

# NATURE VANCOUVER

*A Portrait: 1994–2010*



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Nature Vancouver, A Portrait: 1994–2010  
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# Preface



Nature Vancouver, founded in 1918, and now with some 700 members, is the oldest and largest naturalist organization in Vancouver, dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of the natural world in the metropolitan area. Its all-volunteer leaders include twelve directors, four section chairs and many field trip leaders, committee chairs, publication editors, website workers and representatives to other naturalist organizations. It is an honour for me to work with these knowledgeable and dedicated people and to write this Preface.

This *Portrait* of our lively organization is made up of 35 essays written by 25 authors with a wide range of knowledge and experience, and put together by a Committee composed of Cynthia Crampton (Chair), Marian Coope (Editor), Margaret Coutts, Daphne Nagorsen and Daphne Solecki. A glance at the Table of Contents indicates the variety of the Society's activities.

The success of Nature Vancouver is due to its combination of outdoor activities with lectures, discussion and publications, to its blending of book-knowledge and practical observation. Its leaders are well-informed, love Nature and have much experience with it, experience they gladly share with others. As a retired university professor long devoted to attempting to understand the world in all its complexity, I deeply appreciate the practical knowledge of our NV leaders, knowledge applied to the study of Nature and transmitted to others. I enjoy listening to them talking about what they know!

Two introductory essays follow providing more detail about the content and background of the book, which is a fine description of what Nature Vancouver does. I invite you to enjoy reading it in order to better appreciate the range and scope of the distinguished Society to which you belong.

—Dr. Daniel Overmyer, FRSC  
President of Nature Vancouver  
November 5, 2011

# How *the* Portrait Project Began

By Cynthia Crampton



**T**he *Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993* was published to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society. Written by Jim Peacock, with contributions from many members, it charts the history of the Society from its founding by Professor John Davidson in 1918, and moves through the activities of the decades to the last chapter, “The Eighties and Beyond.”

Long-time member Louise Irwin approached me in 2008, during my years as Nature Vancouver’s President, wondering if there was any interest in updating the history. If so, she would be pleased to fund the project.

With an offer like that, the Board immediately voted to get going. I volunteered to lead the project, and two fellow Board members, Margaret Coutts and Daphne Nagorsen, also volunteered to join the committee. We approached Daphne Solecki and Marian Coope, both of whom have a wealth of information on the Society and experience in producing publications (and who have both received the Ney award, the premium award of the Society). We were pleased and grateful when they also agreed to join the committee. The five of us rolled up our shirtsleeves, and *Nature Vancouver, A Portrait: 1994–2010* was underway.

We have had a couple of years of immensely enjoyable potluck meetings to plan and implement the updating, and to divvy up the responsibilities for the necessary tasks. We asked Section Heads to provide us with articles on their sections. We asked photographers to send us their best — and most representative — photos. Members were approached to provide us with information to fill in some gaps; memories were checked and double-checked. Back issues of *Discovery* and the *Vancouver Naturalist* were pored





**Louise Irwin (second on the left) in action: leading a hike to Black Mountain in the fall. Photo by Kay Ley. For more details of Louise's life and contribution to our Society, please see the VNHS Profile, written at our request: "Memories of my 39 Years with the VNHS" in *Discovery* 36(1):8–13 (Spring 2007).**

over. Articles were edited by Marian Coope and proofread by myriad members.

We engaged Laura Fauth to design the book. She had worked as a volunteer with Jeremy McCall on *Discovery*. She was an inspired choice and a joy to work with. It has been a great couple of years. Nature Vancouver has a history to be proud of, and now it is documented until the end of 2010.

We are deeply grateful to Louise Irwin for providing the funds to publish not only the *Portrait* and an up-dated *Discovery Index II: 1994–2010*, but also to allow the conversion of the marine biology pamphlet to a more permanent booklet form, and to permit the purchase of a digital projector for Power Point presentations. For over 41 years, Louise has shared her enthusiasm and expertise with our Society. This enthusiasm and expertise, together with her thoughtful and generous gifts, made Louise a most worthy recipient of Nature Vancouver's 2011 Ney Award.

*Cynthia Crampton chaired the Portrait Project. She was President of Nature Vancouver from 2007 to 2010.*



# Acknowledgements



The starting point for *Nature Vancouver, A Portrait: 1994–2010* was the desire to record the Society’s activities since the publication of *The Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993*. The project was undertaken initially as part of the celebrations of Nature Vancouver’s 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Louise Irwin, who did not wish to wait for the book until the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, was the catalyst that compelled the Society into action. Nature Vancouver must extend its gratitude to Louise for her great generosity in covering the cost of this beautiful work and its companion *Discovery Index II: 1994–2010*.

The many articles in this book reveal time and again what a vast amount of work is done in our Society by a large number of volunteers in the wide range of the Society’s activities. Where there are many volunteers, much can be accomplished, and the Society is enormously enriched by the efforts of those who work in conservation, those who share their knowledge of nature with others, and those who organize the evening programs and outdoor activities that give members so much pleasure.

Not only the Society, but also this book, is grateful for its volunteers. Nature Vancouver must thank the 25 contributing authors of the 35 articles: Kevin Bell, Patricia Mason, Sheila Byers, Kitty Castle, Colin Clark, George Clulow, David Cook, Marian Coope, Margaret Coutts, Cynthia Crampton, Adrian Grant Duff, Julian Hudson, Bill Kinkaid, Jeremy McCall, Bill Merilees, Pat Miller, Dan Overmyer, Alison Parkinson, Nigel Peck, John Rawsthorne, June Ryder, Kelly Sekhon, Daphne Solecki, Katharine Steig and Wayne Weber.

The *Portrait* would not be a portrait without illustrations. Many thanks to the photographers whose work enlivens its pages: Nelly Bacou, Hans Berhisch, Sheila Byers, Peter Candido, Kitty Castle, David Cook, Jim Cosgrove, Kelly Diamond, Ursula Easterbrook, Phil Edgell, Graeme Ellis, Saul Gonor, Mark Habdas, Dawn

Hanna, Virginia Hayes, Andrea Johnson, Bill Kinkaid, Kay Ley, Joseph Lin, John Lowman, Bill Merilees, Pat Miller, Eva Nagy, Janet O'Connor, Nigel Peck, Annie Prud'homme Génereux, Kelly Sekhon, Rod Silver, Daphne Solecki, Susanna Solecki, Rosemary Taylor, and Michael Wheatley. In the Christmas Bird Count article, special thanks to Jenny Hards for the satirical view of that activity (from *Vancouver Naturalist* 5:4(1) December 2003), to the White Rock Museum and Archives for finding Andrea Johnson's photo of the same activity, and to the *Peace Arch News* for their kind permission to use it.

The Committee that carried through the project was composed of Cynthia Crampton (*Chair and Co-ordinator*), Daphne Solecki, Daphne Nagorsen, Margaret Coutts, and Marian Coope (*Editor*). Thanks are also due to reviewers Peter Candido, John Coope, Jude Grass, Jeremy McCall, Martin McNicholl, Mike McNulty, Rosemary and Terry Taylor, and many other Society members called upon to answer questions and proofread. We apologize to any contributors whose names have been inadvertently omitted.

Marian Coope compiled and edited the material; Laura Fauth was responsible for the design of the book.

# Introduction

By Marian Coope



As Nature Vancouver was about to celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it decided to publish two books, sequels to the two published in celebration of its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1993. The first of the earlier books was *The Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993* written by Jim Peacock and produced by Deborah Kerr; the second was *Discovery: Index (Volumes 1 to 22, 1972 to 1993)* by Roland Wahlgren. These small volumes, the History and the Index, have proved a wonderful source of information for members. However, the years have rolled by, the Society has been extremely active, and now is the time to bring both volumes up to date.

The new books carry us forward seventeen years, not nearly so many as were covered by the first history, and therefore we have described the new volume as a “portrait.” If the first volume was a history with some portraits, this one is a portrait with some history. Its articles take less account of specific years and decades, but rather attempt to show the many facets of our complex Society. Because the Society’s activities are ongoing, and long-time members have long memories, we have not been unduly concerned with the boundaries set by the dates of the title, particularly in matters of conservation of natural areas, where outside political decisions may extend issues beyond the limiting years.

Of course, the Society has evolved since its founding, but not unrecognizably so. It is still the same loose federation of sectional interests (botany, birding, conservation, sometimes geology and mycology, and nowadays marine biology). The Society still provides monthly evening meetings with talks on general topics to remind its members that all elements of nature interact with each other. The talks might be on the importance of insects or fungi, on salmon, bears and forests, on evolution or on a myriad of other subjects. There are still local trips led on weekends by experienced members to look at birds or plants or geological features, and, of



**Easter or White Fawn Lily (*Erythronium oregonum*), April, Horth Hill, Vancouver Island. Photo by Rosemary Taylor.**

course, the annual summer camps still provide the highlight of the year for many members. But the Society has problems that did not exist years ago.

Although the population of Greater Vancouver has increased in the last few decades, the Society has fewer members than it used to, its numbers having fallen from over 1,200 to just over 700. Perhaps the chief reason for the decline is the proliferation of other natural history and conservation organizations in the Lower Mainland. *BC Nature* magazine lists over 60 societies besides our own, and still there are many more, local and national, not affiliated with BC Nature (formerly Federation of BC Naturalists). Most of our ardent naturalists are members of more than one group, and cooperation between societies is the rule, not the exception.

Over the years since its inception in 1918, the VNHS has been involved in many initiatives that eventually spun off into

independent ventures, now managed by their own members. Some recent examples are Friends of Cypress Provincial Park, Camosun Bog Restoration Group, Terra Nova natural area in Richmond, the Nature House at Lost Lagoon and the Young Naturalists' Club of BC. Finding areas of concern and initiating action keeps the society vigorous and draws in a large variety of people to become involved. That these initiatives have taken on a life of their own demonstrates how far the influence of VNHS has spread.

Our Society will continue to flourish as it pursues its mandate to "foster public interest and education in the appreciation and study of nature" (to quote from our Society objectives that appear on the editorial pages of *Discovery* and *Vancouver Naturalist*). In recent years the Board of Directors has encouraged the activities of its Outreach Program in order to reach as many people as possible and to increase membership.

The portrait of our Society can never be complete as its activities are too many and too varied to be fitted into a single small volume. From reading the articles, it becomes evident what a huge amount of work is done by volunteers. The names of some members recur repeatedly in different contexts; others for lack of space may not appear at all. Here and now, we apologize to them. But all members, no matter what Society activities they enjoy, can be thankful that ours is a Society in which volunteering is the norm, in which sharing our delight in nature is a given.

A love of exploring the outdoors has always been a common denominator for members of Nature Vancouver. Better words could not be spoken than those of the late Dr. Bert Brink who, as the guest speaker at the VNHS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary banquet in 1968, described members of the Society in this way: "One astounding fact that has emerged from my reflections is that of the hundreds of members I have known, there are none I have not liked; some few have puzzled me and some I did not understand, but it is easy to develop a real affection for people in the out-of-doors and for naturalists." Many of us would agree with this statement. And Bert ended his speech by reminding his listeners that, despite the urgency of much conservation work, "I have, and I believe the majority of our members have always been aware of the danger of the Society becoming little more than a pressure group." His final

message is that we should not forget the “wisdom granted us by our members of the past 50 years,” and balance our responsibilities for the protection of nature with our enjoyment of it when we celebrate our centenary in 2018.<sup>1</sup>

## **Our Name Change**

An issue of particular significance for the readers of this book is the change of the Society name. This change was made in response to the Canadian Nature Federation, which changed its name to Nature Canada, and asked all the provincial federations and clubs to do likewise so as to establish a link between them. At the Annual General Meeting, April 2006, the Society’s Members approved the adoption of an additional “trade” name to be used for outreach purposes. A trade name is a name that an organization can use in addition to its legal name. Following this decision, the name approved by the Corporate registry in Victoria (though not our first choice) was “Nature Vancouver Protection.” Subsequently the abbreviated name “Nature Vancouver” has come into common use within the Society. The name “Vancouver Natural History Society” continues to be the Society’s legal name for registry purposes, for use in legal documents and for financial statements, but most members today have become accustomed to using the name “Nature Vancouver.” Moreover, in conversation the Society’s legal name and trade name tend to be used interchangeably. (One of the advantages of retaining the original name is that it is the name which some members may use when they decide to include the Society in their wills.)

**Our Society is now both “Nature Vancouver” and the “Vancouver Natural History Society,” both “NV” and “VNHS.”** The significance for the present book is that its authors are sometimes hard put to know which title to use when talking about the past, a past that sometimes moves into the present. **The editorial decision is to allow both names — and both sets of initials — to be used as seems most suitable in the circumstances, without apologies or further explanations.**

*Marian Coope is the Editor of the present work, and a former Editor of Discovery.*

*The Vancouver Natural History Society/  
Nature Vancouver*

# Emblem

*By Cynthia Crampton*



**T**he VNHS emblem was designed for our Society by the noted West Coast artist Hilary Stewart. The emblem first appeared on the cover of the Vancouver Natural History Society newsletter No. 137 (December 1967 to February 1968), and on the cake celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society in May 1968. The emblem has continued to appear on all our publications and official documents up to the present day. For the VNHS 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the emblem was made into a lapel pin, and for Nature Vancouver's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary another handsome lapel pin was made, this time featuring the emblem and both the Society's names, VNHS and Nature Vancouver.



