



# Langley Field Naturalists



To encourage nature appreciation, conservation and education

c/o Secretary, 203-9018 208<sup>th</sup> Street, Langley, BC, V1M 2Y8

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Newsletter

December 2016

## HUMMINGBIRDS

There are no hummingbirds in Europe so, while growing up there, hummingbirds were exotic jewels to me in far-away lands. Imagine my surprise, after I came to Canada, finding swarms of hummingbirds around hummingbird feeders on a ranch in the Central Interior of BC.

With global warming, Anna's Hummingbirds (*Calypte anna*) have expanded their habitat, so that now we can see them even in winter at hummingbird feeders here in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island, and we know that Rufous Hummingbirds (*Selasphorus rufus*) arrive here in early April. That means hummingbirds here somehow need to survive frosty nights.



Hummingbird in torpor

Photo: Ursula Kernig

I could not imagine how they survived until my visit with Dixie Mueller in late April. While we were in her garden one morning, she called me: "Come here, there is a hummingbird in torpor". Wow, I got my cellphone ready for

some photos and joined Dixie. There it was, hanging with its tiny feet upside down from a twig in a smoke bush. We circled around it quite close. But nothing disturbed this usually so frisky bird. I took some photos as close as I could get to it on the grassy slope. Here was my answer to how hummingbirds survive cold nights.

When we went back about 1/2 hour later, the jewel had melted away in the sunshine.

*Ursula Kernig*



## Thursday December 15<sup>th</sup> MEMBERS NIGHT

Special evening  
consisting of a short  
business meeting

followed by members favourites  
(bring 10-12 slides, photos, a collection)

Finger food pot luck,

Social Hour

From 7.15 pm



If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2016/17, please do so before the end of the year, as we have to confirm names to BC Nature.

## LANGLEY FIELD NATURALISTS 2016-2017 DIRECTORS

President: Bob Puls  
604-856-7534 ~ bob@puls.ca

Vice President:

Past President: Jude Grass  
604-538-8774 ~ judegrass@shaw.ca

Secretary: Joan Taylor (Assist: Norma Truman)  
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Treasurer: Ian Taylor  
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Membership: Sheila Puls  
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FBCN Director: Kathy Masse  
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Webmaster: Lisa Dreves/Joan Taylor

### REPRESENTATIVES & CONVENORS

Historian & Toots Tucker  
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Greeters: Rebecca Tin Tun/Helen Thompson

Refreshments: Cecily Isler / Monica Newman  
604-514-9697 ~ pcangus@telus.net

Forslund-Watson: Ryan Usenik  
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Parks & Environment (City): Lisa Dreves  
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Campbell Valley Park Association: Jude Grass

Derby Reach Brae Island: Anne Gosse

Nature Kids Anthea Farr 604-576-7731  
nicomekl@naturekidsbc.ca

Member Participation Committee: Joanne Rosenthal  
604-455-0116 ~ jrrose77

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month  
from September to June, starting at 7.15 pm  
at the Langley Community Music School,  
4899 207 St. Langley

Executive meetings are held  
on the first Wednesday of each month Sept - June  
at the LEPS office or at Executive members' homes.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



After a record breaking dry summer, we have now set a record for the number of days with measurable rainfall for October (28 out of 31) and are continuing with the same pattern into November. The result has been an exceptional year for fungi with new species still occurring in the Mountain View Crownlands brings my total identified (subject to peer review) to 400 species.

We are also hearing of record numbers of Snow Geese overwintering or passing through the Fraser River delta. Climate change seems to be affecting bird migration and I have seen, for the first time, a White-throated sparrow at my feeder in October and November and Orange-crowned Warblers on the 8th avenue trail in November, also a new sighting for this area. As of today, November 23rd (Newsletter deadline) we still haven't had a frost, which must be unusual if not a record.

The R.E. Mountain Secondary School Green Team hosted the November 'Green Wednesday' film presentation by showing a National Geographic special on Climate Change. It was a fantastic film, scary and dramatic, but attendance wasn't very good. Hope to see more of you at future Green Wednesday presentations

**Bob**

### **GREEN WEDNESDAYS AT KPU LANGLEY, ROOM 1030 20901 LANGLEY BYPASS**

Doors open 6.30 pm Film starts at 7 pm

**December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Haida Gwaii: On the edge of the world**

**January 11, 2017  
To the ends of the earth**

**February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
The Messenger**

*Admission by donation  
Light refreshments  
See trailers at greenideasnetwork.org*

**BC NATURE FALL MEETING,  
PRINCE GEORGE,  
SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> - 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2016**

Sheila and I left for Prince George at 8 am on a fine September 22<sup>nd</sup> morning, stopping at 100 Mile House for a picnic lunch and arriving in PG at 4.45 pm. We decided to have dinner at the Hotel restaurant until we saw the menu and prices and retired to our room for beer, chips, an apple and granola bar.

The social and buffet commenced at 6.15 pm offering a bun, smoked salmon and fruit which wasn't impressive. Then Mike Nash gave a presentation on the highlights and places to visit around PG ranging as far as Prince Rupert, Jasper and the Yukon, claiming PG as the centre of BC, and within reach of everywhere. It was a good presentation with excellent sound quality in the conference room.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> was a full day of presentations, commencing with a rather sparse and only cold breakfast. Mayor Hall was introduced and gave the usual speech of praise and Clive Keen was introduced as moderator.

