunteers set out to locate some that could be included in the count, resulting in 30 found in Marin Park in Brentwood Bay and two on the trail between Wallace Drive and Todd Inlet. After the official count time, near the end of June, I received four emails in one day reporting sightings of California Tortoiseshells (*Nymphalis californicus*). Dianne Crowthers even had one in her garage!

In July and August the weather continued to cooperate, and the numbers of butterflies remained high. Then the rain came! September saw a sharp decline in count numbers. Only 206 were reported, which is 700 less than for the same period in 2001. The last two reports received were for a Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*), seen by Jessica Murray on November 10 near Pat Bay and a Satyr Comma (*Polygonia satyrus*), seen by Rick Schortinghuis on November 25 at Island View Beach.

I wish to thank all the people who helped make this year's count possible. Special thanks once again to Sheila South, Phyllis Henderson, Morwyn Marshall and Ann Knowles, who helped by phoning participants who didn't have a computer. Many thanks also go out to Jeremy Gatten and Chris Saunders, who helped out when someone was unable to do their area. And a very special thanks to Ann Nightingale, who set up the computer/e-mail reporting system and always had time for all my questions.



Clockwise from top, left: Moss' Elfin, Common Ringlet, Common Woodnymph, Two Banded Checkered Skipper. *Photos*: Jeremy Gatten

A question I was often asked was "where can I see (a certain) butterfly?" Here is list where a few of the less common ones were reported in 2004. Hopefully this will be helpful.

American Lady (Vanessa virginiensis): September – Mt. Doug

Clodious Apollo (*Parnassius clodius*): June – Railway track behind the Goldstream Provincial Park campground

**Common Woodnymph** (*Cercyonis pegala*): July – Goldstream Provincial Park; August – Observatory Hill; Many were also seen at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory

**Green Comma** (*Polygonia faunus*): April – Highlands Area and Thetis Lake; July – Thetis Lake

**Hydaspe Frittilary** (*Speyeria hydaspe*): June – Thetis Lake; July – Tower Point and Kerry View Drive near Prospect Lake

**Milbert's Tortoiseshell** (*Aglais milberti*): May – Royal Roads and Central Highlands; June – Railway tracks behind Goldstream Provincial Park campground and at Ten Mile Point

Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*): April – Thetis Lake, Saxe Point and Blenkinsop Lake

**Two Banded Checkered Skipper** (*Pyrgus ruralis*): April – Blue Valley Rd. and Munns Rd. in the Highlands Area; May – Swan Lake

Western Pine Elfin (Incisalia eryphon): April – Jocelyn Hill

# 2004 - Victoria Butterfly Counts

Species	April Total	May Total	June Total	July Total	August Total	Sept. Total	Grand Total
American Lady – Vanessa virginiensis	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Anise Swallowtail – Papilio zelicaon	69	123	85	116	15	3	411
Brown Elfin – Incisalia augustinus	93	25	1	0	0	0	119
Cabbage Butterfly – Pieris rapae	296	478	559	751	478	173	2,735
California Tortoiseshell – Nymphalis californicus	9	1	0	0	0	0	10
Cedar Hairstreak – Mitoura rosneri	0	12	0	0	0	0	12
Clodious Apollo – Parnassius clodius	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Common Woodnymph – Cercyonis pegala	0	0	0	2	2	0	4
European Skipper – Thymelicus lineola	0	0	311	289	10	0	610
Green Comma – Polygonia faunus	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
Grey Hairstreak - Strymon melinus	13	8	4	5	1	0	31
Hydaspe Frittilary – Speyeria hydaspe	0	0	2	3	0	0	5
Lorquin's Admiral – Limenitis lorquini	2	11	795	439	10	3	1,260
Milberts Tortoiseshell – Aglais milberti	0	2	5	0	0	0	7
Moss' Elfin – Incisalia mossii mossii	3	4	0	0	0	0	7
Mourning Cloak – Nymphalis antiopa	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Mylitta Crescent – Phycoides mylitta	24	14	64	34	31	6	173
Painted Lady – Vanessa cardui	14	12	16	6	4	0	52
Pale Swallowtail – Papilio eurymedon	6	69	137	12	0	0	224
Pine White – Neophasia menapia	0	0	3	238	37	2	280
Propertius Duskywing – Erynnis propertius	26	32	4	0	0	0	62
Purplish Copper (u) – Lycaena helloides	0	0	75	6	11	2	94
Purplish Copper (f) – Lycaena helloides	2	11	25	14	42	1	95
Purplish Copper (m) – Lycaena helloides	9	5	13	42	48	2	119
Red Admiral – Vanessa atalanta	0	0	11	3	1	3	18
Sara's Orangetip – Anthocaris sara	134	1	0	0	0	0	135
Satyr Comma – Polygonia satyrus	35	7	9	3	0	1	55
Silvery Blue – Glaucopsyche lygdamus	23	7	1	0	0	0	31
Western Spring Azure – Celastrina echo	1,192	429	22	0	0	0	1,643
Two Banded Checkered Skipper – Pyrgus ruralis	4	4	0	0	0	0	8
Common Ringlet – Coenonympha california insulana	2	165	61	22	91	7	348
West Coast Lady – Vanessa anabella	2	1	1	1	0	1	6
Western Pine Elfin (m) – Incisalia eryphon	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Western Tiger Swallowtail – Papilio rutulus	26	119	604	228	3	0	980
Woodland Skipper (f) – Ochlodes sylvanoides	0	0	0	4	33	0	37
Woodland Skipper (m) – Ochlodes sylvanoides	0	0	0	32	27	0	59
Woodland Skipper (u) – Ochlodes sylvanoides	0	0	1	1,333	1,234	0	2568
Total Species	23	22	24	18	14	11	33
Total Individuals	1,990	1,540	2,812	3,583	2,078	206	12,209

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# Hericium erinaceus – Bearded Tooth Fungus

# By Barbara Begg

This unusual-looking fungus is only rarely found in the Victoria area. It prefers to grow on living hardwood trees. Bearded Tooth is in the Hydnaeceae, (Tooth Fungus) family, which produce their spores on teeth rather than on gills or in tubes. Species in this family tend to develop late in the year and grow on trees or on roots. Some are edible and none are known to be poisonous. *Hericium erinaceus* is said to be choice when very young. Species in the *Hericium* genus are usually branched, though *H. erinaceus* is not. According to Lincoff (1981), it has a rather disjunct range. It is found in the southern United States from Florida to California and has been reported in New York, Michigan and the Pacific Northwest.

These specimens were growing on the trunk of a stressed and damaged reclining Garry Oak and were about one metre off the ground. They looked quite white and fresh when discovered in November, and measured about 10 cm x 6 cm and 7 cm x 6 cm. By late December the overall colour was a yellowish tan and in early January 2005 both were starting to droop and the larger one was beginning to disintegrate. Something, likely a slug, had been nibbling on the top of the smaller mushroom. Some other common names for *H. erinaceus* are Unbranched Hericium, Satyr's Beard and Hedgehog Mushroom.

While Bearded Tooth may be toothsome, it is best to leave it where found for others to enjoy, hopefully just visually.

Lincoff, G.A. 1981 *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*. Alfred A. Knopf; New York. 928 pp.



Hericium erinaceus – Bearded Tooth Fungus. Photo: Ted Hart



# The Brant Are Coming – Are You?

# By Michele Deakin

Celebrating all things natural is the focus of the Brant Wildlife Festival, held in Parksville/Qualicum Beach each spring. Fifteen years ago, the first festival was held to educate people about natural areas, and strengthen the connections to these areas for locals and visitors alike. In the beginning, the festival celebrated the arrival of 20,000 Brant Geese. Since then, we have changed to the Brant Wildlife Festival. We now recognize that Brant can't exist without the rest of the ecosystem, and vice-versa.

Brant Geese are an indicator species. Significant to the ecosystem, if they are doing well, then it is likely that the rest of life in that area is okay. If their numbers decline however, it can be a strong indication that there are problems in the balance of life that need to be addressed before it is too late.

Part of that balance is maintained by Bald Eagles, the major predator of the Brant. Also of key importance is the eelgrass, the preferred food of the Brant Geese. To feed, they move along an eelgrass bed, trimming the tops of the plants. Similar to farming, they take down their "crop", returning to full beds the next year. They also eat green algae and herring roe.

The area of Parksville/Qualicum Beach is a major stop on their migration north to Alaska. The birds can arrive quite thin and should be quite plump before they leave. Sensitive to human disturbance, the Festival encourages proper viewing of the Brant Geese. If they do not get the necessary feeding and preening time, they may not make the flight north, or may get there and be incapable of breeding. This is especially important once we know that Brant mate for life, starting in their first year of life, but can't actually breed until year three.

Brant biologist, Terri Martin, is trying to solve some puzzles regarding the Brant numbers and shifting patterns of use in the area. You can join Terri on a Brantastic Tour. She will take you to respectfully view the birds where the Brant are located this year. You may also see the exciting courtship chases of the first year birds, as they compete for their life partner. You may also see sea lions, seals and other waterfowl.

Brant Geese are important but are only part of the ecosystem the Festival is celebrating. The Salmon Forest Tour, with Pacific Rainforest Adventures, will travel through a nearby old-growth forest along an active salmon stream. Home to the third tallest Sitka spruce in B.C., this wildlife corridor supports songbirds, raptors, black bears, wolves and cougars. Here you can experience the story of how the salmon feed the large trees and support the entire forest ecosystem.