The VNHS emblem, left, and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lapel pin.



# Conservation Section



*A Tribute to*  
**Dr. V.C. (Bert) Brink**  
1912–2007



**B**ert Brink, as he was known to most of us, was undoubtedly the most distinguished and influential member of the Vancouver Natural History Society in our time.

Bert joined the VNHS when he was 15 and thus was well acquainted with John Davidson, the founder. As a professor (and later Chair) in the Department of Plant Science at UBC, his academic specialty was the study of grasslands, but his knowledge of natural history was immense, and he remained passionately interested in all aspects of it until the end of his very long life. He enjoyed sharing his wealth of knowledge with naturalists throughout BC, even publishing an article in *Discovery* at the time of his death. Bert was an ecologist before the term was coined.

Bert became known for his conservation work throughout the province: on estuaries, on southeastern Vancouver Island, on the Fraser River delta, and on the south Okanagan and Southern Chilcotin Mountains. He was deeply involved in the creation of numerous provincial and regional parks, among them Tweedsmuir, Wells Gray, Spatsizi and Cathedral Provincial Parks. Bert's influence on conservation of natural areas in BC is incalculable, yet he did it all without fanfare. He was inclusive and accommodating in his approach to difficulties, persuading with logic and science.

Bert served the Vancouver Natural History Society as President and Honorary President. He was a founding member of the Federation of BC Naturalists (BC Nature) in 1969, following which he served as President and chaired the Education and Conservation Committees. He was actively involved with VNHS Camps for many years, and with the Conservation Section right up to a few months before he died.



**Dr. V. C. (Bert) Brink with Iona Campagnolo. Photo by Rod Silver.**

Bert was awarded the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Canada, and in 2007 was presented with the Lieutenant-Governor's Conservation Award for his contribution to wetland conservation and education. Iona Campagnolo, Lieutenant-Governor at the time, described him as B.C.'s "icon of conservation and sustainability." He has been recognized provincially with the dedication of the Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area situated on the Fraser River near Sumas Mountain, and regionally with a memorial in MetroVancouver's Boundary Bay Regional Park.

For those who would like to read more about Bert, we refer you to the *Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993*, by Jim Peacock, the predecessor volume to this *Portrait*. Also see "Remembering Bert Brink" by Dick Stace-Smith, another long-time VNHS member, in [www.npsbc.org/Newsletter/Menziesia\\_08\\_Winter.pdf](http://www.npsbc.org/Newsletter/Menziesia_08_Winter.pdf) and BC Nature's compilation of tributes to Bert in "A Celebration of Life," at [http://bcnature.ca/pages/conservation\\_education/documents/Bert\\_Jan\\_31\\_tributes.pdf](http://bcnature.ca/pages/conservation_education/documents/Bert_Jan_31_tributes.pdf).

*Written by Nature Vancouver members.*

# *The* Conservation Section

*By Jeremy McCall*



## **Origins**

The foundation of the VNHS Conservation Committee was announced in Society Newsletter #120, January 1963,<sup>1</sup> although members had been engaged for many years before in conservation activities with other societies. By January 1965, although not on the original committee, Bert Brink had become the chair and wrote a brief on behalf of the Society to the Minister of Recreation and Conservation with suggestions regarding a Parks Policy for British Columbia.<sup>2</sup> Bert was to remain a member and attend most of the meetings on a regular basis almost until the end of his life in 2007. His contributions were innumerable and his good sense, his balanced understanding of the needs of all parties and his ability to achieve agreement among them, made him one of the foremost and most successful conservationists in our province. He and other conservationists understood that it was necessary for many groups to join forces to protect the environment, so they took the steps necessary to form the Federation of B.C. Naturalists (now BC Nature), and later, the Canadian Nature Federation (now Nature Canada).

In March 1997, the Committee changed its name to “Conservation Section” in line with the other VNHS Sections.

## **The Members**

Members of the Conservation Section fall into several different categories. There are those who have attended most of the meetings between 1994 and 2010, the dedicated hard core. Bert Brink was first among them and always wonderfully inspirational, but there are others too. Katharine Steig, Bev Ramey and Jeremy McCall also fall into this category of constant workers. Then there have been those who stayed the course from the beginning to the end of

this period, who were extensively involved with specific issues at times, but who did not necessarily attend all of the meetings. This category includes Kevin Bell, Stephen Partington and Paul and Mavis Jones, any of whom can still be relied upon to turn up for a meeting when a particular issue of interest to them arises. There are also those who made major contributions while they were involved, either associated with an important initiative or issue, or by supporting the work of the Conservation Section. That category includes: Reggie Ho (see “A Major Success Story” below); Gordon Fisher, who developed a “white paper” on national, provincial and regional parks; Ian Plenderleith, the recording secretary for so many meetings; Rick Simpson, who helped the Section to develop an interest in Marine Protected Areas; Tim Blair, who worked to protect the UBC Farm, and who began as an efficient recording secretary and later became a chair who brought new members into the Section when it was running out of steam; Juliet Pendray, who not only acted as recording secretary but also became the chair; and June Ryder, who has worked on birding conservation issues, acted as liaison with the Birding Section and worked to re-establish vegetation on Iona Island (see page 24).

Two other notable members of the Society who attended many Section meetings at one time or another were Linda Kingston and Daphne Solecki. There have been many others who contributed to specific issues for several months, or even for several years, and it would be hard to list them all. Their support and input were always very much appreciated.

## **The Guests**

Over the years the Conservation Section often had guests (some of them VNHS members) who brought their experience and insight to the issues the Section considered important at the time. In 1994 these included Wilf Hurd, the Liberal environment critic and Gary Sutherland, Chair of the Regional Protected Areas Team for the Lower Mainland. They were followed by: Sue Hammell, NDP MLA for Surrey-Green Timbers, Anne Murray, responsible for environmental and community affairs at Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and Marian Adair, Fraser River Estuary Management Program, in 1995; Kate

Smallwood, BC Endangered Species Coalition, and Jamie Smith, Centre for Biodiversity Research at UBC, in 1997. Jamie later became a member of the Section until his untimely death in 2005; Julia Gardner, BC Parks Legacy Project, in 1998; Daniel Pauly, UBC Fisheries Centre, Jeff Marliave, Vancouver Aquarium, and Gord Heath, Marine Life Sanctuaries Society, in 1999; Marc Pakenham, Fisheries & Oceans Canada and John Clarke — the latter to receive the Frank Sanford Award for community service for his Wilderness Education Program — in 2001; Angus Mackay, Pacific Salmon Commission, in 2002; Rick Hankin, GVRD Parks, Darrell Desjardin, Vancouver Port Authority, Ross Vennesland, Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection in 2003; and Bob Purdy, Fraser Basin Council, in 2004.

### **Some Conservation Constants**

While there have been dozens of issues which attracted the interest of Conservation Section members between 1994 and 2010, many appeared only briefly, while others have been discussed at many meetings. Some are still being discussed at the time of writing. Examples of the latter are Cypress Provincial Park, in which Katharine Steig and Stephen Partington have been so active (see page 27); preservation of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR); protection of Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island; protection of the streams and sloughs in the Lower Fraser (the Fraser Wetlands); monitoring the environmental record of Vancouver International Airport (YVR); marine protected areas, especially Indian Arm; issues of concern to the Boundary Bay Conservation Committee, of which the VNHS has been a regular member since 1992, such as the Alaksen National Wildlife Area and the actual or promised Wildlife Management Areas in Boundary Bay and on Roberts Bank; Hastings Park; Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust; the Seymour Demonstration Forest, which later became the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve thanks to the efforts of Kevin Bell among others; the nesting habitat of the Marbled Murrelet and protection of the Caren Range, which was eventually designated as Spīpiyus Provincial Park, thanks to the efforts of Paul and Mavis Jones and other members of the Friends of Caren; Burns Bog; the Riverview lands, and the funding (or lack thereof) for BC's Provincial Parks.



**Bert Brink and a few of his disciples: The Conservation Section celebrates Bert's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at a meeting on 15 November 2002. From left to right, standing: Ian Plenderleith, Joseph Lin, Katharine Steig, Anne Kent, Bev Ramey, George Bangham, John Brady, Jamie Smith, Paul Jones. Seated: Jeremy McCall, Bert Brink, Hugh Hamilton. Photo by Dawn Hanna.**

## **A Major Success Story**

In the 1994 to 2010 period there were a large number of successful outcomes. When considering initiatives which may have had the most influence on the Lower Mainland's situation today it is hard to overlook the Conservation Section's influence in the Wildlife Habitat Advisory Committee on Compensation (WHACC), which was seeking habitat compensation for Vancouver Airport's parallel or third runway. As a member of our Conservation Section, Reggie Ho was the VNHS representative on the WHACC, and he was an example of our Society's ability to affect outcomes. Reggie was instrumental in bringing considerable influence to bear on the WHACC's ultimate decisions. With other members of the WHACC, he advocated a mixture of environmental stewardship and land acquisition in areas away from the airport to compensate for the loss of habitat on Sea Island. It is thanks to the WHACC that today we have Boundary Bay Regional Park, the Van Dongen property, Delta Air Park and the Serpentine Fen Wildlife Management Area, all in or adjacent to Boundary Bay, and Colony Farm in



Coquitlam, as well as the Sea Island Conservation Area, the Terra Nova Natural Area and Iona Beach Regional Park in Richmond. The WHACC also negotiated a significant fund, to be invested with Vancouver Foundation, which continues to provide valuable financial support for the operations of the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust. These favourable outcomes owe a great deal to the insistence by Reggie, supported by the Conservation Committee, on a practical and useful settlement.

In 1995 Reggie Ho was nominated for the Mayor of Richmond's Environmental Achievement Award for his contribution to environmental compensation for the third runway at YVR and his participation in the discussions to establish the Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area. In 1996 Reggie received the BC Minister of Environment's Environmental Award and in 1998 he also received the Davidson Award for Conservation.

### **Other Important Contributions**

The Conservation Section's successful contributions were by no means limited to the WHACC. In 1995 members of the Committee played a major role, in conjunction with the Federation of BC Naturalists (FBCN), in identifying suitable candidate areas for the Protected Areas Strategy (PAS). The VNHS, with other Lower Mainland naturalist clubs, had identified a number of ecologically unique or sensitive areas as part of the FBCN's Land for Nature project. These included such areas as the Caren Range, the Elaho River valley, Mount Elphinstone, the Upper Lillooet River valley, and the Nahatlach valley and Mehatl Creek. The final recommendations by the PAS Lower Mainland Regional Strategy Team were put to the BC Cabinet in the Fall of 1996 and they included recommendations to protect 24 sites ranging from 5 hectares to 30,500 hectares in size, most of which were approved.

Just prior to this period Kevin Bell, with his wife Patricia Mason and others, were among the principal advocates for the preservation and protection of Maplewood Flats, which became the home of the Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia in 1993. A full description of the highly successful campaign, in which the VNHS played a major role, was published in the 2010 issue of *Discovery*, and appears again on page 33.

In other significant actions, Stephen and Susan Steinbrecher were strong advocates for the protection of Surrey Bend, and contributed to its later acquisition by the Greater Vancouver Regional District as one of the many properties acquired under the 1995 Nature Legacy Program. Stephen was also active, together with Katharine Steig, in working for the establishment of Cypress Provincial Park (see page 27). And Paul and Mavis Jones have been the ardent champions of the old-growth forest in the Caren Range and the preservation of its Marbled Murrelets

Throughout most of the period covered by this history, Bert Brink acted as a link between the Conservation Section and the Fraser River Coalition, thus ensuring that the two groups acted in unison to advocate conservation of the Fraser River and its wetlands. When the PAS was approved in 1996, provision was made to protect 1,000 hectares of Fraser River wetlands, with the precise areas to be determined later. These were described as Goal 2 areas. It was fitting that when McGillivray Slough was finally designated in 2009 as part of the Fraser wetlands, it was named the Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area.

The Conservation Section later played an active role in advocating the purchase of the Codd Island Wetlands and the West Creek Wetlands. Furthermore the Conservation Section succeeded in getting the Board of Directors to approve a significant grant from the Society's Conservation Fund to assist with the purchase of Codd Island, using funds which had originally been accumulated to assist with the purchase of Burns Bog. The funds were no longer required for that purpose after the Bog was purchased by four levels of government.

While the Conservation Section for the most part has dealt with issues relatively close to home, from time to time its members have taken an interest in an area much further away. Such was the case with the South Chilcotin Mountains. Bert Brink first became aware of the exceptional landscapes of this area in the 1930s and he always made sure that they continued to be an important candidate for protection after that. He was later supported by the many members of the Society who enjoyed hiking, climbing and botanizing in the area when several summer camps were located in Cinnabar Basin. As a result many members of the Society played an

active role in calling for protection, an effort which was rewarded by the designation of the South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park in 2001. Certain parts of the Park were later put in question when they were re-designated as areas open for mining.

Closer to home was the recent campaign to secure the future of the entire 24 hectares of the UBC Farm, which had been threatened by the ever-spreading development of the UBC Campus. Tim Blair, at the time the chair of the Conservation Section, went so far as to get elected as a student member of the UBC Board of Governors so that he could bring some influence to bear on the protection of the Farm. Bev Ramey's daughter Stella produced an attractive natural history guide to the Farm to assist with the promotion of its attributes on and off the Campus. Thankfully, at the time of writing the future of the UBC Farm appears to be reasonably secure for the foreseeable future.