**Doug Heard and Dale Seip** gave the first presentation on **WOODLAND CARIBOU**. They explained that there are 4 sub-species that differ in their feeding and elevation habits and that 95% of their habitat is protected. Never-the-less the South Peace group have dropped in numbers by 30% over the last decade, and that habitat protection was not working. Mining, oil exploration and wind power are competing for space in the lower ranges, whilst the higher ranges are self-sustaining.

The main problem is that moose have moved south into the caribou's traditional habitat and wolves have followed the moose. Although not their staple diet, wolves pick off the young caribou resulting in 50% mortality in the first month of life. Fencing in the calving grounds did not work as the wolves just wait until they are released. This is the basis of the wolf kill strategy along with reduction of the moose population.

**Bruce Harrison of Ducks Unlimited** followed with a talk on **HOW TO COUNT DUCKS**. This

included tips on how to recognize species when in eclipse from their colour, shape, vocalization, habits and take off from water. He included information on their loafing, nesting and feeding habitats and then more information on migration, satellite telemetry and banding.

**Ken Otter** was the lunchtime speaker telling us about **SUBURBAN BIRDS** and whether they lived in paradise or an ecological trap. Young forests have a lower food supply and result in poorer reproductive success. If the birds are in better condition they produce a stronger dawn chorus and are more attractive to a mate. Nesting success is much better in urban areas if a more diverse planting of tree species is adopted. Bird feeders are good for winter but tend to be abandoned in the breeding season when natural food, such as caterpillars, is more abundant. Feeders can be predator magnets (hawks, cats) as well as attracting parasites (cowbirds).

**Roy Rae** from the University of Northern B.C. gave a talk about **THE HISTORY OF B.C'S WILDLIFE** starting from 500 million years ago. This led to the appearance of man on the scene and the consequent effect on the environment; Included were the fur trade, and its effect on furbearers, the Gold Rush, with the decimation of grouse, waterfowl and deer for food, and including the virtual extermination of bison east of the Rockies. Conservation did not begin until the end of the 1800's.

**Rob Bryce** gave a talk on **NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY** which allows you to link your photographs to a GPS reading so that you know exactly where each photo is taken.

**Darwyn Coxson's** talk was on the **ANCIENT INLAND RAIN FOREST** in the Upper Fraser Valley. Western Red Cedar became established in this region 2,000 years ago, as determined by pollen deposited in the lake beds. It is thought to be possible that seeds had been introduced by First Nations traders. Some of the trees are greater than 1,000 years old, but are hard to age by core samples as the centre of the trees are invariably hollow. Theoretically these forests are outside the temperate forest climatic zone as it is too dry for them, but winter snow in the mountains is sufficient to retain moisture for the cedars. Cedars do not catch fire easily due

to the high humidity in their environment, resulting in the longevity of these forests. The effect of climate warming was discussed, noting a 3oC increase since 1950 and it is thought that the result will depend on groundwater retention. A new Provincial Park 'chun T'oh Whudujut' or 'Ancient Forest Provincial Forest' has been created and will be the destination of one of the field trips on Saturday.

**Dr. Charles Helm** was the after dinner keynote speaker. This was a fascinating presentation about **TUMBLER RIDGE** and the incredible dinosaur finds that have been, and still are being, discovered in the area. The find is so important that within 3 years of application an 8,000 sq.km. area has been given Global GeoPark status, only the second park in Canada with this UNESCO designation.

Over 800 dinosaur bones have been recovered to date, along with numerous dinosaur tracks in the cretaceous layer. It is now one of the most important sites in the world.

The volunteers have received considerable help from local industry in the form of helicopters lifting heavy slabs containing tracks and transporting them to the museum. Metallurgical coal was discovered in the area about 100 years ago, but all mines are currently closed. One tidbit of information that I wasn't aware of was that lignin digesting fungi had not developed at the time the coal lawyers were laid down and hence their formation, and the fact that consequently no new coal is being formed.

Photographs of the site showed the dinosaur tracks and bones taken along a 3 km hike, along with many waterfalls, lots still unexplored, and many caves which are still being found and investigated.

It was such an intriguing presentation that several conference participants decided to head north to the site after the conference and it is definitely on my bucket list for a future visit.

## **SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>**

### **FIELD TRIP.**

With the format of this year's meeting we were only offered one field trip and I had elected to go to **ESKERS PROVINCIAL PARK**. This entailed a

45 minute ride in a 12 seater van where we met Keith Egger and a colleague from the University of the North, who were to be our guides and interpreters for a fungi and lichen walk. Immediately on alighting from the van there were mushrooms at our feet. The university had permits to collect fungi from the park, so we were each given a paper bag in which to collect our finds as we set off along a wooded path that skirted a fairly large bog. The two guides valiantly identified as many of the fungi as they could during the hour long stroll, some causing discussion, others arguments, and one particular unidentified specimen was destined to be taken back to the university for more detailed microscopic examination. We found wild cranberries growing by the bog. On returning to the covered picnic site near the parking lot we emptied our paper bags along bench in the sun, where they were arranged by species, with an estimated 30-40 species found in a relatively short distance. It was a good, interesting, venture and the fungi were returned to the park environment prior to our leaving.