Just as salmon have a connection to the forest, the intertidal area is connected to the greater ocean. For example, ling cod use the eelgrass beds as protection in early stages of life, later moving to their reef areas. Without the intertidal area, ling cod and other species would not exist. Rob Butler will be hosting an intertidal exploration with a twist. He will take a group through the intertidal area and show participants what plants and animals live there, and focus on those that can be harvested for food. After the tour, you will have a delicious lunch at a nearby resort and the menu will include many of the things you will have seen in the intertidal zone.

Have you ever wondered what an estuary does for you? Join us in a tour through the rarely seen Wildlife Management Area. You'll learn about the inner workings of an estuary. You'll see white fawn lilies and other early wildflowers, Bald Eagles on the nest, migrant songbirds, many waterfowl, Brant, and possibly seals and sea lions.

These tours need to be pre-booked, but there are other activities that you can do without reservations. The wood carving show brings in top carvers from around North America. The photography exhibitions are attracting top photographers, some of whom are delivering workshops and demonstrations. Stop by the wildlife viewing stations and watch sea lions, seals, Brant Geese, seabirds and the stars. Explore Milner Gardens and attend the open house with well-known artist, Fenwick Lansdowne. We also have lots of family activities, including a Bald Eagle release, bird house building, and fun nature tours.

For more information, check out our website at **www.brantfestival.bc.ca**. We can also be reached by phone at **250-752-9171**. Hope to see you there!

# Brant Wildlife Festival April 8-10, 2005

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# Life of Swartz: a Subtle Change?

By Michael Price

Tinter weather can shade Vancouver Island in ways that leave even the optimist feeling heavy and doleful. Garry Oak savannahs rest in relative dormancy, their blanket of leaves having flown free months ago, along with their summer bird migrants. Strolls through coniferous forests are often wet and lonely, as even the dependable fungal fruits of autumn have long withered away. For many, this time of year appears quiet.

For the naturalist, it is the recollection of years past that notifies us of times becoming ever more quiet. Most of us no longer hear the enchanting songs of amphibians in spring, or an owl's serenade when the nights are still. Introduced species such as Scotch broom are feverishly replacing wildflowers; English ivy is ousting conifer seedlings. Birders have surely observed the encroachment of homes around areas such as Panama Flats, Rithets Bog, Christmas, Knowles, and Mill Hill, and the resultant decline in resident flora and fauna. Changes such as these are easy to recognise when they occur where we live and recreate. Toxicity of surrounding waters, however, is much more insidious. Heavy rains inevitably deliver oil-slicked substances to our streams and shores. Our ocean has now become our toilet.

My parents adopted a derelict beach-house on the edge of Swartz Bay when they moved to the area seven years ago. Its quaint frame stands on the shore in clear view of the haunting ferry terminal. Prior to 1959, the bay called Swartz belonged to wildlife. Yet 46 years of heavy ship traffic and

resident septic runoff have contaminated the sediments and overlying waters. This historical clam/oyster harvesting area is now under sanitary closure, with shellfish toxins frighteningly too high for human consumption. This begs the question, "What has become of all the other historic consumers of shellfish and tidal organisms? Do they continue to rely on them, or have they shifted their foraging habits to other, less toxic prey?" On any given day, we see groups of Red-breasted Mergansers, various scoters, Long-tailed and Harlequin Ducks. Eagles and ravens ascend the skies above; raccoons and mink comb the rocky shores. A lone Grey Whale has even spent a few days sieving the waters for sustenance. The presence and abundance of these animals in this bay must speak of rich waters. Nevertheless, change can be remarkably subtle.

The river otter is the most frequently spotted mammal of Swartz Bay. For a family of 6, the derelict cabin (now the home of my fiancée and I) is their home. We have observed their comings and goings for years. Their use of the steep banks for afternoon siestas is well marked with slide trails: their faeces litters the cabin's outer deck. Some nights we are awoken to the sounds of them coming ashore. Their whistling and splashing resonates through us, as they play and feast beneath the floorboards. We often greet the following day by sidestepping over their leftovers from the night before: crustacean parts and fish scales. This family group is certainly not the first to inhabit Swartz Bay though, as local



Photos: Courtesy of Michael Price

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The river otter is the most frequently spotted mammal of Swartz Bay. Their use of the steep banks for afternoon siestas is well marked with slide trails.

knowledge speaks of otters trawling these waters as long as humans have been around to observe them.

One misty morning, as we warmed our hands with a mug of tea, hundreds of cormorants blackened the bay. They drifted with the current, bobbing and diving with urgency in the roiling waters. Gulls circled above, desperately wishing to join their manic competitors. In time, we recognised one of our otter companions diving and surfacing within the flock. Its slender tail would leave a wake as it plunged beneath the restless water. Before long, we watched as it rhythmically undulated back in our direction. Its movement appeared laboured, as if weighed down by a defiant, oversized rockfish. Side-over-side it rolled, twisted, and squirmed its way towards us. With our binoculars steady, we could see that something was unusual about this latest catch. It appeared slick-black against the chestnut-brown fur of its predator. And not until the two of them were within an arm's reach of us, could we piece together the identity of a yellowish bill, gasping desperately for air under the otter's tightening grip. There lay a cormorant, an unlikely catch for an expert fisher. The two of them, entwined like lovers, gave us a fleeting glance as they descended beneath our cabin. We heard no scuffle, no dramatic fight to the death. The episode came and went like a winter's tide.

Was this occurrence a matter of chance events, opportunity lain waiting? Come to think of it, I'm surprised it doesn't occur more often. It doesn't take much imagination to envision hundreds of distracted birds, diving for food, to be an enormous target for a predator. But then again, there exists the downside of numerous unpalatable feathers to contend with. Although it has previously been noted, birds are a rare selection for otters. They are known for eating crabs, clams and other shellfish, but perhaps they are beginning to recognise an apparent danger. It is not unusual for a species to shift its foraging preference, given the uncompromising pressures of natural selection. Regardless, events like this should force us to question whether change is, in fact, underway.

We are newcomers to Swartz Bay, and like us, all who visit can surely attest to the loss and degradation of habitat. Unfortunately, habitat loss is only skin deep. We all need to devote more time towards assessing our oceanic community's ecological health, to sharpen our resolution for signs of change already underway. In closing, the next time you board the ferries bound for Vancouver, think of the remarkably resilient life that strives to surround it.





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The Victoria Naturalist Vol. 61.5 (2005) 11

# Annual Bird Report for Southern Vancouver Island

By Jeremy B. Tatum

Plans are underway to publish an Annual Bird Report for southern Vancouver Island, starting in 2005, similar to the Reports that were published in the early 1970s. In this article I'll briefly describe the nature and purpose of the Reports and the ways in which all birders in the area can help with the project. For many years, local birders have been accumulating countless observations of the birds of the area, but most of these have never been placed on permanent record, in print for all future birders to read about. Now is our chance to do this.

The *Report* will publish a species-by-species systematic account of the occurrence of all species seen within the boundaries of the area during the calendar year. The area to be covered will be the portion of Vancouver Island, including the Canadian Gulf Islands, south of latitude 49° N and east of longitude 123° 50' W. For a thumbnail map of the area, see the VNHS Bird Checklist. Records of birds of exceptional interest seen near to but outside the boundaries of this area will be included in an Appendix to the *Report*.

All birders are encouraged, starting in 2005, to keep regular records of their sightings and to submit them for publication in the Report. It will be most convenient if observers send in their records in four batches, at the end of March, June, September and December; they could also be submitted in one batch at the end of the year if you prefer, though we would prefer to receive quarterly batches. It will also be convenient if they are submitted in standard taxonomic order. This could be one of the following, whichever is easiest for you: (i) the new AOU order, which begins with the geese; (ii) the old AOU order (beginning with loons), which is used in most of the current field guides; or (iii) the order in which birds are listed in the VNHS Checklist. Observations submitted in chronological or alphabetic order or in some other order will cause us a lot of extra work, and we would prefer you not to do this! Records may be sent by ordinary mail to Victoria Natural History Society, P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4, or they may be submitted electronically – keep an eye on the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca) for details on how to do this.

What records should be submitted? In the case of common resident birds such as Song Sparrow, it is not intended to publish every sighting made by every observer. Indeed, we expect that few observers will send in observations of such species, and the entry in the *Report* for such birds in likely to be brief. This is not to say that common resident birds are of no interest – indeed it is arguable that they are more important than the occasional exceptional rarity. Common birds have a habit of gradually changing their status over the years, so gradually that we may not notice. Therefore it will be quite appropriate for the *Report* to publish any special studies or systematic, regular counts that anyone may undertake of such species.

Records of migratory birds are obviously of particular interest. Observers can let us know the date of arrival of the first migrant they see, as well as the date by which the bulk of the migrants are in, the date by which most of them are gone, and the date when the last one was seen. And obviously the Report will serve to place on record the occurrence of all uncommon or rare birds. For guidance as to what birds are considered uncommon or rare, see the VNHS Bird Checklist.

All birders recognize that it will be essential for observers to supply field notes of observations of uncommon or rare birds, as well as out-of-season birds (e.g. swallows or House Wrens in winter) or birds that are hard to identify (e.g. Sharp-shinned Hawk, Long-billed Dowitcher, Arctic Tern). Usually just a sentence or two will suffice to describe the features that were seen on the bird under observation. In the case of "vagrant" and "accidental" birds, full and detailed descriptions of the bird will have to be provided, as usual, to the Bird Records Committee on the form provided for that purpose. Whether for "accidental" or for merely "rare" or "uncommon" or even for common but out-of-season birds, the provision and publication of the details that were seen on the bird under observation will serve to assure all readers of the Report (including readers from outside the area, or readers in the far future) that the record is absolutely sound and will remove any of the doubts that often attend reports of an unusual record.