### **Conservation Nights and Conservation Matters**

A perennial problem for the Conservation Section has been the challenge of interesting the many other members of the Society in its work. There are good reasons for this, including the necessity of doing a certain amount of homework to understand the issues. Various efforts have been made to interest the Society's other Sections in conservation work such as June Ryder's Conservation Reports at Birder's Night and, indeed, many of the programs of the Marine Biology Section have focused on conservation issues. In late 1994 the Conservation Committee decided to organize a series of Conservation Nights to raise member awareness of conservation issues and the work of the Committee. In January 1995 the topic was "Wetlands" and the February topic was "BC's Coastal Old Growth." Large numbers of VNHS members came out to hear panels of highly qualified speakers on these subjects. The topic for the April 1995 Conservation Night was "BC Parks: How safe is the habitat?" Conservation Nights continued in 1996 with "Protecting Marine Areas" and "Greening the Urban Environment." These programs required a great deal of effort to plan, organize panel members and promote, but they were very well attended and very worthwhile and it is to be hoped that others will be organized in the future.



**From the 2005 Nature Vancouver Photo Competition: Old forest giants on a logging spur in the Carmanah Valley by Ursula Easterbrook. (Honourable Mention. Category: Other Natural History.)**

In March 2007 the Conservation Section organized a public meeting on BC Parks, inviting Executive Director Scott Benton and Wilderness Committee Director Ben West to speak on provincial park issues.

Another important way in which the Conservation Section got its message out to other members of the Society in the past was through the Conservation Matters column which ran in *Vancouver Naturalist* for many years. The column included short articles about issues of current interest, especially those where members could make a difference either by answering a survey or engaging in a letter writing campaign. As with the Conservation Nights, it is hoped that these too will be revived.

*Since Jeremy McCall became the Chair of the Conservation Committee in 1995 he has attended most of its weekly meetings. He has also represented the Society at the regular meetings of the Boundary Bay Conservation Committee for the same period. These meetings led to his involvement in the designation of the Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area in 1996 and the combined efforts, with other environmental groups, to oppose the development of the third container berth at Deltaport on Roberts Bank, where the promised Wildlife Management Area is still to be designated at the time of writing.*

## VENUES

1994–2005	Vancouver Museum Boardroom	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month
2005–2006	Vancouver Museum Local History Lab	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of month
2006–2009	Board Room, Society for Environmental Protection (SPEC), 2150 Maple St.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of month
2010–	St. Mary's Kerrisdale	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

1993/1994–1995	Co-chairs, Conservation and Education Committee: Kevin Bell, Stephen Partington and Susan Steinbrecher
1995–2002	Chair of Conservation Committee: Jeremy McCall
2002–2005	Chair: Katharine Steig
2005/2006	Rotating Chairs: Tim Blair, Dawn Hanna, Jeremy McCall, Viveka Ohman, Juliet Pendray, Bev Ramey and Katharine Steig
2006/2007	Chair: Tim Blair
2007–2009	Rotating Chairs: Tim Blair, Dawn Hanna, Jeremy McCall, Viveka Ohman, Juliet Pendray, Bev Ramey, Katharine Steig and Margaret Coutts
2009	Chair: Juliet Pendray (& Recording Secretary)
2009–	Chair: Dan Overmyer

# *Update on the* **Conservation Section**

*By Daniel Overmyer*



Over the years, all the sections of Nature Vancouver have been concerned to protect and enhance the natural world in and around the Vancouver area through letters, petitions, presentations at meetings, and cooperation with other like-minded groups. Through field-trips and bird walks we have guided thousands of our members to experience for themselves the beauty and value of that world, and so develop concern for its protection. However, it is the Conservation Section itself that is particularly charged with this responsibility, for which it seeks out places and activities that need investigation.

As I wrote in the *Vancouver Naturalist* of December 2010 in a report on Conservation issues: “We proceed by identifying problems and opportunities, gathering the necessary information, deciding what to do and acting on our decisions. All discussion in Section meetings is focused on decisions and actions...” In recent months we have been working on such issues as trying to protect the 32-hectare wetland on No. 6 Road and Blundell in rural Richmond, next to the Country Meadows Golf Course, an area with the temporary designation “Lulu Island Wetland.” This wetland, a former peat bog and habitat for a large number of native plant and bird species, including breeding Sandhill Cranes, is owned by Ecowaste Industries, which plans to fill in the area and turn it into agricultural land. Even in 2011 bulldozers are hovering over it. Led by Nature Vancouver member Julian Hudson and others, we have visited the area, done initial surveys of its plant and bird species, and contacted the City of Richmond to ask that it be protected. On 23 November 2010, we made a presentation concerning this wetland at a meeting of the City of Richmond Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committees, met with the executive director of Ecowaste and with The Land Conservancy,



and also wrote to Metro Vancouver Parks asking them to consider incorporating the wetland in a new park. As of August 2011, a decision has still not been reached.

Other issues the Section has worked on recently are: to oppose plans by the Port Authority to increase oil tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet; to promote more green space in Hastings Park in cooperation with the Friends of Hastings Park; and to support the Burns Bog Conservation Society in its dispute over the environmental assessment of the planned South Fraser Perimeter Road. Nature Vancouver contributed \$1000 to the Burns Bog Society to help out with legal costs. On the oil tanker issue we successfully arranged for a front page headline article in the *Province* newspaper of 24 July 2010 which led to a meeting of the Vancouver City Council on the issue. In March 2011 two of our members, Katharine Steig and David Cook, attended a meeting hosted by Parks Canada on the feasibility of establishing a new national park on Bowen Island. In the November 2011 election this proposal was defeated.



**King Gentian (*Gentiana sceptrum*), August, Hollyburn. Photo by Rosemary Taylor.**

In the past twenty years the Section has worked on a great variety of conservation issues, in cooperation with other groups, such as preservation of Burns Bog and stopping gravel mining in Olson Creek above the Pitt River, both of which succeeded, as did preventing the construction of a gondola line going up the Stawamus Chief in Squamish. Other concerns have been protection of the South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park, the UBC Farm and Iona Beach Regional Park. However, some of our efforts have failed, including attempts to limit fish farming off the coast, protection of Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island and opposition to container terminal expansion at Roberts Bank (the Deltaport Third Berth Project). We also failed to stop the South Fraser Perimeter Road and the destruction of beautiful habitat at Eagleridge Bluffs, a cause of much sadness. In all of these efforts to preserve nature from misguided and destructive schemes we have been ably led by dedicated Section Chairs like Jeremy McCall, Katharine Steig and Tim Blair.

*Dan Overmyer, a retired professor of Chinese studies at UBC, has been a member of Nature Vancouver for many years. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 2008, appointed Chair of the Conservation Section in 2009, and became President of the Society in September of 2011.*

# *The Future of the* **Conservation Section**

*By Jeremy McCall*



**T**he Conservation Section provides an incredibly valuable service by connecting its members with the important conservation issues of the day as well as with the members of other like-minded organizations. Like all organizations, the Conservation Section will evolve over time, but will always be a strong and respected voice on conservation issues and provide opportunities for conservationists to connect with and learn from each other. On one thing all the regular members agree, and that is that an evening spent with the Conservation Section is always an evening spent among fellow members of the Society having a similar outlook on the world, and enjoying energetic and fruitful discussions on subjects of common interest.



***Amanita muscaria*, November, Belcarra. Photo by Rosemary Taylor.**

# The Sanctuary at Hastings Park

*East Vancouver's Green Jewel*



*By Pat Miller*

**D**uring spring and fall migration, lively flocks of wood warblers touch down to shelter and re-fuel in the Sanctuary, a beautiful 4 hectare semi-wild wetland located in Hastings Park in northeast Vancouver. Al Grass, one of Nature Vancouver's most cherished naturalists, refers to the Sanctuary as "The Miracle at Hastings Park." And it is indeed a miracle — by virtue of its very existence, as well as its surprising capacity to provide refuge and respite in an otherwise very urban landscape. As to its amazing ability to attract wildlife, Al likes to say "If you build it, they will come."

Few people realize that Hastings Park is actually Vancouver's second largest park (after Stanley Park). The 65 hectare (160 acre) site was granted in trust to Vancouver by the provincial government in 1889 "for the use, recreation and enjoyment of the public." Almost immediately, the City leased portions of the park to commercial interests for development of a horse racing track, exhibition grounds and amusement park. Over time, much of the parkland was converted to buildings and parking lots, public access was restricted, and noise, light and traffic issues increasingly plagued local residents. For more than 30 years, the people who live in the Hastings-Sunrise community lobbied City Hall to support their vision of a green, family-friendly, accessible neighbourhood park.

In 1997, it seemed that this vision had been realized when the Hastings Park Restoration Plan was adopted unanimously by City Council and the Vancouver Park Board. The initial two phases of the Plan provided for the creation of a formal Italian "rain" garden, a skateboard park, a children's playground, and the Sanctuary for



**A view of the Sanctuary at Hastings Park. Photo by Pat Miller.**

wildlife. The next phases were to carry out further re-greening and the daylighting of Hastings Creek. The City directed the Pacific National Exhibition, a non-profit provincial corporation, to re-locate its Annual PNE Fair and Playland amusement park off-site to make way for these new park elements and a large viewing and picnicking area to be known as Windermere Hill.

Development of the Sanctuary took precedence during the park restoration, starting in 1998 with the demolition of three buildings and the excavation of a paved area to allow for creation of an upper and lower pond, connected by a short length of stream. A pump provides for the circulation of water from the upper to the lower pond. Architectural features, including three bridges and a winding gravel path, were installed to provide pedestrian and bicycle access around the pond perimeters. A diversity of native trees and shrubs, many purchased with public donations made to the Vancouver Park Board's 2000 Trees for 2000 campaign, were densely planted throughout the Sanctuary. Within several years, the vigorous growth of this vegetation, combined with the mature presence of legacy trees such as Lombardy poplar, liriodendron, western redcedar, and shore pine, made it difficult to imagine a time when the Sanctuary was just a neighbourhood dream.

The two ponds were designed to bio-filter and retain surface run-off and groundwater. Because they are dependent on natural inflows, water levels in the ponds tend to fluctuate seasonally. The original design also made allowance for future inputs from the creek's natural catchment through the daylighting of Hastings Creek and connection to the municipal stormwater collection system. Portions of Hastings Park to the north and east of the Sanctuary were to be re-greened and Hastings Creek was to flow through a riparian wetland corridor, past the Hastings Racecourse, beneath McGill Street and the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, through New Brighton Park and into Burrard Inlet.

Unfortunately, however, the next phase of park re-greening never happened. In 2004, the Restoration Plan was derailed by the transfer of the PNE from the provincial government to the City of Vancouver and the passage of the *Pacific National Exhibition Enabling and Validating Act*. As the PNE's new owner, the City experienced a swift change of heart. Rather than forcing the Annual PNE Fair and Playland off-site, the City instead chose to shelve the Restoration Plan and embark on a new park



**View from under the Middle Bridge in the Sanctuary at Hastings Park. Photo by Pat Miller.**

“re-visioning” process. The PNE was given responsibility for all Park site maintenance, including care of the Sanctuary. Six years later, in December 2010, despite its Greenest City Initiative, Vancouver City Council passed the Hastings Park Master Plan. Although billed as a re-greening initiative, the Plan’s priority is commercial entertainment and revenue generation. Public access is to be restricted to a trail system and landscaped areas that will trace the Park’s perimeters and the daylighted stream will be confined to a thin riparian ribbon, while the heart of the site will be set aside for an expanded Playland, several new exhibition buildings, an amphitheatre and food service areas. The Sanctuary will be surrounded by landscaped gardens and urban park spaces, including the “The Garden’s Gardens,” “The Green,” “The Parade,” “Festival Meadow” and “Festival Plaza.” The effect of these changes on the Sanctuary, including its ability to provide refuge for its wild inhabitants and human visitors, remains to be seen.

Despite everything, as of March 2011 the Sanctuary and its wildlife continue to thrive. In 2010, seven new bird species were recorded there, for a total of 123 species since the site was initially re-greened in 1998. One of these species included an improbable yellow-bellied sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), a bird that, in spring, is more typically found in northeastern BC. Other birds seen for the first time in 2010 included Townsend’s Warbler, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ring-billed Gull, Redhead, and overhead in October, a small flock of Snow Geese. And the new sightings haven’t just been limited to birds — the Sanctuary provides habitat for introduced turtles and goldfish, skunks, raccoons, eastern grey squirrels, and the odd coyote. In January 2011, a member of the Hastings Park Conservancy’s Environmental Committee recorded and photographed the Sanctuary’s first Douglas Squirrel.

The Hastings Park Conservancy is a volunteer-run organization established in June 2000 to represent the community, and work with the City of Vancouver and the Park Board during the park re-greening process. The work of the Conservancy’s Board is supported by an Environmental Committee and an Education Committee. From its inception, the Conservancy has been





**Oregon grape growing in the Sanctuary at Hastings Park. Photo by Pat Miller.**

actively supported by Nature Vancouver. Over the years, many Nature Vancouver members have taken on leadership roles in advocating for the Park. Efforts to convince the City to continue with park restoration have been a frequent topic of discussion at Conservation Section and Board meetings and regular news items have appeared in *Vancouver Naturalist*, updating members on Park status. A list of bird species and other wildlife recorded in the Sanctuary is maintained by Conservancy members with the generous support of Jude Grass.