The **Fall General Meeting of BC Nature** took place in the afternoon with a banquet in the evening at which **Chris Harris**, renowned photographer and author was the after dinner speaker.

His presentation contained several 6 minute photo-clips which had been arranged to music. These featured:

**'SPIRIT IN THE GRASS'** – the most biodiverse area in Canada.

**'COAST MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS'** – touted as the next Beringia, Rick Careless and Dave Nedes, founders of ARC, dream to create this contiguous wilderness as a protected area covering altitudes from 400-4,000ft.

**'SHIELD VOLCANOES LANDSCAPE'** in the Anahim area, presented by Chris' wife Rita.

**'MEMORIES OF ICE'** featured the Jacobson and Nimpo Lake area with a commentary on planetary history.

Chris will be presenting this show in the lower mainland later this year whilst promoting his latest book 'British Columbia's Cariboo Chilcotin Coast'. A presentation you won't want to miss.

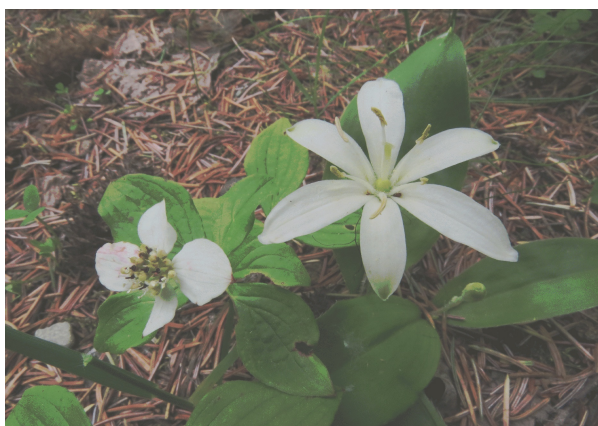
**Bob Puls**

## CYPRESS PROVINCIAL PARK SATURDAY AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup>

Al Grass

It was beautiful weather in the lovely mountain setting. Our group of 14 (with guests from Nature Vancouver (Eva), the Wild Bird Trust of BC (Derek) and Abbotsford Mission Naturalists (Stan) headed off on the Yew Lake Trail.

Our bird list was small but nice, including Cooper's Hawk, Steller's Jay, Common Raven, Pine Siskin, Golden-crowned and Ruby crowned kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. There were lots of sapsuckers signs (wells) on hemlocks, but no sapsuckers!



*Bunchberry and Queen's Cup*

*Photo: Al Grass*

Plant life here is always exciting and thanks to Eva, we found fringed grass-of Parnassus, fern-leaved Coptis (rare), round-leaved sundew and western false asphodel. Eva told us that the hybrid spirea at Yew Lake still has experts baffled! In one of the grass-of Parnassus flowers we found a very beautiful caterpillar (still to be identified); also, a large caterpillar was found feeding on goldenrod flowers (also yet to be identified).

Fungi were not abundant but we did find Paxillus, sp., Russula, sp., and a "mummy berry (a parasitic fungus that attacks blueberry species. (There is lots on the internet about it.)

Thanks to Stan Olson for the insect list which includes dragonflies and damselflies an emerald, black paddletail (rare), Pacific forktail and bluets). Butterflies included the Mytila crescent, Lorquin's Admiral and European Skipper.

Mammals listed were black bear, (droppings full of blueberry remains), and Douglas' Squirrels.

Other plants of note were a *Lycopodium*, sp., parsley fern, stink current, Queen's cup, (a favourite of mine), black bean, and deer cabbage. The Friends of Cypress have produced a lovely brochure complete with colour photos on the flowers of the park (see their website <http://www.cypresspark.ca/>)

It was wonderful to be beside those ancient trees (mountain hemlock, yellow cedar) in the old growth loop.

Thanks to all for a wonderful day.

**Al Grass**

## CHEAM WETLANDS THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

Joan, Ryan and I had agreed to meet at the Douglas Park Rec-centre to car pool but realized when we got there that any cars that we left there would have been towed away when we returned after our hike. After a quick discussion we decided that a good place to leave the cars was at the parking lot where the township building used to be, at Fraser Hwy and 221<sup>st</sup> Street. We were good to go. An hour on the highway and we were there. At 10 past 9 we decided that no one else was going to join us and headed towards the loop trail.

The weather was perfect, the sun was coming up and there were a few clouds but no rain in the forecast. There wasn't a lot of bird activity as we walked the trail but we did see a Green Heron perched on a dead branch, looking out over the marsh. We tried playing the Virginia Rail call and got one short reply and saw some movement at the edge of the reeds but were unable to make a positive ID, pretty typical rail behaviour.

We continued on up the trail, flushing some Green-winged Teals as we approached the small pond. We were hoping for a Solitary Sandpiper but had to settle for a young Cooper's Hawk which flew over the pond, calling loudly while we watched from the bridge. We had almost finished the loop when we

came upon a small group of birds feeding in some bushes and low down in some trees at the edge of a small open area. There were Black-capped Chickadees, a Common Yellowthroat and, the bird of the day, a Black-throated Grey Warbler.



*Black-throated Grey Warbler Photo: Audubon.org*

After arriving back at the car park we headed for the viewing platform which looks out over the main lake. There weren't a lot of ducks but we did see quite a few Pied-billed Grebes and 17 Greater White-fronted Geese.