All contributors to the *Report* will, of course, be acknowledged, and it is traditional to include the observers' initials after each record – and I know that observers eagerly look for their own initials in order to experience that special Glow of Pride in knowing that they saw a Tree Swallow before anyone else did. I know that, because I do it myself!

While the success of the *Annual Bird Report* depends heavily on the involvement of all birders, and on their sending in their records and field notes, there is also a fair amount of less exciting organizational work involved in bringing the project to fruition. Therefore a Working Group (WG) is being set up to guide the *Report* through the necessary stages. We are therefore asking for anyone who would like to be a member of the WG, or who would like to help in some way without necessarily being a member of the WG, or who can offer any special expertise (e.g. in layout, cover design, budgeting, seeing it through to the printer, and a host of other tasks of that nature), so please make yourself known. We do need help, and we eagerly seek any that you can offer. Contact me at 477-1089 (h), 721-7749 (w), universe@uvvm.uvic.ca or jtatum@uvic.ca.

# A New Canadian Record! The 2004 Christmas Bird Count

# By Ann Nightingale

n December 18, 196 birders braved warm weather and calm winds to achieve a new Canadian Christmas Bird Count record of 154 species, two more than the previous record of 152 set in Victoria in 1991 and tied by Ladner in 2001. Forty-four feederwatchers augmented the teams of bush-beaters this year, raising the counts for many of our backyard birds. Congratulations and thanks go out to all participants!

New species high count records were established for sixteen species: Anna's Hummingbird, Wood Duck, Longtailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-Crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco, while Spotted Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager and Barred Owl tied their record numbers. A new species, Common Redpoll, was added to the list this year, as was Cackling Goose - the result of a species split by the American Ornithological Union. Once again, we didn't have any truly rare birds on the count, but the warblers, Western Tanager, Marbled Godwit, and a lone Mountain Bluebird at the Blenkinsop Golf Course that stayed in town for the count were really appreciated!

We had set a count week target of 160 species to commemorate the end of the 60th anniversary year of the Victoria Natural History Society. In addition to the 154 species seen on count day, Golden Eagle, Cassin's Auklet, Heerman's Gull and Brant were confirmed during the week. Two other species were reported: Swainson's Thrush and Chipping Sparrow. These two are sufficiently rare at this time of year that I am waiting for a decision from the Bird Records Committee before officially adding them to our week's total.

I am often asked why we do Christmas Bird Counts. Perhaps the answer lies here. Despite excellent weather, and an unprecedented bird count contingent, the number of individual birds counted was considerably lower than we have had on many previous counts. While 77,921 may seem like a lot of birds, the Victoria record is more than 125,000. I was shocked at how some of our current numbers differ from previous records. I have included these high counts with this year's results so that you may also see the changes. In particular, the sea-going birds, gulls, and many of the ducks seem to be suffering. The Christmas Bird Counts contribute to the knowledge base about what is happening to populations throughout North America. Let's hope this information is being used to try to find out why! In the meantime, we are all encouraged to follow the guidelines of the FBCN's Seabird Survival Program.

The Christmas Bird Count could not happen without volunteer participation. Barbro Baker and Joan Gowan once again managed a great post-count gathering at St. Luke's Church Hall. Thank you to all who contributed. Mark December 17 on your calendar for the 2005 Christmas Bird Count!

# Christmas Bird Count 2004 Participants

Marika Ainley David Aldcroft Arnold Aldkirchner David Allinson Tracy Anderson Matt Austin Vic Badenhorst George Baker Debra Barr Wendy Barry Lonnie Bate Doug Bateman Ron Bates Brent Beach Barbara Begg Louise Beinhauer Mike Bentley Hank Blouw Jan Brown Daniel Brvant Heather Bunner Martha Burd Alan Burger Barry Byers David Campbel Muriel Carlson **Bob Carroll** Jan Carroll Dannie Carsen **Robert Chappell** Barbara Chouinard Paul Chytyk Bill Dancer Isobel Dawson Paul Deniverville **Brent Diakow** Melanie Donegani Neal Donegani Don Fastman Mike Edgell Dafne Eerkes-Metano Ros Eldridge Marven Eng Christian Engelstoft Sue Ennis **Jim Farrell** Jenny Fieck J. Finlay Maija Finvers Dave Fraser Lea French Marilvn Fuchs Jeff Gaskin Bryan Gates Barry Gatten Jeremy Gatten Tracee Geernaert Tom Gillespie Heather Glass Sharon Godkin Rob Gowan Art Grabham Kyla Graham-Kordich Frances Gundry Robert Hadley Poul Hansen

Andrew Harcombe Gail Harcombe Bruce Hardy Gordon Hart Sharon Hartwell Ian Hatter John Henigman Carmen Holschuh Gordon Hooper Gwennie Hooper Mary G. Hooper Robert Hooper Ron Hoppe **Bob Houston** Edith Hunsberger Doreen Hunter Lynda Jamison Colin Jennings Susan Jennings Naira Johnston Chris Junck Barb Kirby Jim Kirby Linda Knox Anne Kranenberg Barbara Lake Robert Lake Marilyn Lambert Warren Lee Diane Leitch Les Leitch Paul Levesque Kitty Lloyd Erin Luther Kem Luther Aanes Lynn Alan MacLeod Pat MacLeod Chervl Mackie Mark Malleson Susan Martin Derrick Marven Brian Mason Denise Mason Margie Mayfield Pat McAllister Barb McClintock Barb McGrenere Mike McGrenere Jacquie McLeod Bill McMillan Marilvn Miller Gail Mireau James Miskelly Marilyn Misner Rod Mitchell Barb Miyasaki Everard Mivasaki Glen Moores Judy Moores Mary Morris Donna Murray Wanda Nash Jacquelyn Nelson David Newell **Geoffrey Newell** 

Ann Nightingale Brian Nyberg Mark Nyhof Colleen O'Brien Gordon O'Neill Marie O'Shaughnessy Christina Ovaska Karen Partridge Ed Pellizzon Gerald Person Tom Plath David Pretty June Pretzer Leah Ramsay Cathy Reader David Reidell Jeff Reitkerk Allison Roberts Mike Roberts Dave Robichaud Mary Robichaud Robin Robinson Wayne Robinson Donna Ross Sharon Russell Terry Russell Chris Saunders Laurie Savard Anne Scarfe Gail Schacter **Rick Schortinghuis** Hugh Scorah Cynthia Shepard Michael Shepard **Brian Simmons** Dave Smethhurst Betty Smith Camilla Smith Ken Sohm Don Spencer Evelyn Spencer Andrew Stewart Ann Stewart David Stirling Al Storey Clive Strauss Jack Sutherland Jeremy Tatum Adam Taylor Mike Toochin Michael Tripp Ed Tupper Gail Tupper Joyce Vezina Leo Vezina **Blake Waters** Elaine White **Bruce Whittington** Jean Ann Wightman Harvey Williams Al Wisely Lorna Wood Genie Wright Lars Yunker

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Count Areas	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)	Oak Bay Islands (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	** indicates new record in 2005
reater White-fronted Goose	<u>m</u> I	0	0			A	<u>ш</u> 1	ш		>		0		-	O	S		ш	3	16	0	0	4	20	<del>*</del> 68
now Goose																						1		1	12
ackling Goose							3		1.0		and and						12		2					17	** 3
anada Goose	1342	3	14	187	16	59	33	91	137	18		19		-	1	20	491	588	486	759				4,264	5156
ute Swan						3	19		2										24					48	77
rumpeter Swan	89			19												21	67	20	Sec. 1	20				236	458
ood Duck													12		12	5								10 39	** 36
adwall					1	7			15								12	48	5			-		88	170
urasian Wigeon	4		1			3	1	-		1	1	-	-	0.5		101	2			000	-	15		13	28
merican Wigeon	596	10	12		50	395	161	70	60	88	97	2	91	65	4	184	103	28	88	392	-	15		2,463	14889
lallard	958 1	10	45	97 6	40	257	354	79	72	10	303	6	167	75	62	824		233 21	77	415 31	-	-		4,748	10336 476
orthern Shoveler orthern Pintail	461			17	6	11 23	32		2	2	-					5	12	21	1	31		-		559	1304
orthern Pintali reen-winged Teal	308		3		3	23	32		5	-						1	11	1	4	23		3		377	685
anvasback	15		5	,	3				13							1	5	7	4	20		52		92	230
edhead	10							~	10				-				3	1				UL		2	8
ing-necked Duck	65	38		16	28	16	3	2								4	61	87	12	20	1.1301			352	663
reater Scaup							6	_	11													19.1		17	3100
esser Scaup	10.00		and the second second		14				292				5	4		7	10	5	10	1				348	1012
arlequin Duck						6				14	37	13	6	25	4			10		14	24	59	6	218	410
urf Scoter						19	42	33		29	24	21	6	47	3	-		114		166	61	24	67	656	1478
hite-winged Scoter								6			8			2	1			2			24	13		56	834
ack Scoter								7							1					5	1			14	16
ong-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)						8	6				2	12	11	23	4			142		158	205		2	577	** 531
ufflehead	48	6	89	1	1	7.4	190	78	285	57	55	124	23	33	35	11	28	241	43	136	71		60	1,863	2863
ommon Goldeneye	5		47			3	26	48	13	97	6	3			17			131		21	22	2		441	745
arrow's Goldeneye	10	7	40	40		45	47	47	10		-	1	1			105	10			40	-	0		42	361
ooded Merganser	19 43	9	8		30 13		17	17 73	10	9	6	29 21	8	33	5		12	30 339	28	12		9	23	421 625	662 1600
ed-breasted Merganser	43	9	15	11	4	22	82	109	3	139	18	24	8	29	43	10	1	172	8	96	-	23	17	791	** 752
uddy Duck	2		-		4	22	02	103	5	135	10	24	0	29	45			112	20	90		20	17	20	420
ng-necked Pheasant				4															20		-			4	93
uffed Grouse		1		-																				1	10
ue Grouse	-			1	121											102.5								1	3
alifornia Quail	34	15	22	34	6	9	20	7	1									1	108	71				14 342	580
ed-throated Loon						2									1			4		7				14	140
acific Loon						4					7			19	12			8		14	13			77	488
ommon Loon						2	1	2		4	4	11	1		5			7		11	4	1	2	55	109
ed-billed Grebe		6		1	6		16		5							7	4	15	1	2				66	100
orned Grebe			1			2	1	1		18				6	9			94		20	7		10	171	1100
ed-necked Grebe			5			44	43	44		44	8	25	1	9	1	110		3		1	4	2	38	267	671
ared Grebe					-	-	-	0							6		-	6		1			-	13	123
estern Grebe						126	6	2			-	00		40				200		6	-	45	2	18	3314
andt's Cormorant ouble-crested Cormorant	8	1	11	1	42	136 52	6 21	110	55	239	10	23 16	16	18	13	6	2	300 173	6	4	49	15 33	70	502 1,004	3549 ** 875
lagic Cormorant	0		11	1	42	23	6	9	55	239		24	16 17	12	13		2	96	0	19	21		34	357	2300
eat Blue Heron	4	3	3		1		5	57	8	4		6		7	2		2	5	3	20	21	2	34	162	** 152
irkey Vulture	-+		5	3		2	5	57		-+	3	0		,	2	5	4	5	-	20		4		5	8
ald Eagle (adult)	4		31	2	2		5	3	1	2			2	2	3		1	7	2	8	1	7		84	448
ald Eagle (imm.)	10		10		-	2	5			-		6		1				2	-			2			
orthern Harrier						-						5	1					-		1		-		1	6
harp-shinned Hawk	2	1				1	4					1		1		1	2	2	3	2				20	30
ooper's Hawk	3	2		3	2		1		6	1	1	4	4	4	1	1	3	6	7	6				4 62	** 57
orthern Goshawk					-	1												-			1			1	2
ed-tailed Hawk	8	3	2	3	2		2	1	3	1.1						1	1	1	4	7				40	79