The Hastings Park Conservancy's Environmental Committee organizes nature walks in the Sanctuary in all months except August and December. These walks, which are publicized on the Nature Vancouver website, are typically led by Nature Vancouver members, including Al Grass, Istvan Orosi, Kelly Sekhon, June Ryder, Pat Miller, Virginia Downes, Doug Cooper, Meg Brown, Christina Struik and Adrian Grant Duff. Les Leighton is almost always in attendance, quietly photo-documenting the Sanctuary's many natural wonders. In August, access to the Sanctuary is restricted to those who purchase tickets to the Annual PNE Fair. In

December, Conservancy and Nature Vancouver members gather in the Sanctuary to participate in the Christmas Bird Count.

In spring, when the warblers are passing through, the Sanctuary comes alive. One day, all is quiet but for the usual inhabitants — Mallard, American Wigeon, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco, and large flocks of American Robin. Then overnight, the warblers arrive. For the next couple of weeks, the Sanctuary is joyously transformed by the bright presence of hundreds of Yellow-rumped Warblers flying to and from the willows and cottonwoods, catching insects in mid-air. The benches that line the wooden “floating bridge” on the southeast side of the Sanctuary become the best seats in the house for an experience that can fill one’s heart with wonder, especially if you’ve brought along a good pair of binoculars. Each year in April, in celebration of Earth Day, the Hastings Park Conservancy, together with Nature Vancouver, organize and lead a Dawn Chorus nature walk. Participants gather at 6 a.m. to listen to the songbirds greet the morning. Warblers are usually there in abundance.

Although the community currently has no real say in the Park’s present or future status, and many people have become disheartened, Nature Vancouver and the Hastings Park Conservancy are confident that, one day, their voices will be heard. We still envision a properly re-greened, publicly accessible park, an outdoor classroom, a showcase for the earth’s resilience — and proof of our own ability to restore and nature’s ability to recover. Meanwhile, the Sanctuary remains east Vancouver’s green jewel, a place to retreat from the City, a place for peaceful reflection and quiet contemplation, a place that we all treasure.

*Pat Miller joined Nature Vancouver in the early 1980s while a graduate student in UBC’s Department of Zoology. She’s been an active member of the Hastings Park Conservancy’s Environmental Committee for more than 10 years.*

# Iona Beach Regional Park

*Nature Vancouver Volunteers*

*Plant a Hedgerow*

*By June M. Ryder*



**N**ature Vancouver has long been associated with the park at Iona Beach, part of a small island at the mouth of the Fraser River, and an integral part of the Important Bird Area that spans the Fraser River Estuary, a stopping-over point for migrating birds.

The park adjoins the Iona Island Sewage Treatment Plant which was completed in 1963. The lagoons have been popular with birders since that time and many rare birds, especially shorebirds, have been found there. The sewage plant has been enlarged several times. In 1988, disturbance associated with extension of the sewage pipes resulted in the obliteration of a marsh just north of the large outer pond. In 1991, the VNHS, in partnership with GVRD Parks, undertook restoration of this marsh, guided by Dr. Patrick Mooney, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at UBC. Funds provided through Environment Canada were partial compensation for habitat damage resulting from construction of the new third runway at Vancouver International Airport. The runway covered the site of the only Yellow-headed Blackbird nesting colony in the Vancouver region. Habitat projects designed for nesting blackbirds were undertaken at several sites, but only the Iona Island marsh was successfully colonized.

Unfortunately, since the 1991 replanting much of Iona Beach Park has been overrun by Scotch broom, an invasive shrub that readily displaces beneficial native plant species and that has virtually no value for birds and small mammals. A major broom removal effort in October 2006, involving GVRD Parks staff and



**Yellow-headed Blackbird in the reeds at the North Outer Pond (or “marsh”), Iona. Photo by Mark Habdas.**

over 100 Vancity employees, resulted in clearance of a large area, but eliminated most of the vegetation barrier between the marsh and an industrial road. The marsh now provides habitat for a variety of waterfowl and marsh birds including bittern, as well as Yellow-headed Blackbird. Concern for the latter led Nature Vancouver members to propose to GVRD Parks that we plant a hedgerow of native species to fill the gap beside the marsh.

On 13 March 2007, Nature Vancouver volunteers and GVRD Parks staff worked together to install a hedgerow of about 100 drought-tolerant plants of six species appropriate to the relatively dry, sandy site: ocean spray (*Holodiscus discolor*), tall Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), red-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguinum*), mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) and birch-leaved spirea (*Spirea betulifolia*). Plants were purchased with funds from the Greater Vancouver Invasive Plant Council. Dr Mooney, the chief designer for the original restoration in 1991, selected the plant species that were used.

At the present time, a visit to the park will show that these plants are struggling as a result of prolonged summer droughts



**View northward across the North Outer Pond (sometimes referred to as the “marsh”) toward the Coast Mountains. The North Arm of Fraser River (not visible) flows in front of the dark conifers in the middle-distance. Photo by Mark Habdas.**

since 2007, despite continued maintenance (mostly watering) until the summer of 2010. But so far, each spring, the Yellow-headed Blackbirds have returned to noisily establish their territories around the pond.

Nature Vancouver volunteers who helped with planting and maintenance include: Kevin Bell, Michael Church, Mark Habdas, George Bangham, Janice Brown, Peter and Elda Carpenter, Hank Tseng, Marta Palaty, John Chandler, Cathy Aitchison, Dawn Hanna, Dorothy Woodhouse and Brian Self. June Ryder organized the planting and hedgerow maintenance during the hot summers.

*This article is a condensed version of an article by June M. Ryder and Mark Habdas titled “For the Birds — Planting a Hedgerow at Iona,” which first appeared in the June 2007 issue of the Vancouver Naturalist, 9(2):1,4.*

# Cypress Provincial Park *and Nature Vancouver*

*By Katharine Steig*



**T**he long relationship between Cypress Provincial Park and Nature Vancouver goes back to 1912 when Provincial Botanist and Vancouver Natural History Society founder John Davidson gave Hollyburn Mountain its name during a plant survey of the area. The mountain had previously been called Mount Vaughan.

Dr. Bert Brink, one of VNHS's most long-standing and significant members, made an ascent of Hollyburn Peak in 1920 at the age of eight. In the mid 1930s, Dr. Brink built a cabin at Hollyburn's 6<sup>th</sup> Lake.

Terry Taylor first hiked up Black Mountain from Horseshoe Bay in 1960, and helped to improve this trail in 1961 on a BC Mountaineering Club trail-clearing trip. He still has records of what grew on Eagle Bluff in the early 1960s and continues to make lists of the park's plants.

Over the years countless other VNHS members have hiked on and improved Cypress trails, documented the park's plants, wildlife and other natural features through reports and photographs, led field trips, and worked to bring public attention to the park's natural environment and advocate its protection. Without VNHS's involvement, the park would not have the recognition and protection that it has today.

Cypress Provincial Park was established in 1975 after the provincial government stopped a private company's late-1960s logging of Cypress Bowl's Black and Strachan mountains under the guise of ski development. BC Parks then developed a downhill ski operation in Cypress Bowl. In 1984 the government sold the ski operation to Cypress Bowl Recreations, along with the rights

to operate a cross-country ski area on Hollyburn Ridge. Conflict between park users and the ski company began almost immediately and continued for many years.

In 1990 Friends of Cypress Provincial Park (FCPP) was founded by VNHS member John Beltz to protect the natural environment and public use of the park. Of special concern was Cypress Bowl Recreations's proposal to develop Hollyburn Mountain for downhill skiing. VNHS became a strong supporter of FCPP's goals, with several members belonging to both organizations and taking an active role in advocating for park protection during BC Parks' 1990s Master Plan process for Cypress. Bob Harris prepared a map of park areas threatened by development for FCPP's October 1992 Wilderness Committee-style publicity flyer; other VNHS members assisted with text and photographs. Many reports on the park planning process were written for *Discovery* by Conservation Committee Chair Stephen Partington. VNHS members spoke on behalf of the park at public forums and worked with other conservation organizations to ensure park protection to the greatest degree possible. In 1995 FCPP became a registered charitable society; VNHS member and FCPP director Laura Parkinson prepared its constitution.

Also in 1995, in an attempt to end the controversy, the provincial government established a Special Planning (Williams) Commission to create "a peace plan" for Cypress. Laura Parkinson served as FCPP's representative at the Planning Commission's public forum in July 1995. The Special Commissioner recommended against Cypress Bowl Recreations' request to develop Hollyburn Mountain for downhill skiing, but allowed substantial ski expansion in both Hollyburn Ridge and Cypress Bowl. Development plans included cutting new ski runs in old-growth areas and building a gondola and mountaintop restaurant on Mount Strachan. Although the "peace plan" was not supported by FCPP or VNHS, a new Park Master Plan was completed in 1997, formalizing the Special Commissioner's recommendations.

In 2001, before new development started on Mount Strachan, the ski operation was sold to a United States company, Boyne Resorts. The new owner had planned to follow through with the approved development on Mount Strachan, but in 2002 he





**Eating cookies to celebrate Norm Pursell's 87th birthday while cutting back encroaching alder on the Pumphouse Road above the Old Growth Loop in Cypress Bowl. October 2006. Left to right: Alan Banwell, Halvor Lunden, Norm Pursell, Bob Holden, Eva Nagy, Katharine Steig, and Louise Irwin. Photo by Park Ranger Kelly Diamond.**

changed his mind and proposed instead expansion of the permit area onto Black Mountain's second-growth slopes in exchange for giving up new development on Mount Strachan and Hollyburn Ridge, thus protecting previously threatened old-growth stands.

He also indicated that he wished to end the controversy at Cypress and create a more environmentally friendly atmosphere in the park. Discussions about Vancouver hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics were also under way at this time and expansion onto Black Mountain would be necessary if Cypress were to host snowboarding and freestyle skiing events. Public Open Houses were held to review Boyne Resorts's proposal, which was accepted by FCPP and the general community as a positive move, although there was concern about losing a relatively easy-ascent trail for a steeper one to Black Mountain Plateau as a result of the expansion.





**Halvor Lunden (back left) and Stephen Partington admire the “Hollyburn Giant,” a 1,000-year-old yellow-cedar with a record 33 ft. circumference, on the Strachan Trail, Hollyburn Mountain, October 1993. Photo by Hans Behrisch.**

After Vancouver’s successful bid for the 2010 Winter Olympics, Cypress Bowl underwent several years of preparation for the Games and many months of decommissioning venues afterwards. Hosting the snowboard and freestyle skiing competitions brought much recognition to Cypress, but the stress was considerable and there were negative impacts on the Park’s environment.

Throughout the years of unrest at Cypress, FCPP and VNHS continued to lead park field trips, improve hiking trails, compile plant lists, produce interpretive material, and promote the park’s natural environment. Terry Taylor wrote articles for *Discovery*

on the park's old-growth and plant communities. In 1996, with funding from VanCity Credit Union, FCPP and VNHS's Birding Section produced a Cypress Park bird checklist. In 1997, working with BC Parks staff, Halvor Lunden designed and was largely responsible for building a bridge across Montizambert Creek to reroute the Sunset Trail away from sensitive plant habitat in Yew Meadows. In 1999 Rex Kenner and Ian Lane discovered at Cypress the breeding site of the rare black petaltail dragonfly, the first recorded in Canada. They reported the news in the *Vancouver Naturalist* with the comment, "This record is a good example of the need to preserve and protect all habitats in our provincial parks — we still have so much to learn about them." (VN 1(3):3).

In 2005 FCPP produced a Yew Lake Interpretive Trail brochure with assistance from VNHS members. The brochure was funded jointly by FCPP and the Cypress ski company, now called Cypress Mountain, an indication of a new and cooperative relationship. Two Cypress botany photographic shows took place at VNHS Botany Nights in 2007 and 2010, both narrated by Terry Taylor. Rosemary Taylor played a lead role in providing photographs and organizing material for the shows, with many other VNHS photographers contributing as well, resulting in an extensive collection of Cypress botany photographs. In 2010 FCPP funded an updated bird checklist, with the assistance of June Ryder, Brian Self, Julian Hudson, and other VNHS Birding Section members.

After the Olympics, it became possible to focus again on the park, with interest among all stakeholders in working together to improve conditions in both the park and ski area. Starting in Summer 2011, interpretive space will be provided in Cypress Creek Lodge in Cypress Bowl for natural history materials produced by FCPP and VNHS members. FCPP, led by Mike Castle and Hugh Hamilton, has initiated the production of a free hardcopy Cypress summer hiking trails map/brochure for park visitors. BC Parks and Cypress Mountain are providing funding assistance. FCPP's Trail Watch program, established in 2007 to assist BC Parks with trail work, is continuing under Mike Castle's leadership. Louise Irwin, a staunch FCPP supporter from the beginning, helps maintain trails in the Blue Gentian Lake area. Kitty Castle, Viire Daniels, Lyn Grants, and other VNHS members also serve as Trail Watchers.

Cathy Aitchison, David Cook, Bill Kinkaid and Katharine Steig continue to lead VNHS field trips in the park. Plant lists prepared by Terry Taylor, Bob Holden, and others continue to be used and expanded. North Shore Wetland Partners, FCPP, VNHS, and other stakeholder groups are currently working with BC Parks, Cypress Mountain, and BC Wildlife Federation on restoration plans for damaged areas in Cypress Creek headwaters.