In the shallow water, on the left side of the first floating bridge as we headed for the lookout, were a number of the semi-aquatic perennial known as Wapato or Arrowhead. They were in full flower and quite lovely. We had our lunch at the picnic tables near the car park and then Joan waited while Ryan and I drove over to check out the trail on the other side of the lake. It goes to a lookout over the lake and is about a kilometre in length but beware because there is quite a hill in the middle. A maintenance crew were busy putting in stairs but it is still going to be quite a strenuous hike. The work crew had obviously gotten too close to an osprey nest because one was calling loudly for most of our hike along the trail. It was time to head home. We all agreed that we'd had a great day of birding.

**Josh Inman**

## **POINT ROBERTS SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>**

On a lovely sunny day, with only the smallest amount of wind, five of us met at the parking lot at Lighthouse Park. We quickly saw all three Cormorants either on the pylons or flying by us,

going south, as well as two Osprey that were hunting for breakfast along the beach further north. Our first stop was the small lighthouse on the point. There were no Parasitic Jaegers today but we did find some Marbled Murrelets, still sporting some of the breeding plumage marbling which gives them their name. On our way along the beach towards the marina we saw a number of Common Loons, also still in their breeding plumage, as well as five or six Harlequin Ducks including one male in full colour.

Another highlight was the two Black Oystercatchers with their bright pink legs and carrot like beak.



*Black Oystercatcher*

*Photo: John Gordon*

We headed back to the point and had lunch at the picnic tables and then drove over to the other side of the marina and walked down to the shore, where five Sanderling came to within about ten feet of where we were standing.

Our last stop was up at Lilly Point where we walked out to the lookout over Boundary Bay. While we were there a guy came rushing up with his binoculars and while scanning the bay explained that he was looking for a particular boat that he was pretty sure had stolen the crabs from his traps the day before. He was quite upset about it but after he had left we thought it was quite funny and wondered what he would have done if he had found the boat he was looking for. He was a long way away and at the top of quite a high cliff.

Our day ended with the following 41 species having been seen:

*Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, Brandt's Cormorant, Great Blue Heron Canada Goose, Mallard,*

Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Black Oystercatcher, Sanderling, Bonaparte's Gull, Mew Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Common Murre, Marbled Murrelet, Eurasian Collared Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Barn Swallow, North-western Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Spotted Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, House Finch.

**Josh Inman**

## **BIRDS ON THE BAY OUTING BOUNDARY BAY REGIONAL PARK, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>**



*Group Photo*

*Photo: Anne Gosse*

*Four LFN members attended the quarterly Birds on the Bay/Delta Naturalists walk for which Tom has contributed this report.*

Under gorgeous sunshine this morning, we had more than 30 participants in our quarterly Birds on the Bay outing in Boundary Bay Regional Park.

At 9:00 am, we all gathered at historic Cammidge House. Following registration of the newbies and several Langley Field Naturalists, Roger spotted a raptor in the tree behind the house which we finally determined was a Northern Harrier (white rump). Then we set out on our amble toward Centennial Beach. Some small birds were in the bushes by the slough at the end of the driveway, possibly Marsh Wrens and Common Yellowthroat Warblers. Some saw an Orange-crowned Warbler. The pond by the new native species garden was unusually devoid of birdlife except for one Mallard and a

Brewer's Blackbird on the mud shore. Following the usual frustration of "herding cattle", we finally got everyone together for a Group Photo, taken by both Langley Anne Gosse and Roger.

At the beach, the tide was way out and we saw no shorebirds. In the distance were rows of ducks, we think were American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal and Mallards, with lots of Canada Geese too. Several Great Blue Herons there too, but interestingly, I didn't see any Bald Eagles in the Bay today. Most have gone fishing elsewhere in the province. Newbie Langley Ralph (my new BFF) carried our priceless Scope and it was very helpful, but we still couldn't ID the far out waterfowl. We could identify the small flock of Cedar Waxwings in the Willow tree. We heard a Greater Yellowlegs calling, but couldn't find it. Fortunately, we saw about 10 later in the 12th Avenue lagoon by the Pump House. Leaving the beach, a Peregrine Falcon flew by, giving some of us a bit of a thrill.

We continued our walk along the trail, seeing Anna's Hummingbirds, House Finches, Spotted Towhees, White-crowned and Song Sparrows, and trying to avoid being hit by the many cyclists. Regarding the latter, we were 99% successful, the one crash scaring the cyclist more than the naturalist. Understandably, it's very difficult for a cyclist to avoid a disjointed convoy of 30 aimlessly chattering birders whose least focus is on other traffic on the path. At the Lookout Tower, we herded the group again for another photo; this amusement took the sting off not seeing many birds this morning.



*Northern Harrier*

*Photo: John Gordon*

Another Northern Harrier glided by, and we saw a Savannah Sparrow in the dunes. At the Pump

House a flock of Canada Geese and Mallards were close to shore. We picked out a Greater White-fronted Goose among them (Bird of the Day for some) and we could see it clearly, especially through Ralph's Scope. House Sparrows were around, but since the tide was still way out, no shorebirds, other than the 10 afore-mentioned Yellowlegs. We dreamed of seeing the Black-necked Stilt which for the last few days has been just across the Bay at 64th Street.