# 2004 Victoria Christmas Bird

Count Areas	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	corrova bay (olishore)	Oak Bay Islands (offshore)	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Feeders	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	** indicates new record in 2005
merican Kestrel					1		1						TTOKA .												2	8
Aerlin	3			1	1	1	1		2	1			-	1	2		1		1	1		1			17	25
Peregrine Falcon				1				1	1								1	2	1	2	-	2			11	15
/irginia Rail	18			1	2		4		1							1	45	7	10		-	-			9	14
American Coot Black-bellied Plover	18				2		1						1				45	332	16			83			414 84	1712 282
Killdeer						1						17								13	-	03			31	370
Black Oystercatcher						2	1	4		18	3	19	24							15		9	4		84	96
Greater Yellowlegs			5			-		1			-	3	- /									6			9	70
Spotted Sandpiper						1				2								1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 - 1947 -			1				3	3
Whimbrel						1000						3	2	2											3	6
Marbled Godwit												1						_							1	- 1
Black Turnstone						47	34	37		24	16	16	5	8				-				34	-1		221	370
Surfbird						25	1				18	2										9			55	70
Sanderling						1					4	_	-									15			20	67
Rock Sandpiper						1	1-1-1-1-1				1000	1									-	8 202			8	57 960
Vilson's Snipe													1							9		202	20		232	37
Bonaparte's Gull						2							1							3		1			2	5004
New Gull			10			1340	133	35		3		54	23	28	3			81	1	5		600	200		2,516	16375
California Gull														20				1		1	-	1	200		3	130
lerring Gull	1		2		100				-						Carl Las										3	288
Thayer's Gull	3		4		32	1223		38				22			2			-	25		2	300	900		2,551	3110
Vestern Gull	2	_				1	1												-	1					5	18
Glaucous-winged Gull	3059	49	285	13	81	370	77	110	465	200	126	36	163	68	30	162	118	410	46	360	35	400	1400	40	8,103	16794
Unidentified Gull						10	15					-		-				152		116	-				323	6589
Common Murre						45 12	6	4		4	4	5		2	E			10		27	1	20			114	7831
Pigeon Guillemot. Marbled Murrelet				-		7	1			9	4	4	_	29 3	5			43		21	56	17	5		206 45	260 290
Ancient Murrelet			-	-		162	2			4	2	4		3				2		2	-	218			730	6401
Rhinoceros Auklet						1		2					-								-	210	550		4	113
Rock Pigeon	12	20	-	31	15		256	1	253	88	192	56	55	1.11	19	5	20	3	1	59				2	1,100	1198
Band-tailed Pigeon	2																					-	-		2	417
Mourning Dove													1000							7		2000			7	21
Barn Owl																			2	1					3	6
Vestern Screech-owl				1								6.000				1.11									1	23
Great Horned Owl		3		1	-	9			1				2			1		2	5	3					26	44
Northern Pygmy Owl			_			1	-				1							Tell.	1						2	5
Barred Owl	1			1					1				1	1		1	1		1						8	8
Short-eared Owl			-						1					-					-			1			1	2
Iorthern Saw-whet Owl	1	4	2	6	1	12	6	6	27	15	11	19	17	63	34	12	17	42	2 45	3		the bas	-	47	2 390	4 348
Belted Kingfisher	2	4	5	0	2		3	3	8	2	11	19	1	63	34	12	17	42	45	3		1		41	48	348 71
Red-breasted Sapsucker	2		5		2	5	1	5	0	2		1	1	2	5	1		-+	3	3	-				40	12
Jowny Woodpecker	7	1	1	1	4	7	9	1	6	5	2	3	1	9	4	6	8	6	7	11				16	115	152
lairy Woodpecker	1	7	5	3		3	3	1	0			5		3	4		0	0	4	1				2	26	** 22
Jorthern Flicker	28	21	6	10			24	2	25	5	12	4	8	32	17	14	6	32		21		4		16	345	447
Pileated Woodpecker	2	4	1	5			6	-					1	1	2		-	7		6				1	51	** 36
lorthern Shrike											1				-		- 16		1	2	1				4	11
lutton's Vireo				1.000			3					1								_					3	8
Steller's Jay	15	13	6	34	28	6	17	2	13			2	5	21	19	5	4	37	54	4				7	292	659
	278	26	90	22	42		96	63	232	89	54	67	101	145	2701	191	82	314	68	233		2		60	4,960	10002
Jorthwestern Crow	210																				-					
Common Raven	48	104	9	34	7	18	7	3	10			2	4	12	6	8	28	16	24	18		1		10	369	420 125

# 2004 Victoria Christmas Bird Count – including Feeder Watch

** indicates new record in 2005																600						112													1973			9380			
Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	2,069	1,315	314	135	324	334	29	1 268	402	-	1	15	4,154	5 019	221	38	9	5	2		1 885	52	583	749	89						24	275	10	06	1,463	539	1 000 0	2,692	2	2,804	77,921
Feeders	143	320	33	2	15	2		4	- 0			1	4/	63	3						27	5	31	21		3	5	50	249	10				21	124		470	10/1	4	282	1,910
Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)						1	1	1				1	T	1					1	1	T		•	1	T	T	T				1	1		T					T		3,226
Oak Bay Islands (offshore)	Q	-				e		+	2			10	97	62	20						16	0 0	15	20	2			7	8					2	29	16					601 2,666
Cordova Bay (offshore)		_	_	_	-	+	+	+	+	-		+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	-	$\left  \right $	+	+	+	-		_		+	+	-	+	$\square$	-	+	+	+	$\left  \right $	99
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Ssend fruoC	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Bushtit	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Brown Creeper	Bewick's Wren	Winter Wren	Marsh Wren	American Dipper	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Mountain Bluebird	Townsend's Solitaire	Hermit Thrush	American Robin	Varied Thrush	European Starting	Cedar Waxwing	Orange-crowned Warbler	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Townsend's Warbler (*)	Wilson's Warbler	Western Tanager (*)	Savannah Sparrow	Fox Sparrow	Song Sparrow	Lincoln's Sparrow	White_throated Sparrow	White-crowned Sparrow	Golden-crowned Sparrow	Dark-eyed Junco	Red-winged Blackbird	Western Meadowlark	Brewer's Blackbird	Brown-headed Cowbird Dine Grosheak	Purple Finch	House Finch	Red Crossbill	Common Redpoll	Pine Siskin	Evening Grosbeak		Count Totals

# **Book Review**

# By John Defayette

# Seasons with Birds by Bruce Whittington

The introduction of this book gives the reader an instant insight into Bruce Whittington, a long-time member of the Victoria Natural History Society whom many people have known for years. Bruce has had an extensive history with our organization: including serving on our board as a President. His love of birds is clearly demonstrated in his writing, and the beautiful full colour and black and white illustrations by well-known artist Loucas Raptis further bring his descriptions to life.

The seasons are indicated by months in each chapter, beginning with September as autumn. Readers can choose to start anywhere, and read every chapter as they are presented: each containing several stories unto themselves. I picked up the book for the first time during the December holiday season, and it seemed like a good month to start with, so I went on to read about the Christmas Bird Count.