The VNHS is well-represented on FCPP's current Board of Directors through Marshall Bauman, Kitty and Mike Castle, Viire Daniels, Stephen Partington and Katharine Steig. Jane Srivastava continues to maintain FCPP membership lists and mailing labels. Two other long-standing FCPP directors also deserve our thanks for their invaluable service over many years: Irene Miller, North Shore Hikers, and Alex Wallace, Federation of Mountain Clubs Trails Committee. Maintaining close ties with other organizations whose members share VNHS's special affection for Cypress, and working with these groups on such projects as Cypress Creek wetlands restoration, is vital in creating the exemplary park we have hoped for.

Special thanks are extended to Norm Pursell, who could always be depended on for encouragement and help with trail work, weed pulls and field trip recces until he was in his late eighties. Sincere thanks are also due to all the other VNHS members, too many to name, who have supported FCPP over these last twenty-one years in its goal to protect Cypress Park's natural environment.

*Katharine Steig was a founding member of Friends of Cypress Provincial Park in 1990 and has been actively involved with the organization since that time. She is currently president of that Society.*

# Saving a Wetland

## *The Maplewood Conservation Area*



By Patricia Mason  
& Kevin Bell

*This dramatic story appeared in Discovery vol. 39, 2010. It was not mentioned in Jim Peacock's The Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993, perhaps because its time frame (early 1980s to 1993) was contemporary with the writing and publication of the book. In order to complete the list of accomplishments of our Society, it is included now. — Editor*

**I**n the early 1980s, Stamatis Zogaris, a 16 year-old member of the Vancouver Natural History Society (VNHS), was bird-watching with Kevin Bell on the filled uplands at what is now the Maplewood Flats Conservation Area (MCA). As he looked around the site, Zogaris, a Greek-Canadian who had already been involved in campaigns to save wetlands in Greece, wanted to know what was planned for this former industrial site, now slowly returning to nature. Bell told him that the intertidal flats, salt marsh and a 15-metre setback from the high tide line were protected by the Federal Fisheries Act, but the rest of the filled lands were owned by Vancouver Port Corporation, now Port Metro Vancouver, a Federal Crown corporation (the Port Corporation). These lands were slated in the District of North Vancouver Official Community Plan (circa 1980) to become a mega-shopping mall together with an “environmentally friendly” marina to be created in the deep saltwater basin which had been dredged in the 1950s.

After receiving this news Zogaris paused for only a moment before stating emphatically that they must fight to have the whole area set aside as a wildlife sanctuary. He said it was far too valuable to be lost to development. That comment set in motion a sequence of events, the outcome of which has Bell still scratching his head



**The saltmarsh on Maplewood's western boundary. Photo by John Lowman.**

in amazement. “He was so young and so determined. It hadn’t occurred to me that it might be possible to save the area. I thought it was worth a try, but honestly had doubts we could ever succeed. It seemed like a real David and Goliath scenario.”

Bell and Zogaris then discussed the issues involved in fighting for Maplewood: the politics and opposition they would encounter from stakeholders, the conservation groups that could be approached for support, and the strategies that could be used to mount a campaign. It was agreed that Zogaris would research and write a pamphlet explaining Maplewood’s importance as wildlife habitat. A number of people who birded in the area provided data, and the Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society agreed to publish the pamphlet free of charge. Zogaris then embarked upon a second pamphlet, and also a restoration proposal that was published by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC). Bell arranged for distribution of the pamphlets.

As Bell and Zogaris embarked on their challenge to save Maplewood, the project began to gain momentum and take on a life of its own. The VNHS Conservation Committee (co-chaired by Stephen Partington and Bell) became an anchor group

for the growing number of people keen to help, and an *ad hoc* “Maplewood Committee,” comprising about 14 very actively involved people was formed. The two committees knew that simply disseminating literature would not be enough to solicit public support. They would need to gain attention through a number of visible, publicity-generating activities. The VNHS and the Maplewood Committee volunteers joined local supporters in removing garbage (mostly plastic and treated wood waste) from the District of North Vancouver (DNV) owned western salt marsh. They planted large numbers of donated shrubs and trees on the western buffer berm and attended guided demonstration walks of the area. Many of those supporters have stayed actively involved since that time.

In 1988 Ken Lay, on behalf of the WCWC, made a presentation about the sanctuary proposal to the DNV Council. Afterwards Bell was approached by an elderly gentleman keen to tell him a story.

“He remembered canoeing the Lynn–Seymour–McCartney estuary marsh complex as a youth in 1910,” recalls Bell. “He described an area of back channels, shrub marshes, swamps, salt marshes and intertidal flats that covered an area of approximately four square miles. It was a fish and wildlife haven and he and his friends fished and hunted the area from canoes for most of their youth. In his lifetime he had watched all of this estuary marshland filled in and built on for industrial purposes. He was very sad to see it all gone and strongly wished to see this last small bit set aside for wildlife.”

The gentleman wished to remain anonymous, but proved to be a staunch ally, making a sizeable financial donation that elevated the campaign to a new level of public awareness.

The VNHS Conservation Committee used the money to take out two quarter page advertisements in the *North Shore News* featuring an image of a river otter with the caption: “Maplewood Flats is His Home.” There was enough money to also print a third pamphlet, this time produced by Bell and Allan Burgesse, a keen Maplewood supporter. Hoping people would be spurred to write letters, Bell and Burgesse included the names and addresses of politicians along with maps and information on the lands and natural history of Maplewood.



**An osprey at Maplewood Flats. Photo by John Lowman.**

Despite their concerns about being identified as troublemakers or activists (“that they should have these concerns is a damning indictment of our so-called democracy,” says Bell), a number of anonymous supporters came forward. Among them, three young women landscape architects who created plans and sketches of the area showing a vision of how the sanctuary could look, with developed trails. Others, representing a number of organizations, contributed information and directions throughout the project.

Up to this point, most of the support had been grassroots, but this was to change dramatically when Tom Siddon, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), came out in full support of the project, a move which placed his ministry in direct opposition to the federal Ministry of Transport and by default, the Port Corporation. The Goliath stakeholders were starting to arouse and take note.

As a result of thousands of pamphlets being distributed, advertising and editorial support by *North Shore News* columnist Peggy Trendell-Whittaker, and various promotional activities

held on site, Maplewood became a cause célèbre. Over 3,500 signatures were collected at local shopping malls by the VNHS Conservation Committee and Maplewood Committee volunteers. Then one sunny Sunday afternoon in November 1988, at a public demonstration walk organized by the Conservation Committee and attended by over 200 people, another pivotal event occurred.

A *North Shore News* photographer captured the image of young Stamatis Zogaris spelling out his position on the preservation of the area to the DNV Mayor. The large picture that appeared in the newspaper, plus a number of regular front page photos and stories, further cemented public support and appeared to affect the outcome of the municipal election the following year. A majority of the councillors returned were in support of the sanctuary proposal and one of the newly elected councillors was Janice Harris, a key campaign supporter and activist.

The next major turning point came in 1990 when the DNV Council designated both the Federal and DNV lands and the inter-tidal area at Maplewood as a Conservation Area. This gave campaign organizers the opportunity to put pressure on the other Maplewood stakeholders, the formidable Port Corporation and its political master, the Federal Minister of Transport. Letters were written to provincial, federal and municipal politicians with the result that John Fraser, the Speaker of the House of Commons requested a meeting with representatives of the Maplewood Committee.

“Janice Harris, Ray Eagle, Tony Webb and I explained the importance of making Maplewood a conservation area,” says Bell. Fraser then asked what plans the Port Corporation had for the area. When I told him that the Port Corporation considered it prime developable land and wanted to build a shopping centre and an “environmentally friendly” marina on it, Fraser became obviously annoyed and asked, whose land is it anyway? I now know Fraser had been a lifelong fly fisherman and had watched many of his favourite rivers being ruined by thoughtless development. At the time he was one of four strong environmental MPs from all the major federal parties. We don’t know exactly what happened next, but within a few months Patrick Reid, the Chair of the Port Corporation, who was also a friend of Fraser’s, announced that



the filled lands of the Port Corporation would be designated as a conservation area, and that consultations were underway with the DNV, Environment Canada and DFO on the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the project.

The addition of the Port Corporation lands meant that a 155 hectares wildlife sanctuary could now be created at Maplewood. The year was 1991 and the nearly decade-long campaign to save the last remaining piece of estuarine wetland on the north shore of Burrard Inlet was finally over. Creating a wildlife sanctuary, once considered an almost impossible feat by Bell, would now become an officially designated conservation area with the blessing (or capitulation) of the major stakeholders, depending on who you spoke to.

It then became necessary to find a non-profit conservation organization to rehabilitate and manage the new Conservation Area. Several established organizations were approached but were unable to help. In 1993, Dr. Richard Beard and Patricia M. Banning-Lover stepped forward and established a new non-profit organization called Wild Bird Trust of BC (WBT) with a mandate to rehabilitate and manage wildlife habitat in BC. The Conservation Area would become WBT’s flagship sanctuary.

In 1990, a year before Maplewood was totally saved, a pair of Osprey arrived at Maplewood — the first nesting pair in Burrard Inlet for 50 years. Osprey have nested successfully every year since then with the result that Burrard Inlet now has at least five breeding pairs. More success in attracting long-lost birds to the area came in 1992 when the VNHS, DNV’s Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Province’s Wildlife Branch provided funds to build large numbers of new west coast -designed Purple Martin nest boxes. Within two years after their placement on the dolphins (a collection of poles driven into the mudflats for log storage purposes in the 1920s) the Purple Martins returned and have since nested every year in growing numbers. Purple Martins had been on the brink of extinction in BC in the latter half of the 1900s due to the destruction of their prime nesting habitat caused by the dyking, draining and clearing of the flood plain marsh forest of the Fraser Delta. In early 2003 WBT established a formal Purple Martin Nest Box program at the site. Many of the old boxes were replaced and new nesting sites were



**The west pond at Maplewood. Photo by John Lowman.**

created on additional dolphins using new numbered boxes. In 2004, under the leadership of Master Bander Derek Matthews, the Conservation Area became the leading breeding colony for Purple Martins in BC. Banding has been discontinued and the colony is now monitored by teams of foot patrol volunteers. A program to assess parasitic impact on this blue-listed migratory species has recently been established.

Working with WBT, volunteers from many organizations have cleaned up industrial garbage, planted shrubs and trees, built over three kilometers of wheelchair-accessible trails, a bridge, a viewing platform, and received grants and donations to create and install a freshwater marsh system and well. This has resulted in a dramatic increase to the bird species list — from 208 species in 1993 to 242 species in 2010 — and increased the amphibian species populations, including the endangered Red-legged Frog. DFO, the first government body to put their weight behind the idea of a sanctuary, has remained supportive over the years, and once the Conservation Area was established, provided funding for a shrub and tree nursery to be built. WBT's last capital project at the site is the proposed Nature House.

The long-term tenure agreement between the Port Corporation, Environment Canada and WBT will be ready for renewal in 2041. By that time the rising sea level may — or may not — have returned much of the filled land to inter-tidal flats.

The Conservation Area at Maplewood Flats is now a thriving wildlife sanctuary. WBT's conservation projects include the Purple Martin Nest Box Monitoring Program and the Anise Swallowtail Butterfly Restoration Project. Monthly bird surveys, guided nature walks for schools and the public, and special events are offered. It is also a popular, restful, pedestrian-only haven for the public in the midst of an area rapidly being lost to business development.

*Patricia Mason has been married to Kevin since 1980. She participated in the Campaign to Save Maplewood Flats during the 1980s, and later became active with the Wild Bird Trust of BC as a director and through several artistic fundraising projects. Her children's book Return of the Osprey (Harbour Publishing 2000) was inspired by the miraculous return of Osprey and Purple Martins to the Maplewood area at about the same time it became a wildlife sanctuary. The birds hadn't nested there in over thirty years!*

*Kevin Bell worked as a naturalist, researcher and manager at the Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre for over 18 years. In the early 1980s he initiated guided nature walks to Maplewood Flats as part of the Centre's Spring and Fall school programs. Following each two hour walk Kevin distributed several leaflets to every school child (including "Save Maplewood") on the importance of estuaries. This went on for six or more years. Kevin and Patricia were founding members of the ad hoc Maplewood Committee, comprised of 14 to 16 members. The Committee worked on saving the area and provided input to its eventual restoration by Wild Bird Trust.*

**Authors' Note:** What became of Stamatis Zogaris? He returned to Greece where he completed a doctorate at the University of Ioannina, and now works as a geographer-biologist on inland freshwater fish and their habitats for the Institute of Inland Waters at the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research. He is still working to protect urban wetlands but now around Athens.

# Society Sections



# *The* **Botany Section**

*By David Cook*



**I**n *The Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993*, Jim Peacock wrote, “For its first 40 years, the Society built on a solid foundation established mainly by John Davidson. Many new members were recruited from his evening classes, resulting in a Society strongly influenced by botany. In the late fifties however, and especially through the 1960s, the direction began to shift as other sections grew.” (p. 73). No other mention of the Botany Section is made in that publication except this: “The Botany Section provided the nucleus for a society that was...intensely loyal to its founder.” (p. 37).

Sections within Nature Vancouver have come and gone during its long history (entomology, microscopy and mycology to name a few) but the Botany Section has both survived throughout and maintained the tradition set by John Davidson at its inception. The history of the Botany Section has yet to be told and the following is an attempt to do that.