We took the inland trail back to Cambridge House, walking briskly to ensure 11:30 am arrival. Some saw Downy Woodpeckers, a Northern Flicker, American Goldfinch, Barn Swallows, and a Song Sparrow that was almost an early-arrived Fox Sparrow. Of course, Roger was the only person to see a Merlin flypast, and he searched in vain for the Yellow-breasted Chat (seen several years ago). We got back almost on time to where the Delta Nats Ladies, Elizabeth, Jean and Jennifer welcomed us with a scrumptious array of home-made goodies. When I arrived, there was only one of Sandra's legendary Egg Salad Sandwiches left. And Jennifer's Scones, both cheese and sultana, and Elizabeth's Double Chocolate Cookies, Blueberry Squares and Shortbread were wolfed down quickly by the starving scavengers.

I often wonder whether the large attendance at these BOTB events is to see the beauties of Nature in our paradisiacal Boundary Bay Park, or for the DNS Ladies' Goodies. Another awesome BOTB event.

**Tom Bears**

## **GOLDEN EARS PROVINCIAL PARK FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>**



*Earth Star*

*Photo: Al Grass*

The weather was great – a lovely fall morning with lots of colour in the trees, especially the vine maples. We gathered at the information kiosk, just past the big Mountain Goat entrance portal, and while we were waiting, one of our group spotted some earth stars (*Geastrum saccatum*) a wonderful discovery.

We then headed off to the Lower Falls Trail, which follows the tumbling rushing waters of Gold Creek. We scanned the surrounding peaks and cliffs for Mountain Goats, but no luck (perhaps too early?). Mushrooms along the trailside were many - some identifiable, and some that shall remain as BUMS. There were Lots of *Paxillus, sp*, Angel's wings, *Armillaria sp*, red belt fungus, *Mycena*, (fairy helmet's), orange jelly (*tremella*), and Inky caps.

Bird life was scarce (no dippers), but we did observe Pacific Wren, Steller's Jay, Common Raven, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin and Pileated Woodpecker.

We had lunch at the Alouette Lake day use area, where we were treated to spectacular views, and one adult Bald Eagle.

**Al Grass**

## **IRENE PEARCE TRAIL LANGLEY NATURE PARK SATURDAY OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

Umbrellas were the order of the day as the November monsoons had arrived early. Anthea, Monica and Robyn joined Bob for this outing in the pouring rain. Anthea led most of the way pointing out various fungi which were adopted as the feature of the day.



*The Umbrella Brigade Photo: Anthea Farr*

Birds seen comprised only three species; a Great-blue Heron which flew from the Little Campbell River, a couple of Dark-eyed Juncos on the trail and a Steller's Jay later on. The beating of raindrops on our umbrellas made hearing birds difficult.



*Sulphur tuft mushroom*

*Photo: Anthea Farr*

Mushrooms, however, were plentiful and although we didn't keep count I think we saw a good 30 species. Of note were lots of large Shaggy Parasols (*Lepiota rachodes*), Alcohol inky, Glistening ink cap, Sulphur tuft, False chanterelle, Puff balls, and several nice Pleated marasmius (*Marasmius plicatulus*) with their dark cap and stem but white gills. Many *Mycena* and other dark and light species were seen, but needed more detailed examination for identification.

We are not sure if a bio-inventory has been done for this park and that is something the club should consider doing.

**Bob Puls**

## **GEORGE C REIFEL MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY FRIDAY OCTOBER 21<sup>ST</sup>**

A stellar day weather wise as we gathered up at the entrance, getting some first-hand information from Varri, who keeps track of what is seen at the sanctuary and who writes a wonderful account of the sightings in their magazine "MarshNotes".

We started out in a grand way with the sighting of a peregrine falcon on the 'usual' raptor snag. Anna's Hummingbirds were busy buzzing

around the feeders. We heard a lovely song which made us stop and think – it turned out to be a Fox Sparrow. Along the dyke we were followed by Chickadees, Nuthatches and an assortment of Song Sparrows and Spotted Towhees. A beautiful adult Bald Eagle shone atop a nearby tree top.

Along the dyke near the tower, Snow Geese put on quite a display, glistening in the sun as they rose from the tidal flats. Harriers were seen hunting over the marsh and a few chattering Marsh Wrens were heard.

We got an excellent Virginia Rail count and saw two fly across the dike in front of us.

Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitchers and Pectoral Sandpipers (photographed by Derek Killby) made up our shorebird list. Waterfowl included Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, and Northern Pintail – all very beautiful in their fine plumages.



*Gadwall*

*Photo: Al Grass*

Heading back, we encountered a mink near the viewing platform, and singing Golden-crowned Sparrows (very nice). Add Sandhill Cranes flying overhead and calling and great views of Black-crowned Night-herons, it was simply a lovely day.

Thanks to all our guests from the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists, Chilliwack Naturalists and Wild Bird Trust of BC, and to Varri for her warm welcome, cheerful smile and great information. Thanks, too, to Tom Wildeboer for keeping track of the birds.

Oh – no owls (maybe too early for saw-whets?)

**Al Grass**

## JACKMAN WETLANDS PARK SATURDAY NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

I'm in danger of being labelled the leader of umbrella field trips! Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> was dry at 8:30 am as 10 of us gathered in the parking lot for the start of the walk. It was blustery as we started along the trails and the usual sparrows were not in evidence, but the ponds had all refilled after the dry summer.