The winter chapters also contain descriptions of an interesting field trip to Costa Rica, Bermoulli's principle explaining how birds soar and fly, and Linnaeus' classification system as it applies to birds. Spring, a busy time of year for birds and birders because of nesting behaviour, includes nest boxes, and how to build one. Hummingbird feeding habits and the use of feeders is also mentioned. The 'mating game' provides a rare insight into bird habits. Of course, field trips in and around Victoria are 'de rigueur'. Summer chapters include ear birding, tricky juveniles, and shorebird challenges. Fall migration commences and with it there is a story about

# Welcome to New Members

Niki Bhabra Blackberry Road

**Renaat and Krista Marchand** Dalrae Place conservation, outdoors

Dr. Ray and Janet Kiff Orillia, Ontario birds, photography

**Diana McBratney and Carol Sidwell** Munro Road

Gordon O'Neil Belcher Avenue travel, sports

**Stephen Price and Purnima** Govindarajulu Christmas Avenue

**Rob Chabot** Lombard Drive everything!

**Gavin Hanke Toronto Street** fishes, herps, birds and palaeontology



bird banding and the ongoing work at Rocky Point. It is also time to get bird feeders ready.

Close to 200 bird species are mentioned in 'Seasons', some with more detail than others. Many readers will chuckle at the field trip stories, and the necessity of using field marks as a means of bird identification. The thoroughly enjoyable "pages from a birder's diary" that are sprinkled throughout 'Seasons' remind us of our own birding experiences. The appendix on choosing binoculars is extremely useful. Bruce's extensive experience with optical equipment shines through: he ran a local naturalist supply store in Victoria for many years, and so had plenty of opportunity to learn about the tools of birders.

Season with Birds is a beautiful read, and well worth adding to your library. Members of the Society can pick up signed copies of this treasure at the Goldstream Nature House bookstore – show your membership card for a 10% discount.

Seasons with Birds is published by TouchWood Editions Limited, a Victoria-based publisher, and distributed by Heritage House. \$26.95, 158 pages.

**Geri and Peter Hinton** Locarno Lane

**Donna Murray** Neil Street

**Christina Ball** Oceanspray Drive birds, botany, marine ecology

**Michael and Monica** Jackson **Richmond Road** 

Stephen and Jean Johnson Beaufort Road

**Stephen Leaver** Tanager Road birds, botany

Betty and Jim Lunam Hollywood Crescent

Sheila Madill **Tolmie** Avenue shorebirds, tidal pools

# **The Friends of Beacon Hill Park**

By Helen Oldershaw and Agnes Lynn

The Friends of Beacon Hill Park aim specifically to protect the fragile natural areas remaining in the Park. In 1989, Anne Fletcher and Helen Oldershaw were alerted to the fact that the City of Victoria was proposing to clear a large portion of the coastal shrub in the Southeast Woods, the area of the Park near Cook and Dallas, because of a problem with prostitution in the area. Anne and Helen jumped to the defense of the Southeast Woods and solicited assistance from Royal B. C. Museum botanists, the Sierra Club and the VNHS. Lists of the valuable native vegetation as well as a list of the birds were part of the mounting evidence of its value. Helen and Anne addressed City Council and, with the support of many others, were successful at convincing City Hall to leave the area as it was.

During that first summer, the Friends arranged a "Walk in the Park" each weekend. The walks included visits to natural areas as well as cultivated sections of the Park. In 1990, the Friends went to City Council for their approval of a restoration project in an area of the Southeast Woods. The plan was to remove invasive species such as ivy to determine if the native species would come back, and indeed they did. The Parks staff had been "keeping the area neat" by raking up all the leaves each year, which robbed the soil of nutrients. We encouraged them to abandon this practice and they did. Agnes Lynn, who was also involved with the Friends from the beginning, commissioned her Girl Guides to be the workers on the project. As part of the service component of their program, they weeded and planted for five years in the area. Rueben Ware, a VNHS member who assisted the Friends, was instrumental in obtaining a grant for the purchase of native plants to replace those that might have grown in that area originally.

Another VNHS member who was very active in the Friends was Connie Hawley. In 1992, the botanists from the Museum expressed concern that the Garry oak meadow was very fragile and would not withstand the staging of large events. Connie suggested having a Camas Day to educate people as to why it was not desirable to hold events on the south slope of the Hill, stretching from the Checkers Pavilion down to Dallas Road. That first year about 250 people attended Camas Day and there were 50 helpers! Camas Day is now in its 14th year, jointly sponsored by the Friends and the VNHS. We have been very fortunate in having some long-time trip leaders, although, sadly, we have lost two: Bev Glover and Bob Olgivie. Tom Gillespie from the VNHS always helps with the organizing and leads the Bird Walk, which is so popular that we would welcome some assistance. Grant Keddie, curator of Archaeology at the Royal BC Museum, will lead the Archaeology Walk, and Adolf Ceska is still leading the Wildflower Walks after all these years. Brenda Beckwith will also be helping out; only this year did



Camas Day helpers! Clockwise from left: Adolf Ceska, Grant Keddie and Chris Brayshaw. *Photo:* Courtesy of the Friends of Beacon Hill Park

Chris Brayshaw stop doing the walks because he is not as spry as he use to be. We appreciate his continued role as an advisor to our organization.

So what do the Friends do besides Camas Day? We have a very good relationship with Parks staff. We assist with mapping the vegetation and help them plan mowing schedules to allow the wildflowers to go to seed. We are called upon to assist them, such as consulting recently on plans to plant native vegetation at the Mile Zero site. Besides the Southeast Woods restoration project, which still looks good years later, we have been working on discouraging cyclists from destroying the vegetation in the rocky areas of the park by planting prickly rose bushes and Oregon grape. We are also hoping that Jeff Ralph's plan to do an ivy removal project in the Southeast Woods will go.

Since the Friends formed, they've succeeded in having the Great Canadian Picnic re-located to the bandstand; and off of the sensitive meadow area. The decision not to allow the Folk Roots Festival (and other large-scale commercial events) in the Park involved a court ruling, indicating that it did not meet the conditions of the original Trust, set up to ensure the Park was kept for the enjoyment of the public. The Friends also participated in the extensive Roundtable discussions to formulate a Management Plan for the Park. VNHS representatives participated in this process, along with other community groups. Recently, the Friends have been mentioned in association with the cancellation of the Luminara festival, but funding shortages were at the root of the problem.

As to the future of the Friends, we hope to weather the storms by getting more people involved. Despite having almost 200 members, many are elderly residents who are apartment dwellers that live near the Park and consider it their backyard. There is only a small core of active people, such as Roy Fletcher, whose duties include treasurer, newsletter editor and publisher. The future will bring increasing pressures on the Park due to the burgeoning population of the area and the insistence on wanting to hold large-scale commercialized events in the Park. Hastings Park in Vancouver has a similar Trust that has been overlooked and the site is now dominated by the PNE. The very attraction of Beacon Hill Park that is quoted often is the "ambiance". This is very much in jeopardy. Beacon Hill Park is one of largest remnants of Garry oak habitat in the Victoria area, and it is very accessible for those without a car.

If you are interested in the challenges of protecting the Park, if you cannot make it to Camas Day and you wish to learn more about the wildflowers, check out our website www.friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca. Check back after the beginning of April for the self-guided tour entitled "Walk on the Wild Side". To join the group only costs \$5.00 per year, and we receive many compliments on our quarterly newsletter, sent out to members. Because we are a charitable organization, any amount over that will receive a tax-deductible receipt. To become a member, send your name, address, telephone number and email address to: Friends of Beacon Hill Park, 1-366 St Charles St., Victoria BC, V8S 3N3. In closing, we would like to acknowledge Janis Ringuette's on-line History of Beacon Hill Park at www.islandnet.com/ beaconhillpark, as it is a very handy reference when composing an article such as this.



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# Coastal Explorations in Botany 2

Examining Garry Oak Habitats Salt Spring Island Dr. Terry McIntosh | May 13 to 15

## Howe Sound: From Sea to Sky

An ecological exploration to Keats Island Horseshoe Bay, Keats Island Tim Turner | May 28

# Burrowing Owls and Grassland Conservation

Nicola Valley Mike MacIntosh | June 17 to 19

Intertidal Ecology Portland Island Marja de Jong-Westman | July 9

## The Secret Life of Alpine Wildflowers Rambling through the Manning meadows Manning Provincial Park Kelly Pearce | July 22 to 24

Bird Migration in the Okanagan Valley Penticton Dick Cannings | September 9 to 11

For more information about these and other courses visit:

www.cmfi.ca or call (604) 312-8145

# PlantWatch (www.plantwatch.ca)

lantWatch is part of a national NatureWatch series of volunteer monitoring programs designed to help identify ecological changes that may be affecting our environment. A joint venture between the Canadian Nature Federation and Environment Canada's Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network Coordinating Office (EMANCO), Plant-Watch partners include representatives from each province and territory. Our goal is to encourage Canadians of all ages to get involved in helping scientists discover how, and more importantly why, our natural environment is changing. The PlantWatch program enables "citizen scientists" to get involved by recording flowering times for selected plant species and reporting these dates to researchers through the Internet or by mail. When you submit your data electronically, it's added instantly to Web maps showing bloom dates across Canada, so your observations make a difference right away!