While the VNHS itself was founded in 1918 as an amalgamation of the Arbor Day Society and the naturalists’ section of the BC Mountaineering Club, the Botany Section had its birth in 1926 with “Botany John” Davidson as its Chair, a position from which he retired in 1952 at the age of 78. During these years he led many VNHS field trips and gave many lectures. The most notable and popular of his field trips were the mesophytic forest at Musqueam Reserve, the rocky bluffs of Caulfeild and the salt marshes in the Crescent Beach area, which he visited once a year at the same time (spring) to compare and contrast floral changes.

From 1926 to 1988 the Botany Section activities were exclusively field trips, organized and often led by the Section coordinator. There was no regular evening program as there is today: evening talks were presented at General Program meetings. However,



**Alaskan Blueberry (*Vaccinium alaskaense*), May, Hollyburn. Photo by Rosemary Taylor.**

members, with Dr. Kay Beamish, a taxonomist at UBC notable among them, held a number of study, discussion and photography groups mostly in her laboratory in the Biological Sciences Building. These groups were:

1. The Botany Discussion Group (1967–1968).
2. The Botany Workshop Study Group (1969): One evening per week or fortnight in Kay's Taxonomy Laboratory to key plants.
3. The Orchid Group (Mrs. Emmy Fisher, Coordinator) of the Botany Section for 1968 and 1969, which also met in Kay's laboratory.
4. Slide Series by the Photographic Group of the Botany Section organized by Kay Beamish and Roy Edgell, in 1969. These activities were sometimes coordinated with the Botany Workshop Study Group.

In 1989, Kelly Sekhon introduced monthly evening talks to the Botany Section. The first talk, on 12 October, was by Al Grass on native trees. At that meeting, members were also asked to



**Old growth Douglas-firs in Cove Forest Park, Deep Cove. Photo by David Cook.**

bring slides to show, or to request identification of flowers or plant species. With few interruptions, the evening program of talks throughout most of the year and the Members' Nights in December, when members' slides are shown, has continued to the present time.

These evening talks have traditionally been held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. Venues have varied over the years, but by far the most frequent has been the Vancouver Centennial Museum and H.R. Macmillan Space Centre, from September 1968, the year the Museum and Space Centre opened, to April 2009.

While location changes are normally made for mundane reasons such as cost and policy changes of venue owners, the circumstances of one change are of interest. During a fascinating talk on *Mega-herbs of the Sub-Antarctic* by Bill Merilees presented in the Billy

Bishop Legion Hall on Thursday, 15 October 2009, Bill was accompanied by the music of a loud band emanating from the bar below. No amount of pleading on our part had any effect in reducing the noise. Bill proceeded unfazed and most of us were able to tune out the intrusive music. However, we were adamant that this situation could not be repeated. We were informed that music in the bar would be a regular event in the future and so there were hurried arrangements to relocate before the next meeting. Since November 2009, our meetings have been held in the Unity Church, 5840 Oak Street, Vancouver.

From the earliest days of the evening programs, seeking out top quality speakers who will present fresh, timely and interesting topics has always been a high priority. It is necessary to create a balanced mix between the more general subject matter such as botanical travelogues, floral photography, native plant cultivation and the more technical, such as a speaker's specialized research or instructional talks for amateur botanists. The return time of individual speakers or of a particular subject also has to be carefully balanced. The work of finding speakers can be daunting for some coordinators, and their length of time with the Botany Section tends to be directly related to the breadth of their contacts. Thus the load for the evening programs has usually been shared between two coordinators, and the Section is always eager to find new volunteers to bring fresh speakers and fresh subjects to our members.

Finally, perhaps the main reason we have so flourishing a Botany Section is that we live in an exceptionally beautiful and varied botanical landscape. The wildflowers of our alpine meadows, the conifers of our forests and their shade-tolerant understory, the complex vegetation of our swamp lands and bogs, the Interior grasslands, and the Gulf Islands' ecosystem, all persuade us that to study them is to expand our horizons, and to appreciate them is to enrich our lives immeasurably.

*Since 2001, David Cook has been leading trips that are greatly enriched by his combined interests in botany and geology.*





Kelly Sekhon  
amid the river  
beauty (*Epilobium  
latifolium*)  
at a creek in  
the Harmony  
Meadows area  
of Whistler, 15  
August 2005.  
Photo by Janet  
O'Connor.

## BOTANY SECTION COORDINATORS

### EVENING PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Beth Whittaker & Louise Irwin	1993–1997
Beth Whittaker	1997–1998
Terry Taylor	1998–2000
Eva Nagy & Olivia Lee	2000–2003
Bill Kinkaid & Eileen Pinkerton	2003–2006
Bill Kinkaid & David Cook	2006–2007
David Cook	2007 to present

### FIELD TRIP COORDINATORS

Don Benson	1993–1998
Joy Tucker	1999–2000
Cynthia Crampton	2002 to present

# *The* Geology Section

*By David Cook*



Natural history has always been perceived as the observation of living things in their natural setting. However, plants and animals live in a geological world; therefore geology by necessity must have a place in an organization such as ours. In the embryonic days of the VNHS under John Davidson, plants reigned supreme. However, interest in geology was always there even if beneath the surface. This latent interest first became evident within the Society in March 1930 when Norman G. Freshwater gave a talk entitled “Local Points of Geological Interest.” The talk was so enthusiastically received that an attempt was made to distribute it in pamphlet form to the public.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1944 that a Geology Section was formed, the first section leader being Dr. M. Y. Williams. Williams was followed by J. J. Plommer from 1948 to 1950, Dr. Jack. E. Armstrong from 1951 to 1968, Charles Ney from 1969 to 1974, Professor Bill Mathews from 1974 to 1981 and Ross Beaty from 1983 to 1993.

The Geology Section therefore had a continuous and very active half-century given momentum by a handful of qualified geologists willing to share their hard-earned knowledge. All were excellent teachers, whether by training and profession or natural skill. The number and frequency of geology field trips and talks during this period were impressive. As these leaders retired or passed away, so did the momentum of the Geology Section.

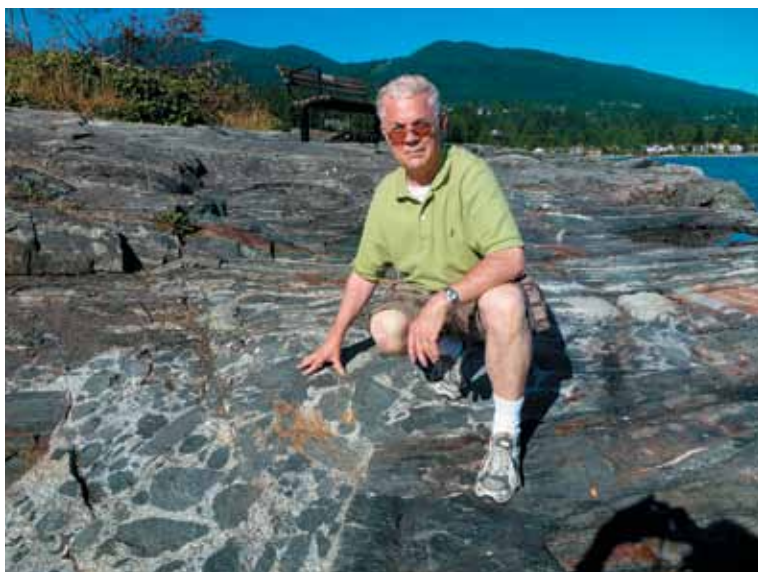
Of the great leaders, special mention should be made of Jack Armstrong, Charles Ney and Bill Mathews who dominated the Geology Section during its glory days from 1951 to 1983. They chaired the Geology Section for 17, 5 and 10 years respectively. Both Armstrong and Ney led geology field trips almost on a monthly basis. Jack Armstrong was Chair of the Geology section

longer than anyone else. His numerous field trips were well attended, with 40 participants being a common number. This high participation was no doubt a combination of interest and the fact that his were fair weather events. Rain, as now, was always a deterrent to field trip attendance. To overcome that problem, he usually stipulated that if rain was falling by noon before the trip started, then the event would be cancelled.

Charles Ney was Chair for only a short time, but he produced 72 geology-related articles for *Discovery*. Long before becoming a member of Nature Vancouver, this writer was fortunate to have attended a field trip by Charlie Ney to Mt. Cheam. The experience probably had some influence on the style now used by the writer for geology field trips. After Ney's death, an attempt was made to publish a memorial collection of his *Discovery* articles but this failed, it seems, due to the ill health of Bill Mathews and Bob Harris, the principal members of the task force struck to complete that task. It is a great pity that the project was never completed, as Ney's style of writing was both interesting and understandable for the general public. Many of Ney's papers came to rest in the Charles S. Ney Memorial Library of the Association for Mineral Exploration, BC (formerly BC & Yukon Chamber of Mines) now located at Suite 800–899 West Pender Street, Vancouver. With energy to spare from his VNHS activities, Ney had also been a long-time volunteer and lecturer at the Association's Prospecting and Mining School. At the time of his death, he served as Vice-President. The Association dedicated the library to his memory in 1976.

The VNHS has honoured Charles Ney in a special way. Charles Ney originally set up the Kaye Ney award in memory of his wife, to be given to a member in recognition of services to the Society. On his death in 1975, the VNHS changed the award's name to The Kaye and Charles Ney Award, to be given to a non-executive member who has shown exemplary service and dedication to the Society. It is the Society's premier award.

Charles Ney and Bill Mathews were close friends, having attended school together, and it was fitting that Bill took over the Geology Section from Charlie a year before Charlie's death in 1975. For ten years, Mathews led many geology field trips, usually teaming up with



**David Cook at the famous Caulfeild Park intrusion breccia. This site is now doubly protected: it is within a municipal park and it is a West Vancouver heritage site. The designation as a heritage site was due largely to the author's efforts. Self-portrait by the author.**

other well known geologists and naturalists such as J. W. Murray, Arnie Thomlinson, John Clague, K. C. McTaggart, Glenn Rouse, Jack Armstrong, John Philip, Colin Godwin, Arnold Greenius, Paul Smith, Joe Nagel, Ted Danner, Bob Harris and Bert Brink.

A younger generation of volunteers was needed and from 1983 to 1993, the geology section was run by Ross Beaty who as chair led many field trips and also published articles in *Discovery*. But as he became a distinguished geologist and mining entrepreneur, travel and an increasing work load placed constraints on his time, and a new crop of geological leaders did not materialize.

The Geology Section went into a 13-year hiatus, with the field trip records of previous leaders held in safe keeping by Jennifer Getsinger, who conducted some nature walks in the Kitsilano area with a geological component.

In 2006 the Geology Section was reborn under David Cook with the resumption of geology field trips. Many of the field trips led by



**Glacial erratic at Third Beach, Stanley Park. Photo by David Cook.**

Armstrong, Ney, and Mathews are being continued, but modified, as development has destroyed certain points of interest and exposed others. With his geological and biological background, Cook was able to marry the geology with the living things that depended on it for their existence and designed field trips accordingly. Dr. Bert Brink, trained as an Agriculturist, had always been cognizant of this relationship and took on the role of mentor as Cook reformed the Geology Section. Well-known geologists John Clague and Jim Monger have from time to time been called upon to assist in this process. A new approach to natural history is now being attempted through the Geology Section and its associated field trips, and has to date received a considerable following. Is this interest in Nature Vancouver reflecting an interest by botanists who want a new perspective on their botanical pursuits, or is it tapping into a hidden resource of lithophiles within the Society? It will be interesting to see how this fresh approach develops.

*Since 2001, David Cook has been leading trips that are greatly enriched by his combined interests in geology and botany.*

# The Mycology Section

By David Cook



**Shaggy mane, Lawyer's wig (*Coprinus comatus*), October, West Point Grey. Photo by Rosemary Taylor.**

**D**uring its lifetime, the VNHS has had a number of Sections that have waxed and waned according to the interests of individual members. Mycology or the study of fungi has been one of them. The most active period of the VNHS Mycology Section was the period between 1952 and 1968 when there were some enthusiastic field trip Coordinators and trip leaders. The first was Foote Waugh, a self-taught mycologist, who led trips from 1952 to 1954, when he resigned to take on the Presidency of the VNHS. Dr. Brink then invited Dr. Dick Stace-Smith to become Coordinator of the Mycology Section, and although considering himself ill-suited for the task because of a lack of knowledge about

fungi, Dick Stace-Smith was reassured by the offer of Foote and his wife Mary Alice to hone and support his fungal lore. In 1958, after completing his term as President, Foote Waugh returned as Mycology Coordinator until 1963.

Other coordinators followed until 1968. Then, after a hiatus of about nine years, the VNHS Mycology Section gained new, but short-lived life under Kitsy Fraser in 1977. However, interest in mushrooms moved away from the VNHS and began to blossom elsewhere. The Centennial Museum held mushroom shows in 1973, 1974 and 1975 and a Mushroom Fair was held at the VanDusen Botanical Gardens in 1975. The fair was a great success and its organizer, Kitsy Fraser, decided to make it an annual event.



**Terry Taylor identifying a Reishi mushroom in Stanley Park. Photo by David Cook.**

At the 1978 fair, people interested in forming a mushroom club were asked to sign up. The first Vancouver Mycological Society (VMS) meeting was held on 7 November 1978 with Mushroom Shows held at VanDusen Botanical Gardens each year since then.