In the end we logged 19 species of birds, mostly waterfowl and one lone Song sparrow showed itself as we were leaving. We also found a small brown tree frog which allowed itself to be held for a short time so that everyone could see its markings.

I had commented at the start of the walk that I had not found any fungi on the site, so Gareth, deciding to find some, walked off the trail onto a mossy bank where we eventually found 7 species which I am now identifying. So far I have *Cyphellostereum leave*, a small white fungi that grows on moss, one I have not seen previously. Then we have *Mycena citrinomarginata*, *Rickenella fibula* (Orange moss cap) and *Psathyrella piluliformis* (Common Stump Brittlestem). The others that were awaiting spore prints to help classify them were, *Inocybe lanuginose*, *Lactarius occidentalis* and *Collybia cirrhata*.

At about 9:30, when we had reached the last pond and identified the ducks there, the rain came down in earnest, so we called it a day and headed for the car park.

**Bob Puls**

## BLACKIE SPIT THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

Eleven participants joined Gareth Pugh for his weekly bird survey at Blackie Spit. A cool east wind was blowing as we set off to the pier from where we could scan the bay. We were able to see Common Loons, Surf Scoters, Cormorants, Gulls, Horned, Western and Red-necked Grebes.

From there we walked around to the spit itself where we found a small flock of Ring-billed Gulls together with a few Dunlin and a large

flock mostly consisting of Wigeon and Pintail together with the Long-billed Curlew and four Marbled Godwits that have been winter residents there for several years. A number of seals could be seen lying on the grassy banks across the estuary and an eagle flushing the ducks which flew around the bay but mostly returning when the eagle had passed.

We walked on to the Rene Saveneye area where we found a number of Double-crested Cormorants sitting on the pilings where the Purple Martin boxes are located. AI identified some late mushrooms for us but most of them had finished.



Greater Yellowlegs

Photo: Bob Puls

Although a large number of Greater Yellowlegs had been in the area for several weeks we could only find two. Taking the trail along the dike past the community gardens we found Mallard, Shoveler, Teal and Wigeon plus a large flock of American Goldfinches and a few other small birds.

**Gareth Pugh**

### SWAN SURVEYORS NEEDED IN DELTA, BC

Bird Studies Canada is piloting a new winter swan count in the Fraser River Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) to monitor swan numbers. This IBA is exceptionally valuable to wildlife, but faces increasing pressure on the land from development. Counts will happen once a month from November to March, and will consist of a coordinated effort by a team of observers over the whole IBA, following the eBird IBA Protocol. If you're interested in signing up to help with this survey, please email our BC Program

Manager Dr. David Bradley  
dbradley@birdscanada.org

**DIXIE LYNN MUELLER**  
**SEPT 4, 1945 - AUG 11, 2016**



Dixie left us on August 11, 2016, after a long battle with cancer. She was a person who enjoyed all aspects of nature, whether it was immersing herself in its beauty, or being involved in protecting it for future generations. Dixie was a long-time member of Langley Field Naturalists and participated in our walks and meetings.

For many years she lived on Barnston Island. There she created a wonderful garden in the midst of the island's natural setting. When her husband became ill, she down-sized to a beautiful piece of land with a lake and a lovely house on the outskirts of Duncan, BC. She moved more than 100 favourite rhododendrons and other cherished plants from Barnston Island to her new home and created another beautiful garden. When her husband died, Dixie found solace in the beauty of nature. Every day she fed the wood ducks and mallards on the lake and the hummingbirds and other birds that came around. Her frequent companion was Bonnie, her rambunctious cocker spaniel. She made a home for a roster of abandoned and stray cats. Dixie's love was boundless and encompassed any creature that was in need.

When Dixie moved to Duncan, she immediately joined the Cowichan Valley Naturalists. During my visits, we attended some of their walks and meetings. After a short time, Dixie was familiar with the beautiful and interesting parks and areas around Duncan. For our last visit in April, Dixie and I went together to the Tzouhalem Nature Reserve and to our delight, the camas lilies were blooming in all their glory.

The BC Nature AGM in May 2016 was hosted by the Comox Valley Naturalists and this was the last major event she was able to attend. After that her health quickly declined. Dixie is buried beside her husband in the "green" area of Royal Oak Cemetery in Victoria.

**Ursula Kernig**

**DONNA PASSMORE,**  
**1961-2016**



It came as a shock to all who knew Donna to hear of her untimely passing at home on October 16th. Although I did not know Donna personally I did have a specific folder in my email with her name on it; it still contains 138 letters and messages she sent in the last 6 years to those of us who are interested in protecting our farmland, environment and natural heritage.

Donna was born and raised in Fort Langley and several of her school time friends, including the Kwantlen Gabriels, spoke of their love and respect for Donna. She was a passionate environmentalist and dedicated her life to this end.

The last time I saw her was at the town-hall meeting that the ALC convened in the Langley Events Centre, the first and only meeting of this type that the ALC have ever held, and likely a nail in Mr. Bullock's tenure as leader of the ALC. This meeting was in protest to the 64th overpass being destined to cut through the Hudson's Bay Heritage Farm in Milner destroying both agriculture and history.

Donna was Harold Steves right hand in fighting to maintain the ALR as well as the organiser of many protest rallies throughout B.C. where big business attempted to override public and First Nation rights.