Plant watching has a long tradition and rich history. In 1750 the Swedish scientist and artist Linnaeus turned plantwatching into a systematic science. He made calendars of flowering times for 18 places in Sweden, also noting the exact climatic conditions at these times. This was the foundation of modern plant phenology, which spread to many European countries and revealed, over the centuries, that some spring wildflowers are super-sensitive weather instruments. Over one hundred years ago in Canada, Nova Scotia's Superintendent of education, Dr. Alexander H. MacKay had students collect plant, animal, agricultural and weather phenology from 1897-1923. Then in 1987 the Alberta Wildflower Survey started and blossomed into a program that initiated Alberta PlantWatch. The Alberta program then advised in the creation of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland PlantWatch. Today there are Plant-Watch programs in each Province and Territory.

The plants chosen bloom every spring, largely in response to rising temperatures. However, some species are flowering almost a month earlier than they were a century ago! Scientists believe climate change is affecting blooming times – a trend that is continuing. They predict that the greatest increases in temperature will be in Western and Northern Canada, while some parts of Eastern Canada actually may be cooling. By reporting on the PlantWatch species found in your community, you can help researchers discover how common plants are responding to climate change – and track where changes are taking place in Canada, and at what rate.

Go for a walk before flowers begin to bloom, to find the plant(s) you wish to observe. If possible, choose specimens that are growing in an easy-to-access, flat area. Plants on a cool, north-facing slope usually flower later; and those on a warm, south-facing slope bloom earlier than plants on level ground. Avoid sites which may have unusual temperature or light conditions such as valleys, or sites near streetlights, buried steam pipes, concrete foundations or paved parking lots and roads.

For trees and large shrubs, temporarily mark an



Saskatoon berry flower. Photo: Darren Copley

By reporting on the PlantWatch species found in your community, you can help researchers discover how common plants are responding to climate change.

individual plant with a tag. For smaller plants, find a typical patch of the species to observe. A good idea is to label your plant (or patch of plants) with a plastic or metal tag so you are confident you are observing the same plants on each visit, and from year to year.

Start watching your plant closely in spring, checking for swelling flower buds. Determine the latitude and longitude of the plant location. Note this on the data sheet. Record the date when your plant reaches first bloom. (For most plants, first bloom is when the first flowers open, revealing the stamens inside.) In some cases you will report when flowers have opened in three different places on your shrub or tree, or in three places within the patch of plants you are observing. It is important to visit your plants at least every few days to catch the first day they bloom. If you are not sure when that has occurred, contact your regional coordinator for help.

Record any environmental details listed on the data sheet. This includes notes on weather, the plant's location and any other interesting information on insects or animals affecting the plant. Record the date when your plant reaches mid-bloom. For tree species and lilac, report leafing dates as well. Spend some time during spring and summer observing the plants in full leaf and bloom so you can easily recognize them and return to observe them early next spring!

You can get plant-watching instructions and forms from the website (www.plantwatch.ca) or from the BC regional coordinator: David Williams c/o Department of Biological Sciences at the University College of the Cariboo. Box 3010, Kamloops, BC V2C 5N3 ph: (250) 828-5426 email: dwilliams@cariboo.bc.ca. The following list of plants has been selected for British Columbia. All but two plants are native, that is, they occurred here well before European settlement. The two non-native, or introduced, plants are lilac and dandelion. Lilac was selected because it is so widely distributed in urban and rural areas, and has a long history of use in phenology studies in North America and Europe. Dandelion was chosen because it is very common, and easy to recognize and observe.

# **Materials Sought for Landscaping Project**

Plants, plants, plants! That is the current theme for the landscaping project the Wild Garden Party partnership is working on in Sidney. Called Homes and Habitats, the goal is to design and create an ecologically friendly landscape at homes being built for low-income families through Habitat for Humanity. For all native plant gardeners out there, this is a great time to donate native plants from your yard and share the joy and benefits that native species can bring to a garden. We are looking for any of the following:

**Native Plants:** Sword fern, Licorice Fern, Salal, Red Flowering Currant, Sea Thrift, Woolly Sunflower, Potentilla, Nodding Onion, Oregon Grape - tall and dull, Goldenrod, Bleeding Heart, False Solomon's Seal, Honeysuckles, False Lily of the Valley, Twinflower, Vanilla Leaf, Twinberry, Falsebox, Evergreen Huckleberry, Alum Root, Ocean Spray, Elderberry (both), Indian Plum, Camas (any), Fringe Cup, Pearly Everlasting, Gaillardia, Yarrow (all colours), Douglas Aster, Stonecrops, Pacific Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, Nootka Rose, Kinnikinnick, Hairy Manzanita and/or X media, Beaked Hazelnut, Lupines, Grasses, Mock Orange, Penstemons, Shooting Stars, Easter Lilies, Tiger Lilies, Trillium, Fool's Onion, Harvest Brodiaea, Trailing Blackberry, Snowberry (both), native Rhodo, Starflower, Siberian Miner's Lettuce, Sea Blush, Blue-Eyed Mary, Ranunculus sp.

**Herbs:** Lavender, Echinacea, Creeping Thyme – various colours, Rosemary, Thyme, Parsley, Fennel, Sage, plus any other drought tolerant options

**In addition we are looking for the following materials:** Big rocks, Coarse woody debris (logs etc), (Lawn) Edging material, Altwood recycled plastic lumber, Rainbarrels, Drip irrigation components to service vegetable beds, Timers for drip irrigation, Pond liner, Pond pump, Solar panel to power pond pump.

To donate, or for more information, please call Lynn at the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre: 386-9676. Thank you!

# **British Columbia PlantWatch list**

Trembling Aspen Kinnikinnick Bunchberry Common Purple Lilac Dandelion Labrador tea Larch Lodgepole pine Mountain Avens Purple Saxifrage Queen's Cup Sagebrush Buttercup Saskatoon berry Twinflower

Populus tremuloidesArctostaphylos uva-ursiCornus canadensisSyringa vulgarisTaraxacum officinaleRhododendron groenlandicumLarix laricinaPinus contortaDryas integrifolia/octopetalaSaxifraga oppositifoliaClintonia unifloraRanunculus glaberrimusAmelanchier spp.Linnaea borealisFragaria virginiana/vesca

# **HAT Tricks**

By Jennifer Eliason, Executive Director

abitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) has recently undergone a strategic planning process to develop our next five-year plan. This process has provided an opportunity for us to review the accomplishments of the past five years, and to think about where we would like to go in the next five. While HAT's mission is still "to conserve natural environments on southern Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands", we have refined our five goals to say just how we will work towards that objective. One of the key goals, for me, is Goal Three: "Strengthened community support for conservation". Realisation of this goal means that conservation groups in the region have the necessary knowledge and tools and are working cooperatively towards conservation objectives. HAT has always worked cooperatively with local groups on stewardship projects and acquisitions. We encourage communication between groups with our Connecting for Conservation forums, and the Conservation Connection website (www.conservationconnection.bc.ca) and listserv. We are proud of what our partnerships have enabled us to achieve together. We are stronger through our collaborations and have the opportunity to learn through the experiences of our partners. Our founding partnership with the Victoria

Natural History Society is a wonderful example – we receive support from many VNHS members, we share opportunities for outreach, we have partnered on many initiatives, and we learn from the expertise of your group (where else would I go with my bird questions?!).

HAT is embarking on another busy year. With numerous projects underway, we continue to be supported by an abundance of partnerships:

• We are working closely with the District of Saanich on new **Good Neighbours Projects** in the Colquitz River and Durrell Creek watershed areas. During these projects, we hope to forge new links with other stewardship groups in these communities. Funding partners for these projects include EcoAction (Environment Canada), Vancouver Foundation, Shell Environment Fund, District of Saanich, Provincial Capital Commission Greenways Fund, and BC Gaming. We are very grateful for their support!

• We are also beginning **restoration of the Matson** Lands Conservation Area, our latest property acquisition on Victoria Harbour in Esquimalt. Our community partners, the Friends of Matson Lands, the West Bay Residents Association, the Township of Esquimalt, and a number of hardworking volunteers, will work together to tackle the dense growth of invasive English ivy, daphne laurel and Scotch broom. We have received funding support for this restoration through an endowment from Mandalay Developments Ltd. and a grant from the Shell Environment Fund.

• The Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative continues to work on a variety of interesting projects, including mapping of the urban forest cover of Greater Victoria, develop-



ing model tree preservation bylaws, and creating an Urban Forest Stewardship Strategy for the region. The Initiative is overseen by a Steering Committee of representatives from 16 agencies (both government and non-government), consultants, and business owners. BC Hydro has recently joined the Steering Committee and has provided major funding for the strategy development. Funding from Georgia Basin Action Plan (Environment Canada) is supporting outreach and research.

• Our wildest collaboration, the **Wild Garden Party**, continues its innovative partnership with Habitat for Humanity to provide ecologically sound (and beautiful!) landscapes for the families of a multi-home subdivision in Sidney. With the partner groups (the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre, City Green, Lifecycles Project Society, Naturescape BC, the Native Plant Study Group, and the Native Plant Society of BC), the homeowners, and Habitat for Humanity volunteers, we have constructed a massive rock retaining

# **Two New Projects:** Will You Help?

# By Norm Mogensen

Think of the great contribution being made to astronomy by well-equipped, but uncoordinated amateur astronomers. By contrast, in the broad struggle to find and protect rare and endangered species here on Earth, many amateur naturalists are handicapped by the lack of a good tool, in the form of a comprehensive local field guide for the identification of rare native species.