From 1985 to 1998 the VNHS Mycology Section, with Paul Kroeger as Coordinator, existed in name only, although our members were invited to attend Vancouver Mycological Society field trips. The Mycology Section of the VNHS ceased to exist in 1998.

Since 1986, VNHS member interest in mushrooms has been satisfied by member Terry Taylor who leads field trips, usually during mushroom season in October and November of most years. While the writer does not lead field trips exclusively devoted to fungi, he and his fellow hikers do stop to observe and discuss them when they find them, along with the many other elements of interest in the forests.

*To his interests in botany and geology, trip leader David Cook adds mycology.*



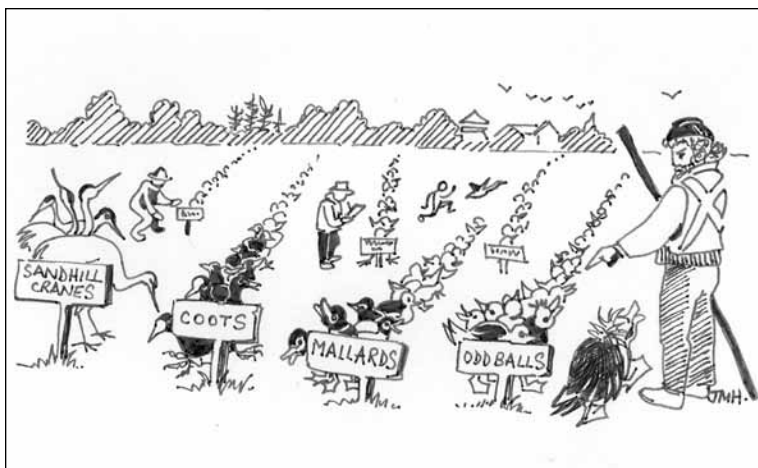
# The Birding Section

By Marian Coope



From its earliest years, the various VNHS sections — birding, botany, geology and others — were concerned with weekend trips, workshops and special events, but held no separate monthly meetings. The general evening lectures we now hold monthly were then held twice a month on a great variety of subjects and were expected to broaden the horizons of members so that they might not remain mere specialists but become all-round naturalists.

With the advent of birding handbooks and inexpensive binoculars in the 1960s and '70s, birding in Vancouver became extremely popular, as appears from the considerable numbers both of birding field trips and of articles on birds in *Discovery*. Although birders had been meeting unofficially since 1970, the first mention



Christmas Bird Count at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary.  
Drawing by Jenny Hards, from the *Vancouver Naturalist* 5(4):1  
(December 2003).





**A Marsh Wren collects cattail down for his nest at Iona. The male builds several dome-shaped nests, and then the female chooses the one in which to lay her eggs. Photo by Mark Haldas.**

of separate evening meetings for Birds and Mammals, as the section was called, is in the Newsletter insert of *Discovery* in 1975.<sup>1</sup> After the list of regular evening meetings, under the heading “Birders’ Nights at the Maritime Museum,” are given the dates of the talks. By 1979, our “Bird Alert” was up and running, and Birders’ Nights were moved to the Vancouver Museum Auditorium, “in order to provide a more spacious and comfortable venue for these popular monthly meetings.”<sup>2</sup> Thus Birding was the first Section officially to hold its own monthly meetings, and was recognized as such in a *Discovery* of 1979–1980, which stated “The Birds and Mammals Section is a ‘special interest’ group within the VNHS with both a growing membership and expanding involvements. A guiding committee has been struck to handle the various responsibilities. Members are: John Toochn, Syd Cannings, Richard Cannings, Jude Grass, Doug Kragh, Robin Weber and Wayne Weber.”<sup>3</sup>

Jude and Wayne are still on the birding committee, John Toochn has remained an active member until recently, and the Cannings brothers are well-known professional naturalists but

no longer live in the city; however, they still have many friends and admirers in Nature Vancouver.

By 1994, the Birding Section had settled into its present pattern. Evening Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month from September to May, generally in church halls. After the initial club announcements and welcoming of newcomers, members describe notable sightings from the past month, often an occasion for lively discussions on birds and their behaviour. A short break for refreshments is followed by a guest speaker, either a member or an outside expert, on a local or a world topic. The topic might be “The Ruff — a Bizarre Shorebird” in Scandinavia by Dov Lank in 1995, or Peter Candido’s talk in 2008, “Birding in Ecuador: the High Andes to the Amazon Basin,” illustrated by Peter’s excellent digital photographs. It might be Dr. Jamie Smith’s talk in 2001 on “Endangered Species — Looking Beyond the Federal Legislation,” or Paul H. Jones, our local expert, speaking in 2010 on the Marbled Murrelet of the Caren Range, all fascinating topics.

The Birding Section has offered, typically, some 40 Field Trips in a year, with seven ongoing monthly surveys as well as special surveys described in a different chapter. As always, the field trips range all over the Lower Mainland and our local mountains, with forays into the U.S. and beyond. Special workshops are sometimes held for raptor identification or for photography. On other occasions, for example before the Christmas Bird Count, there might be bird identification sessions with slides and the preserved bodies of birds from the Cowan Vertebrate Museum.

With the increase in interest in birding and bird counts, it was necessary to produce Society Checklists, and the first, in 1988, was compiled by Wayne Weber, Richard Cannings, Mike Force, Brian Kautesk and Doug Kragh. A second edition appeared in 1994. In 1998, Rick Toochin, with Tom Brown and Kyle Elliott, compiled the “Seasonal Status of Birds” and a new “Checklist of Birds” for “Vancouver and Vicinity,” and also a “Checklist of the Birds of Iona Island.”

During the period covered by this volume, the Birding Section became a prolific publisher, as is shown in the article on Books: four books on birds have appeared between 1993 and 2010 (and



**Birders on the outer dyke of the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary.  
Photo by Peter Candido.**

another is in the works). The other four books also have birding components. But that is not all: the Section's excellent 16-page newsletter, "The Wandering Tattler," founded in 1977 and mostly written by Jude Grass, has appeared eight times each year in time for Birders' Nights.

To commemorate the VNHS's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1993, artist Allyson MacBean painted "The Birds of Vancouver," which was reproduced as a high quality, colourful poster. "Featuring 22 perching birds, including the Crested Myna," it was sent out to about 400 Vancouver schools thanks to the efforts of Val Schaefer and the support of Canada Trust's Friends of the Environment Foundation.<sup>4</sup> The Crested Myna is no longer found in the Vancouver area, so the poster must serve as its memorial.

Every year in May, birders in North America celebrate a Big Bird Day in which they spend 24 hours counting bird species they have seen in order to raise money through sponsors for a good cause. 1994 was an outstanding year. At the fourth annual Vancouver Big Day Birdathon, birders saw 160 species and raised over \$8,000, which the VNHS contributed to the Nature Trust of BC for the acquisition of coastal wetlands. Shortly afterwards,

the organization of the event was moved to Bird Studies Canada's Baillie Birdathon, but the event still takes place in May.

Special surveys and bird counts are described in the sections that follow.

In the last few years, the Birding Section has developed its own site within the Nature Vancouver website. Field trip leaders can post their field trips directly, and birders can find the most recent information on their trips. On the Calendar, members can readily see scheduled events and activities, and in the Photo Gallery, members can create their own album and share photos with friends.

Birders, like birds, flock. They join with each other, they join in other clubs' activities, wherever there is a chance to see birds, they flock. Good birding, Birders!

*Marian Coope joined the VNHS in 1992 as a beginning birder; she's been at it ever since.*

## CHAIRS OF THE BIRDING SECTION

George Clulow	1994–1998
Larry Cowan	1998
Adrian Grant Duff	1998–2001
Brian Self	2001–2003
Peter Candido	2003–2004
Jude Grass	2004–2010

# Vancouver Christmas Bird Counts

*By Adrian Grant Duff*



Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) have taken place in Vancouver annually since 1954, and Nature Vancouver birders are heavily involved, not only in our own Vancouver CBC, but also in coordinating and participating in many surrounding CBCs in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and coastal areas.

The Bird Counts originated in the United States in response to the custom of well-fed gentlemen taking their guns out in the Christmas season to see who could shoot the greatest number of birds and animals in a single day. Staging a Christmas Bird Count as a response to this senseless slaughter was proposed by Dr. Frank Chapman, ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History, and the idea rapidly gained popularity after the first counts (25 of them!) were done in the year 1900. The counts have continued to grow in numbers and importance, and now span the entire hemisphere.

The data collected on the Christmas counts, at a time of year when birds are not migrating, provide valuable insights into population trends and the long-term health of bird species and the environment. All over the Americas, each Bird Count is conducted in a circle fifteen miles (24 km) in diameter. Bird counters cover as much of their local circle as possible within a single twenty-four-hour period. Each individual bird of each species is counted. The participants are all volunteers who have an interest or skill that contributes to their team. Nature Vancouver sponsors the Vancouver Count, and our current Count compiler is Danny Tyson. Bird Studies Canada receives the tallied bird counts and compiles them into a database for all of Canada. The Canadian



**Christmas Bird Count, 2000/2001. From left: Marian Coope, Istvan Orosi, John Vooy's and John Hagen on White Rock Pier. More than 125 species were seen on this count. Photo by Andrea Johnson, published by kind permission of the Peace Arch News.**

counts can be accessed through the National Audubon Society website: [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/).

From 1999 to 2008, an average of 116 people participated in the Counts, with an average of 129 species counted. The numbers of individual birds counted from 1997 to 2010 are listed on the next page. The numbers seem to decline from 1999 to 2006, and then increase again, with a real rebound in 2009. This may look encouraging, but the trend would have to be followed for a good many more years to establish whether this growth in bird numbers is a real cause for optimism or not.

After a day spent in what are occasionally appalling winter conditions, the count is followed by a social and a hot meal traditionally prepared by Jude Grass and helpers. Area reports are presented and the total species counted. The popular but difficult Bird Quiz completes the evening with bird photos, calls, and general knowledge birding questions. Over the years, the Quiz

has most often been won by the Count compiler, Danny Tyson. For many members, taking part in the CBC is a long-standing Christmas tradition. One of our members, John Toochn, has been participating — in one area of Stanley Park — since the initial count in Vancouver: 53 years! The Christmas Bird Count is always fun. Come and join us.

*Adrian Grant Duff was the Society President from 2004 to 2007, and has been the Christmas Bird Count Coordinator since 1997.*

## TRENDS IN INDIVIDUALS COUNTED

BIRD	1999	2000	2008
Western Grebe	950	0	27
Western Screech Owl	0	1	0
Red-throated Loon	332	0	16
Anna's Hummingbird	5	0	47

## EXAMPLES OF UNUSUAL BIRDS COUNTED

BIRD	NUMBER	YEAR
Blue Jay	1	2003
McKay's Bunting	1	2004
Rock Wren	1	2005

## INDIVIDUAL BIRDS COUNTED

1997: 88,358	1998: 88,934	1999: 103,678
2000: 94,720	2001: 95,243	2002: 93,102
2003: 84,537	2004: 79,311	2005: 78,953
2006: 60,578	2007: 72,618	2008: 71,691
2009: 97,023	2010: 80,101	

# Vancouver Bird Surveys

By Colin Clark



**M**any members of Nature Vancouver participate in ongoing bird surveys at various sites throughout the Lower Mainland area. The information generated by such surveys is potentially useful for detecting trends in population size as the city continues to develop.

For this purpose it helps if the surveys of a given area are done regularly, and are consistent in terms of total search effort per survey. Survey records usually list the time duration, number of each species observed (seen or heard), number of observers, and weather conditions. It is important that this data be accurately recorded in some database, which is then quickly made available to the participants and other interested persons. More on this topic later.



**Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*). Photo by Mark Habdas.**



In most cases, survey leaders are experienced birders, but less experienced participants are also useful because more pairs of eyes count more birds. And beginners can learn a great deal by watching other watchers.

## Ongoing Bird Surveys

**Maplewood Conservation Area.** This 75-acre site on the shores of Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver has been surveyed on a monthly basis since 1997, with additional surveys going back to 1977. The surveys are organized by members of the Wild Bird Trust, including Kevin Bell, Bonnie Hawkes and Janice Wilson (earlier surveys were led by Brian Self). Data are submitted to eBird Canada.

**Terra Nova.** Occupying formerly protected farmland in Northeast Richmond, this 63-acre area was set aside as Terra Nova Rural Park in 2004, in conjunction with a large-scale housing development. Monthly bird surveys (led by Eric Greenwood) have been carried out since 1998, with data being submitted to the City of Richmond for use in future planning.

**Sea Island Conservation Area.** The Sea Island Conservation Area (SICA) was established in 1992 as compensation for the loss of wildlife habitat due to expansion at YVR. SICA consists of 140 acres lying between the Northern airport fence and the North Arm of the Fraser River. Monthly bird surveys have been conducted since 2002 (originally organized by Adrian Grant Duff, and subsequently organized and led by June Ryder), with observations taken from along the dyke and adjacent wooded areas. Data for the period 2003–2007 have been summarized and analyzed by Ryder (2009).

**Vancouver City Golf Courses.** In 2002 Vancouver Parks Board officials requested assistance from Nature Vancouver members to survey the natural history of its three public golf courses (Langara, McCleery, and Fraserview) in order to apply for Audubon accreditation as sustainable wildlife habitats. Accreditation was granted, and the bird surveys initiated at that time have continued to the present day, with organizers David Boyd and Colin Clark. Attractive bird posters showing seasonal specialties

seen around the courses (and using NV members' photographs) are appreciated by golfers, who sometimes apprise the survey team of their own observations.