Over the years, organizations she put her heart - and voice - into included the Farmland Defense League and the Fraser Valley Conservation Coalition. She spoke out on issues ranging from the South Fraser Perimeter Road and protection of the Serpentine Fen in South Surrey, to the destruction of wildlife habitat in Stokes Pit and the need to maintain an off-leash area in Blackie Spit. Donna was at one time a member of the Langley Field Naturalists.

**Bob Puls**

## PROGRAMMES

Check our website for updates! Meetings are held commencing at 7.15 pm at the Langley Community Music School, 4899 207th Street, Langley. Unless otherwise indicated, they consist of a brief monthly business meeting, followed by the feature presentation (approximately one hour), followed by refreshments.



PLEASE Bring your own coffee mug - we don't want to keep using disposable ones.

### Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup> KRUGER NATIONAL PARK – BIRDS AND MAMMALS.

#### **Speaker: Ken Summers**

Wildlife Biologist will present a slide show of his recent safari to the Kruger Park area of South Africa. Come and enjoy an evening of viewing and learning about the exotic mammals and birds of that area.

### Thursday February 16<sup>th</sup> THE SUPER-BLOOM OF 2016

#### **Speaker: Ron Long**

Death Valley doesn't bloom often - the last time was 2005. In 2016 exactly the right amount of rain at exactly the right time produced a "Super-bloom". Ron was there for both events and will show the results as well as other aspects of the fascinating topography of Death Valley National Park.

### Thursday March 16<sup>th</sup> FUN & FAUNA ON AN ALASKA CRUISE: MEMOIRS OF A CRUISE SHIP

#### **Speaker: Graham Sunderland**

Naturalist Graham Sunderland will discuss some of the many changes that have befallen S.E. Alaska's communities and wildlife over his 20+ years of cruising there. His talk will include creature encounter highlights, insights into various animal lifestyles as well as wildlife viewing tips and ports of call information, all from his characteristically entertaining viewpoint.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

Vancouver - Sunday December 18<sup>th</sup>  
Mr. Danny Tyson  
[dityson71@hotmail.com](mailto:dityson71@hotmail.com)

Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge (Langley section)  
Sunday December 18<sup>th</sup>  
Bob Puls [robert@puls.ca](mailto:robert@puls.ca)

Ladner - Sunday December 27<sup>th</sup>  
Jude Grass [judegrass@shaw.ca](mailto:judegrass@shaw.ca)

White Rock/Langley - Monday January 2<sup>nd</sup>  
John Gordon  
[johngordonone@gmail.com](mailto:johngordonone@gmail.com)

Abbotsford - Monday January 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Mr. Lynn M. Miller  
[lynnmelvinmiller@hotmail.com](mailto:lynnmelvinmiller@hotmail.com)

*ALL I NEED TO KNOW  
ABOUT LIFE  
I LEARNED FROM BIRD  
WATCHING:*

*Failing to feed the birds  
is a cardinal sin;  
The sky's the limit;  
The early bird gets the worm;  
Heron today, gone tomorrow;  
All work and no play  
is strictly for the birds;  
The bluebird of happiness is not as  
elusive as you might think;  
Never duck the issue;  
Fowl play is not always a bad  
thing;  
Owl's well that ends well.*

## FIELD TRIPS

Please Note: anyone wishing to carpool should phone in to make arrangements beforehand, otherwise please meet at the designated meeting place. Please call to let the leader know to expect you. The walks are generally about two to three hours long and are open to all Naturalist Clubs & members of the public (adults & children, but no pets please). Please dress for the weather and bring water, binoculars and a snack.

*Note these walks are weather dependent so if the weather is bad and no calls are received then the leader will not show up.*

### **SATURDAY DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> BLAINE & DRAYTON HARBOUR**

Time: 9:00 am at Blaine Marine Park (see web site below for directions)

Leader: Gareth Pugh

Join us to visit Blaine and Drayton Harbour which is an important over-wintering area for shorebirds and waterfowl. We will also drive around to the West side of the Harbour to visit Semiahmoo Park and have lunch at the cafe in the Semiahmoo Resort. Please dress warmly and wear proper footwear. Bring lunch, snacks and refreshments and, of course, your passports. Please phone 604-576-6831 to let us know to expect you and to arrange car-pooling.

[://www.google.ca/maps/place/Blaine+Harbor/@48.9947109,-122.7592769,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0x6757baa2c029fcaf](https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Blaine+Harbor/@48.9947109,-122.7592769,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0x6757baa2c029fcaf)

### **FRIDAY JANUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> GEORGE REIFEL BIRD SANCTUARY**

Time: 9:00 am in the parking lot at Reifel

Leader: Al Grass

Walk through this wonderful bird sanctuary on the Fraser River estuary. This is one of the best times of year to visit Reifel as the waterfowl are again wearing their colourful feathered coats. Please dress warmly and wear proper footwear. There is a small admission fee. Bring Lunch, snacks and refreshments.

Please phone 604-583-8774 for information and to let us know to expect you

### **SATURDAY JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> TERRA NOVA RURAL PARK, RICHMOND**

Leader: Josh Inman

Time: 9:00 am in the parking lot at the end of River Road (NW corner of Richmond)

Walk along the dike with Josh and look for raptors, snow geese and other birds that spend the winter in the marshes on the West side of Richmond. We will also walk through the park and the community

gardens checking out the ponds along the way. Please phone 604-532-0455 for information and to let us know to expect you.