On Friday, January 21st, I attended a *Species at Risk* symposium, facilitated by the Canadian Forest Service research establishment on West Burnside. Apart from finding the symposium very interesting, I came away with strengthened, long held convictions that:

(1) there ought to be a handy field guide dedicated to describing and illustrating all the rare and endangered species (both flora and fauna) of at least the Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone of British Columbia, in a manner that might be user friendly to amateur naturalists at least, who now may see but not recognize and report them; and

(2) as many of us struggle hard to rid our urban forest remnants of pernicious alien invasive species (apart from ourselves) that are rapidly smothering and displacing our native species, commercial nurseries continue to sell such stock to gardeners as though harmless, and gardeners, often through ignorance, continue to provide them with secure garden bases from which to spread into adjacent forest remnants. It is time to mount an information campaign about the destructive effects of specific invasive species and to put pressure on purveyors (perhaps both voluntarily and through wall, built raised veggie beds, installed pathways, planted native shrubs and put down water-retaining mulch. There is still work to do, with two additional houses nearing completion. We are looking forward to getting back into the dirt this spring to lend a hand with this wildly creative project. Extra hands are always welcome so if you would like to get involved in this or any other project, give HAT a call at 995-2428. We are also looking for donations of plants and other supplies for the Homes and Habitats project (*See box on page 21*). Funding support for this project has come from the Victoria Foundation (JW McConnell Family Foundation Environmental Funding), VanCity Savings Community Partnership Grant and Credit Union, and CRD Water.

We are looking forward to our busy year, with new partnerships beginning and old-but-gold partnerships continuing. Please call (995-2428), visit (316-620 View Street), or check out our website (www.hat.bc.ca) if you would like to know more about these or other HAT projects.

encouraging the introduction of local government bylaws), to stop selling it.

With respect to the field guide, I understand that no other organization has done this comprehensively, although there is a lot of scattered good information out there that needs to be brought together in a handy sized, "easily to consult, fieldguide" form. I propose that, with permission of the owners of existing data and photos, they be used, rather than try to find and photograph new, hard to locate specimens in the wild. Compiling this will probably entail a digital format, so first, standard and commonly used terminology, references maps and layout formats should be developed and agreed upon. It will be necessary to identify and consult with current owners of the data, to ensure its availability in the form needed. I don't see this as a commercial venture, but one ultimately important for environmental protection. However some costs will likely be incurred, so it will be important to properly estimate these and at least, recover them via appropriate grants, donations and/or sales of the end product (with adequate interim financing).

The project to "ban the propagation and sale of invasive alien species" would largely entail educating the public and several levels of government, prompting them to take appropriate measures to stop the spread of these biological enemies of our local forests, and to eradicate them where they exist, even in domestic settings. Details of that are yet to be worked out.

I view these as projects best undertaken by volunteer teams, each with its needed array of skills (which might be more varied than is apparent). Certainly professionals in relevant disciplines are welcome. The projects might need an extended period of time to mature. Good retirement careers eh! Accordingly, I invite anyone who may be interested in participating in either project, to let me know this soon. In doing so, please provide your name, phone number, e-mail address, and your special interest or expertise. I can be reached at 477-9114 or nmogensen@shaw.ca.

# Letters

To whom it may concern

I would like to thank you for selecting me as the recipient of the Victoria Natural History Bursary Award. It means a great deal to me to have you acknowledge the program we are attempting to put in place here in Canada. I have enjoyed my first year at Royal Roads and am confident that I will be able to apply much of what I have and will learn at Royal

#### Roads towards our organization.

I am appreciative of the financial assistance you have provided to both the organization and me. Thank you again

Jay Honeyman

**Executive Director** 

Karelian Bear Shepherding Institute of Canada

The VNHS contributed financially to the Salmon Run school programs held at Goldstream this past fall. Below are some letters from students thanking us for the support. They have not been edited!

Dear Goldstream Chum, I really liked the movie at the Nature House and seeing the female solmon making the redd. We can't wait to get our tank of eggs! Thank you full for leting us akewood

To: Victoria, Natural Society

Hi our names are Jenna and Olivia we in grade 3 Mos Jensen's class We Went to Goldstream to learn about salmon so we know how to take care of our salmon eggs when we get them when we were at the nature house we saw a tape on a salmon's life cycle. We also sawa tape, that had a bear in the estuary. our Envorite part was that we saw the insides of a female salmon. It st touched Eggs, we went up and felt like jello. Why we wrote to you is because we want to sav for donating money to program's so we can From Jenna afford to go.

- tom-	-lator	
Dear; G	oldstream Chums,	Non, Nov 15
Thank	you for sharing your	time with
	learn that the children ging nettle. I learn alo	
	. Thank you very, very,	
	, Leah Massis Div4 Willway	

Goldstream was great. Thanks for supporting this givesome program. From Oaklands

# Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative (ELSI) Report: June 2004 to January 2005

# By Peter Heron

In June, Ann Nightingale asked me to replace her as your VNHS representative on ELSI. I was very pleased and honoured to accept. Some VNHS members may not be familiar with ELSI; it functions as an advisory group and as a partnership between community and environmental groups, government agencies and First Nations, working together to protect and improve the health of Esquimalt Lagoon and Coburg Peninsula. It is composed of 18 different agencies or organisations represented by 30 individuals. It has two subcommittees - Planning and Restoration and Outreach and Interpretation. ELSI functions under the auspices of VEHEAP (Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours Environmental Action Program) and is very ably chaired by Jody Watson of the CRD. Bruce Whittington and I are your two VNHS representatives.

ELSI meets, generally, once every two months, and addresses both specific projects and on-going issues. For example, ELSI organised and co-ordinated the *Oceans Day* 

# **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held September-April on the following days. **Board of Directors**: the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.); **Natural History Presentations**: the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., in Murray and Anne Fraser 159, University of Victoria; **Botany Night**: the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre; **Birders' Night**: the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser 159, University of Victoria. **Marine Night**: the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre. Locations are given in the calendar listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca.

# MARCH

#### Tuesday, March 8 NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION (AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING) Gorgeous Galapagos

The Galapagos Islands are renowned for their place in the development of the theory of natural selection and continue to be a magnificent laboratory of evolution. They are also famed as a wonderful place to see wildlife. Join **Michael Jackson** for a slide-illustrated talk on the natural history of these special islands. Michael is the author of the best-selling *Galapagos – A Natural History*, has been leading trips to the islands for 25 years, and is a founding director of the Charles Darwin Foundation of Canada. Everyone welcome. Bring your coffee cup and a friend. 7:30 p.m., Fraser 159, University of Victoria. celebrations at Royal Roads University on June 5, 2004, which were attended by over 550 people. It also provided a display for Parks Canada's *Canada Day* celebrations. Royal Roads University is requesting input into its expansion plans, and ELSI was also informed about Royal Bay's plan to reclaim Producers Pit (the huge Colwood gravel pit) using Class A bio-solids in both agricultural in-fill and in topsoil. Two more interpretive signs at the Lagoon are in preparation. The first is in place beside the pumping station at the west end of the Peninsula.

An on-going project is the Coburg Peninsula (Esquimalt Lagoon Spit) Management Plan being developed in cooperation with the City of Colwood. It will incorporate restoration, protection, and recreation objectives. So far 13 benches have been installed, and the implementation strategy has been prepared. Public consultation tools such as displays and response forms will be circulated before June. The fish bearing potential of creeks (especially Colwood and Bee Creeks) entering the Lagoon is being examined through fish inventories by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Royal Roads students, and members of ELSI. The Pacific Centre for Family Services is planning the restoration of Bee Creek, which runs through its grounds. The historic landfill area adjacent to the Lagoon will be decommissioned and restored to a natural salt marsh by the Department of National Defence, with possible input from ELSI.

It is a privilege to serve on this committee. Its work is extremely important, particularly over the long-term. For more information, please visit the ELSI website: www.veheap.crd.bc.ca/elsi/about.htm

#### Saturday, March 12 BOTANY FIELD TRIP

#### Identifying Trees and Shrubs in Winter

Join **Agnes Lynn** and learn how to identify them before the leaves come out! Location: Phyllis Park at the end of Ten Mile Point. Take Arbutus Road and park near the gate to Phyllis or take Tudor and continue on to Phyllis to the end. 10:00 a.m. Call Agnes at 721-0634 for more information.

## Tuesday, March 15 BOTANY NIGHT Camas Landscapes of Southern Vancouver Island. Dr. Brenda Beckwith's presentation will include results from ap-

**Dr. Brenda Beckwith**'s presentation will include results from applied ethnoecological studies, conducted in both nursery and field settings, on *Camassia* spp. These studies support the ethnographic

evidence that camas was cultivated by Straits Salish peoples and indigenous management activities for this root vegetable shaped the larger oak landscape of this region. Swan Lake Nature House 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

## Friday, March 18 and Saturday, March 19

John Taylor & Lynn Beak are hosting a house concert with Ian Tamblyn, www.tamblyn.com at their home for two nights, Concert starts at 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Advance tickets only: \$15. Seating limited to 30 each night. Ian, as well as being a musician, works as a naturalist guide in the Arctic and Antarctic and will probably have slides as well as songs. All the proceeds go to the artist who is doing a benefit concert in Tofino for the Whale Festival. Contact John or Lynn for tickets by email (john\_f\_taylor@telus.net), phone (598-3584), or catch us at the Folk Club Sunday nights.

## Saturday, March 19

## **\*\*\*YOUNG NATURALISTS FIELD TRIP\*\*\*** A Walk Through Time

Helen Oldershaw of the Friends of Beacon Hill Park will teach the smaller set about the History of Beacon Hill Park while exploring the amazing flora and bird life that resides within the park. Families: meet at the gate to the petting zoo in Beacon Hill Park at 1 p.m.