### **WEDNESDAY JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup> OWL AND BOUNDARY BAY DIKE**

Leader: Al Grass

Time: 10:00 am at OWL, 3800 - 72nd Street, Delta

Come for a 90 minute presentation and a walk around the facility to find out how injured birds are rehabilitated and released back into the wild. There is a small charge of \$5 per person.

If the weather is suitable we will follow this visit with a walk on the Boundary Bay dike to look for the variety of birds that spend the winter in this very important area including the beautiful Short-eared Owl. Bring lunch. Please phone 604-538-8774 for information and to let us know to expect you.

### **SATURDAY JANUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> DERBY REACH/BRAE ISLAND BIRD COUNT**

Leader: Phil Henderson

Time: 8:00 am to Noon, meet 7:30 at St. George's Church, Fort Langley (Lower South entrance)

Birders of all levels are needed to help with the count. This is a great opportunity for beginners to learn from more experienced birders. Please phone 604-888-1571 for information and to let us know to expect you.

### **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> SERPENTINE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**

Time: 9:00 am at the parking lot behind Art Knapps, 4391 King George Boulevard

Leaders: Liz Walker & Al Grass

We will walk around this wetland that is jointly managed by Ducks Unlimited and the Ministry of the Environment. Please phone 604-538-8774 for information and to let us know to expect you.

## **FRIDAY FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>**

### **CAMPBELL VALLEY REGIONAL PARK**

Leader: Gareth Pugh

Time: 9:00 am at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue parking lot

The network of trails leads through this regional park with its diversity of habitats and wildlife. Bring some seed to feed the birds and squirrels and check out all the different trees that can be found there. Please phone 604-576-6831 for information and to let us know to expect you.

## **WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>**

### **SUMAS PRAIRIE RAPTOR SEARCH**

Leader: Wim Vesseur

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

The beautiful pastoral Fraser Valley is an overwintering location for many raptors! We will be looking for birds of prey - such as the Red-tailed Hawk, Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Rough-legged Hawks plus any surprises we find along the way! We will warm up after with warm drinks at a restaurant. Meet at McDonalds at 9:00 am at 34618 Delair Road, Abbotsford, off exit no.92, off Sumas Way North. Please phone 604-534-3447 for information and to let us know to expect you.

## **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>**

### **BRYDON LAGOON**

Leaders: Al Grass & Annabel Griffiths

9:00 am – 12 noon.

Search out the many waterfowl, raptors, and other birds that call this wetland their home in winter and learn more about how LFN are working with the City of Langley to improve this valuable urban park. Meet at the 53rd Avenue parking lot near 198A Street, Langley.

Please phone 604-538-8774 or 604-530-2778 for information and to let us know to expect you.

## **FRIDAY MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup>**

### **8<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE TRAIL**

Leader: Bob Puls

Time: 9:00 am at 1062 – 256th Street

Join Bob to walk the section of the South Langley Regional Trail from 256th Street to 264th Street. This is a fairly new trail, recently completed by the Back Country Horsemen, as the last link between the Campbell Valley and Aldergrove Regional Parks. The trail is nicely gravelled all the way, with wooded sections interspersed by stream valleys crossed by a couple of brand new bridges, and a variety of open and closed habitat. Please phone

604-856-7534 for information and to let us know to expect you.

## **SATURDAY MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup>**

### **HOUSTON TRAIL IN DERBY REACH REGIONAL PARK.**

#### **BIRDS & BRYOPHYTES!**

Leader: Biologist Phil Henderson

Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Biologist Phil Henderson will lead us in search of any early spring bird migrants - plus bryophytes which include mosses and their relatives; tiny but beautiful plants that flourish in moist, shady sites. We will also drop down to the wetland water edge to have a look for waterfowl. Bring binoculars and hand lenses if you have them. Meet at Houston Trail parking lot on Allard Crescent, Langley 9:00 am. Please phone 604-888-1571 for information and to let us know to expect you.

## **FRIDAY MARCH 17<sup>TH</sup>**

### **CHEAM LAKE WETLANDS REGIONAL PARK CHILLIWACK**

Time: 9:00 am at Cheam Lake Wetlands

Leader: Al Grass

This 107 hectare sensitive wildlife habitat is comprised of a lake, a marsh and forests. It is a popular bird-watching area where 184 different bird species have been recorded plus it is home to many insects and mammals. Please bring water and lunch/snacks – there is a nice picnic area. Please phone 604-538-8774 for information and to let us know to expect you. For map see: <http://www.fvrd.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation/park-s-trails/cheam-lake-wetlands-regional-park.html>

## **SATURDAY MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup>**

### **LITTLE CAMPBELL RIVER**

Time 9:00am at Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club, 1284 - 184th Street, Surrey

Leader: Al Grass

Walk the interpretive trails with Al, along the Little Campbell River, to look for the plants and shrubs as they sprout new vegetation and flowers as well as any early bird migrants. While it might be early spring it can still be a little cool, so please dress warmly and wear proper foot wear. There will be a guided tour of the hatchery following the walk. Meet at 9:00 am – please park by the Hall which is in the upper parking lot. Phone 604-538-8774 for information and to let us know to expect you.