# Wednesday, March 23 **BIRDERS' NIGHT**

# The Natural History of the Osprey

The Osprey is a bird found in the temperate and tropical parts of all of the world's continents, except Antarctica, and there is no shortage of Ospreys right here on Vancouver Island. Michael Miller, a biologist from Cobble Hill, will present a slide-illustrated talk on this magnificent raptor, which is in a class by itself. 7:30 p.m., Fraser Building 159, University of Victoria. Free and everyone welcome. Bring your coffee cup and a friend.

## Thursday, March 24

# Trans-Pacific Migrations of the Albatross & Others

Join the Victoria Natural History Society and Rocky Point Bird Observatory for this special joint presentation. Discover the amazing movement patterns of the albatross and various other creatures. Find out how they overcome the hardships and risks of long-distance travel through and over the often inhospitable and food-deprived ocean. The great flights of the albatross, which come to California to get food for their chicks waiting in nests over 4000 miles away, will be a primary focus. The fasting of whales, tuna, great white sharks, and other marine animals, as well as the surprising over-water journeys of various shorebirds, land birds, insects, and bats will also be covered. Guest speaker, marine biologist Peter Pyle worked as a Farallon Island Biologist for the Point Reyes Bird Observatory for 24 years, studying bird, bat, and butterfly migration and white sharks. He currently works for the Institute for Bird Populations, is a Research Associate for the California Academy of Sciences, and the author of the bird-banders' primary reference, Identification Guide to North American Birds.7:30 p.m., Fraser Building 159, University of Victoria. Free, but donations welcome.

# Monday, March 28

## MARINE NIGHT

Biophysical ShoreZone Mapping in Alaska, BC and Washington The speaker will be Mary Morris of Archipelago Marine Research.

# APRIL

# Sunday, April 10 **BOTANY FIELD TRIP** Spring Wildflowers at Mill Hill

Join Joy Finlay and Agnes Lynn for a 10:00 a.m. start. Take the Colwood exit off Trans-Canada Highway and follow Old Island Highway. Turn right on Six Mile Road just before bridge, then left on Atkins Road. Turn left at the four-way intersection to continue on Atkins Avenue that leads to the park entrance on the right. Call Agnes at 721-0634 for more information.

## **Tuesday, April 12**

## NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION Kwadav Dan Sinchi: the North American Iceman.

James Cosgrove, the Manager of the Natural History Section at the Royal BC Museum, will be speaking about "Long-Ago-Person-Found" or Kwaday Dan Sinchi, the North American Iceman. The headless body was discovered by sheep hunters in 1999 after it had become uncovered at the foot of a melting glacier in Tatshenshini-Alsek Park near the British Columbia Yukon border. Hunting tools, a hat, a robe and even food (a pouch of dried salmon was in the robe) were found near the body that had remained frozen for over 500 years. The hat and robe are dated between the years 1415 and 1445 - before Columbus even arrived in North America. The frozen body had been well preserved by the ice, and a few years after its discovery, the head was also found! DNA testing is being done to determine if there are any links between the native tribes and the ancient man. Come out and hear the latest on this incredible find. Everyone welcome. Bring your coffee cup and a friend. 7:30 p.m., Fraser 159, University of Victoria.

## Saturday, April 16 **BOTANY FIELD TRIP**

# Spring Wildflowers On Horth Hill And Bear Hill

Sharon Godkin and Agnes Lynn will be leading this adventure that starts at 10:00 a.m. Bring a lunch and please try to car-pool as parking is limited. Meet in parking lot at Horth Hill. To get to Horth Hill, take Pat Bay Highway north to Wain Road exit. Follow Wain Road west to cross over the highway, then turn right on Tatlow Road to the park entrance on right. To get to Bear Hill from Horth Hill, return to highway and go south. Turn right at Island View Road, left on Saanich Cross Road to Central Saanich Road, continue south on Central Saanich Road to right on Keatings Cross Road, left on Oldfield, left on Bear Hill Road to parking lot. Call Agnes at 721-0634 for more information.

#### Saturday, April 16

# **\*\*\*YOUNG NATURALISTS FIELD TRIP\*\*\*** Hartland Landfill & Recycling Tour

Elaine Leckie (CRD) will lead this tour to learn more about how Hartland practices the 3Rs to save precious landfill space, con-

## **Tuesday**, April 19 **BOTANY NIGHT** Who was Carl Linnaeus?

Dr. Joe Harvey will show that the father of botanical and zoological nomenclatural was not a boring figure as one would guess from his long lists of plant names. It all starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Swan Lake Nature House. Everyone welcome.

## Saturday, April 23

# FIELD TRIP

# **Camas Day in Beacon Hill Park**

Birding walk with Tom Gillespie at 9:00 a.m., Archaeology Walk at 11:00 or 1:00 with Grant Keddie, Wildflower Walk with Adolf Ceska and Brenda Beckwith at 11:00 and 1:00. Walks are about 1 hour each. Meet at the flag pole atop Beacon Hill. Jointly sponsored by VNHS and Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society. Call Agnes Lynn at 721-0634 for more information.

Sunday, April 24 **BOTANY FIELD TRIP** 

Help wanted with the Naturalist Magazine mailout Helpers are needed for this for the bi-monthly project. Please call or email Tom Gillespie at 361-1694 / twg@horizonnet.ca

## The Goldstream Artshow (Sept 17. to Oct. 10, 2005)

"The Nature of Island Artists" is held at the Visitor Centre in Goldstream Provincial Park every second year and showcases artists from our region. The exhibit aims to increase public awareness of the importance of conserving natural areas through the use of a medium that is accessible to all: art. More than one hundred artists participate in the show, with a diverse array of styles and media. Previous contributing artists have included such well-known names as Fenwick Lansdowne, Robert Bateman, Mark Hobson, Art Vickers, Mark Nyhof, and Lissa Calvert. Each exhibit, members of the Victoria Natural History Society have volunteered their time to make the show a success. These tireless efforts go towards supporting the salmon run school programs. If you can support this great cause, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. While we're on this topic, the artshow committee is seeking a volunteer coordinator! This involves great organizational skills and a working telephone. As well, some other key volunteers are needed to help out with advertising/promotions, sponsorship, wine and cheese opening night, etc... Anyone who wishes to be more involved can contact Darren or Claudia Copley at dccopley@island.net (479-6622).

## Help with YNC

The Victoria chapter of the Young Naturalists Club would love to hear from people that would be willing to lead a field trip: on a topic and to a location of your choosing! The Club has one trip per month and every child must be accompanied by an adult, so you

## Spring wildflowers on Lone Tree Hill

Join Moralea Milne and Agnes Lynn at 10:00 a.m. Follow the Trans-Canada Highway to Millstream Road exit. Turn right on Millstream Road and continue to the junction of Millstream Lake Road. Turn left to continue on Millstream Road to the park entrance on right. Call Agnes at 721-0634 for more information.

## Monday, April 25 MARINE NIGHT

## Lugworms to Shovelhead Worms, and Some in Between

Kelly Sendall is Collections Manager of Fish, Invertebrates, Reptiles and Amphibians at the Royal BC Museum. He is also working toward a Masters degree at UVic on the taxonomy of worms. Tonight he will describe the wonderful, diverse world of marine worms. Come and enjoy all segments of this presentation. Swan Lake Nature Centre 7:30 pm.

#### Wednesday April 27 **BIRDERS' NIGHT** Brvan's Botswana Adventure

Arm-chair travel with Bryan Gates as he takes you on the trip he and other members of the VNHS went on earlier this year. 7:30 p.m., Fraser Building 159, University of Victoria. Free and everyone welcome. Bring your coffee cup and a friend.

# **BULLETIN BOARD**

always have lots of helpers. If you're keen to become even more involved, the Club would love some assistance in organizing these monthly trips. Please call Shirley Conner at 642-7531 or 642-7492.

#### What's that in your freezer?

Rocky Point Bird Observatory is accepting bird specimens for educational purposes as permitted under their federal salvage permit. Ideally, specimens should be labelled with the date and location they were obtained, but we can still use them even with this information missing. Please contact Rick Schortinghuis: 652-3326 or shylo@islandnet.com.

#### Are you going on one of the VNHS field trips?

Willing to pick up a VNHS member in James Bay? If yes, then please telephone 384-7553. Thank you for your consideration.

## Field trips every weekend:

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks winter nature programs calendar is available by calling 478-3344 or visiting www.crd.bc.ca/parks//brochure2.htm

#### Spring Break at Swan Lake 2005

Take your break at the lake! (March 21-24, 28 and 29) Come and buzz with honey bees, blow bubbles, be busy as a beaver and caper with crows. Have a picnic with Garry at the top of Christmas Hill, enjoy a fun-filled ramble around Swan Lake and find out what makes our night creatures so special. Some programs require pre-registration. For full information, check out our website www.swanlake.bc.ca



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# CAMAS DAY

WHEN: Saturday, April 23, 2005 - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. WHERE: Beacon Hill Park (walks begin at the flagpole)

# Guided Walks

9:00 a.m. Birding Walk in Beacon Hill Park (1 hour) Join Tom Gillespie from the Victoria Natural History Society and learn to recognize some of the birds who call the park home.

11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Wildflower Walks (1 hour each) Botanist Adolf Ceska and ethnobotanist Brenda Beckwith will lead groups to seek out the common and not so common flowers in the wildflower meadows of the park.

11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Native History of Beacon Hill Park (1 hour each) Grant Keddie, Archaeologist at the Royal B. C. Museum, will lead a fascinating walk to archaeological sites in the park.

Sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and Friends of Beacon Hill Park. For information call Helen Oldershaw at 592-6659 or Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.