**UBC Farm.** Monthly bird surveys of the agricultural areas on the UBC campus have been carried out since 1997. They were originally organized by Tim Blair, with the help of Dorothy Woodhouse and Bev Ramey. Tim also set up the database so that data could be submitted to eBird Canada and made available for UBC students, faculty and staff.

### Other Bird Surveys in the Vancouver Area

**Raptor Surveys.** These surveys took place over two 10-year periods, 1970–1980 and 2000–2010, organized by Jude Grass. They covered suitable habitat (12 specific sites) in Richmond, Ladner, Pitt Meadows and similar areas. Data have yet to be made available.

Surveys of a more local nature (in time or space) are, or have been, conducted at Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Hastings Park Conservation Area, Jericho Beach Park, and the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

The bird surveys described above have been useful in helping to identify bird “hotspots” in the Vancouver area. Results from such surveys sometimes prove to be instrumental in convincing political decision makers of the necessity of protecting natural habitat. (How often have we heard the developers' refrain “The birds will just go somewhere else”?)

An important step is the treatment of the survey data. Given today's availability of computer spreadsheets, it is a simple matter to quickly record the data from each day's observations, and then to generate annual summaries. Survey participants appreciate receiving copies of these spreadsheets. The data can also easily be submitted to eBird Canada, where it becomes readily available to all birders.

*Colin Clark has been a member of Nature Vancouver and an avid birder since 1968. For the past ten years, he has run the Survey at the Fraserview Golf Course.*

# *National and Provincial* **Bird Counts**

*By George Clulow*



**B**irder members of Nature Vancouver make significant contributions to avian science through a number of programs and projects. Ornithology, not unlike astronomy, is a science where skilled but amateur volunteers work in conjunction with professionals to carry out basic, vital field-work that would otherwise be impossible without their help. The National and Provincial counts in which members participate are these:

## **BC Breeding Bird Atlas**

The Breeding Bird Atlas (BCBBA) ([www.birdatlas.bc.ca/english/index.jsp](http://www.birdatlas.bc.ca/english/index.jsp)), the first for BC, is an ambitious project led by Bird Studies Canada to map the distribution and abundance of breeding birds throughout the Province from 2008 to 2012. An additional two years will involve the compilation, review, and publication of the five years' field data. Birder members of Nature Vancouver conduct field-work to identify breeding birds across the Province's landscapes. They act as coordinators for some of the atlas regions, and serve on both the Atlas Technical and Steering committees. Auditory as well as visual identification of breeding birds in various locations and habitats are essential skills in conducting the point counts that determine relative abundances. Birders work on the atlas in their own home "patches," as well as travelling to very remote and difficult-to-access areas of the Province.

## **Breeding Bird Surveys**

The Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) ([www.ec.gc.ca/reom-mbs/default.asp?lang=en&n=416B57CA](http://www.ec.gc.ca/reom-mbs/default.asp?lang=en&n=416B57CA)) is an annual, long-term breeding bird monitoring project headed by Environment Canada. Its purpose is to determine status and population trends of breeding birds across



**Rare migrant Emperor Goose seen in Richmond. Photo by Peter Candido.**

the continent. Birders conduct their surveys along fixed, 39.4 km routes, and follow a strict protocol at each of the 50 stops, 0.8 km apart along their routes. Some of our members have been doing the same BBS route for more than 30 consecutive years. Most species are identified “by ear,” and the data collected is compiled first in Canada before becoming part of a North America-wide database.

### **Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program**

The primary objectives of the Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program (BIEAP) were to reduce and control contaminant discharges to Burrard Inlet, and to identify measures to remediate conditions and enhance the environment in the ecosystem. The BIEAP Surveys, fondly called “BEEP,” saw VNHS birders working with Canadian Wildlife Service, Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia, Vancouver Port Corporation, Canadian Coast Guard, and Port Moody Power Squadron to survey the birds along the entire shoreline of Burrard Inlet, from the head of Indian Arm to the outer waters of English Bay.

Starting in the fall of 1992, the surveys were very popular. They provided many birders with the chance to bird local waters from a boat, and also allowed them to gain access to areas of the Inlet that could not be seen except from the water. Shoreline surveys

were also conducted from land where access was easy. The first few surveys were conducted quarterly, but after that, a pattern of spring and fall surveys was established, continuing for over ten years. The last survey was conducted in 2003. The mapping of critical areas for bird use was an important undertaking in such an urbanized/industrialized setting as the Port of Vancouver, where oil spills continue to occur.

At the suggestion of BIEAP, the data from the BIEAP survey formed the basis for the VNHS publication *The Birds of Burrard Inlet* (see chapter on books).

### **BC Coastal Waterbird Survey**

Counting waterbirds in mid-winter as part of the BC Coastal Waterbird Survey (BCCWS) is not for the faint-hearted when the weather is uncooperative. The BCCWS ([www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/bccws/](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/bccws/)) aims to monitor the annual changes and long-term trends in the populations and distributions of waterbirds along our coastlines. Surveys are conducted monthly at multiple sites where coastlines are accessible, and range from rocky, wave-swept environments to wide, shallow estuaries and bays. Waterbirds — ducks, loons, shorebirds, gulls, raptors, etc. — are identified and counted from the shoreline out to 500m offshore using binoculars and scopes. Coordinated by Bird Studies Canada, the BCCWS is yet another example of the power of cooperation between our skilled birder members, a national conservation organization, and the government through the Canadian Wildlife Service.

### **BC Yukon Nocturnal Owl Survey**

Conducted in the late winter and early spring, the BC Yukon Nocturnal Owl Survey (BCYNOS) ([www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/bcynowls/about.jsp](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/bcynowls/about.jsp)) follows pre-selected routes, usually on back roads, with listening stops 1.6 kms apart. Owl detections here on the Coast tend to be lower than along interior routes, and so a tape-playback protocol is followed: a recording of an owl is played, and if there is an owl in the vicinity, it will answer and can be counted. The data from the surveys are used to monitor the distribution, abundance, population trends and habitat associations of different owl species.



**Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*). Photo by Mark Haldas.**

## **eBird**

A sine qua non for most birders is their field notebook in which they record observations while out birding. With the advent of eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/canada>) it is now easy for all of us to contribute these observations to a secure national database. These records of our birding activities are always accessible and organized, and are also available to a range of professionals from academics, to land managers, to conservationists. Since its 2002 inception eBird has grown tremendously, and recently received three million entries in a single month, with nearly a quarter of a million of those from Canada. Technology is advancing our passion into a powerful tool for conservation.

*George Clulow was Chair of the Birding Committee from 1994 to 1998. During that time, he reorganized the Rare Bird Alert to be run by a team of volunteers rather than by just one person, and he was the organizer of the Christmas Bird Count. In 1998, he received the Society's Ney Award for his work. George has been a director of Bird Studies Canada since 2003.*

# *Vancouver* **Rare Bird Alert**

*By Wayne Weber*



**T**he Vancouver Rare Bird Alert (RBA) run by Nature Vancouver is a listing of recent sightings for the previous 7 to 15 days of birds that are rare or unusual in the Vancouver area. It was originally just available through a recorded telephone message, but is now also available as an e-mail message on several e-mail groups and on two websites (the BIRDING IN BC website and the Nature Vancouver website). It is one of dozens of similar RBAs that operate throughout North America. The Vancouver RBA was started by John Toochn in 1979, and has been in operation ever since. It has proved very useful not only for local birders, but also for visiting birders from other areas who are looking for species new to them.



**Extremely rare Sharp-tailed Sandpiper seen at Iona Beach Regional Park. Photo by Peter Candido.**

Until 1995, the RBA was generally run by a single volunteer for a period of two to five years, which required a considerable commitment of time and effort. Keeping detailed records of sightings that were phoned in (or later on, retrieved from e-mail groups) was also part of the job. The RBA was run capably by Michael Price from 1991 to 1995. When Michael retired from the job, it was decided that a team of volunteers should take over the task, with a different person running the RBA each month, and no one having to run it for more than three months out of the year. The team was headed by Larry Cowan from 1995 to 2002, by John Kalman from 2002 to 2005, and by Wayne Weber from 2005 to 2008. In 2008, it was decided to return to the previous system of one person running the RBA, in part because of difficulties in coordinating the archiving of the sightings. Wayne Weber took over this task.

From 1995 to 2008, many persons took turns running the RBA, some only once or twice, others 10 or 20 times or more. Those who volunteered their time included Larry Cowan, Dave Guild, Jo Ann MacKenzie, Prue Spitmann, John Chandler, Libor Michalak, Rick Toochin, Mitch Meredith, John Kalman, Mark Wynja, Kevin Louth, and Wayne Weber. If we have forgotten the names of any other volunteer RBA operators, we offer our apologies. We are grateful to all of them. In addition, we owe sincere thanks to John Morton of Wild Birds Unlimited, who has made a major financial contribution to the cost of running the RBA for several years, and continues to do so.

*Wayne Weber has been birding with the Society since 1959. Running the RBA and being on the Birding Section Committee are only his most recent activities. During the intervening decades, he was co-compiler of the Christmas Bird Count for 19 years, served on the editorial board of Discovery and on the Board of Directors for ten years.*



# *The* **Marine Biology Section**

*1999 to 2010*

*By Sheila Byers*



**F**rom the beginning, there were always some VNHS members whose greatest love was for the ocean, as is evident from early marine environment camps. Immediately after the foundation of the Society in 1918, the first marine camp was held on Savary Island. Between then and 1991, some 26 camps were held in the Gulf Islands, on Vancouver Island and up the coast as far as Haida Gwaii. But while the VNHS held marine camps, many of them canoe trips, no Marine Biology Section was formed, and lectures on marine topics were offered in the General Program only intermittently.

By the 1990s, Society interest in marine life had grown considerably, paralleling an increased concern for the well-being of our coastal environment, and that interest continues to grow in the twenty-first century. In the late 1990s, the Conservation Section, chaired by Jeremy McCall, focused on a number of development projects in the Lower Mainland that had the potential to impact the foreshore habitats of Sea Island, Boundary Bay, Roberts Bank, and Burns Bog. At the same time, topics of interest to marine lovers began to appear more frequently in the General Programs and in *Vancouver Naturalist* (VN), among them: biodiversity, overfishing, wild versus farmed salmon, reliance of temperate rainforests on salmon, and whale-watching. Over a decade later, all of these topics remain at the forefront of conservation and sustainability discussions.

Exploring life in the intertidal zone was an activity that launched the Young Naturalists' Club (YNC) in 2000. Also in 2000, Kyle Elliott, a UBC graduate student and enthusiastic bird



**Sheila Byers and David Cook discuss ecology during the Stanley Park Intertidal Workshop, 30 May 2010. Photo by Nellie Bacou.**

watcher, began leading SCUBA diving trips, in combination with visits to the Vancouver Aquarium, to engage naturalists in BC's local marine fauna. Margaret Butschler, former Animal Records and Operations Administrator at the Vancouver Aquarium and a long-time member of VNHS, encouraged this collaboration. Kyle furthered the association with the Aquarium through Andy Lamb, then School Programs Coordinator for the Intertidal Marine Biology wet lab. Over the years, a supportive and mutually beneficial relationship has developed between VNHS members and staff and volunteers of the Vancouver Aquarium.

Meanwhile, Ann Kent, a horticulturalist and keen naturalist, was relaying her coastal discoveries in her informative 'The Weekend Naturalist' articles in the Society newsletter. Soon, Kyle and Ann were collaborating on field trips. Kyle was awarded the VNHS Garibaldi Award for Service, especially for taking the initiative in leading field trips with an emphasis on marine biology, in hopes that the Society could establish an active group in this field. His dream became reality in 2001, when several members of the VNHS Conservation Section — Kyle himself, Reggie Ho, Ann Kent and Jeremy McCall — proposed a vision statement for the group: "The

Marine Biology Section of the VNHS will educate and foster interest in marine biology and coastal habitat for members of the Society and the public at large” (VN 3:2, 2001). The evening programs for the Marine Biology Section (MBS) were officially off and running in the Fall of 2001 with Ann Kent at the helm.

Under Ann’s capable leadership, the MBS Planning Committee had a clear agenda with an annual theme. The monthly evening programs had a primary invited speaker on an aspect of the theme, and a short-topic component that focused on conservation concerns. Ann initiated a display of topical research that provided relevant and informative details, and for the social part of the evening, she established the tradition of members’ slides and potluck dinner for the December evening programs.



**Feeding adult basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*). Recent, hopeful sightings were made in 2009 near the Gulf Islands. Photo by Saul Gonor while snorkelling off Cornwall, England in 2004.**

## **Evening Programs: Biodiversity of the Oceans**

The following topics encompass some of the primary themes of speakers’ presentations at the MBS evening programs.

### **Local Fisheries, Wild and Farmed**

At a General Meeting in March 1999, Dr. Daniel Pauly, UBC Fisheries Centre, forecast that overexploitation of species at the top trophic levels in the Strait of Georgia (or Salish Sea<sup>1</sup>) followed by fishing down the food chain would result in nothing remaining other than zooplankton soup (VN 1:1, 1999). Thus, the pressure increases for more farmed fish; but there is much controversy surrounding fin fish aquaculture in open-net cages along BC’s

coastal waters: interactions between farmed and wild salmon suggest that the wild salmon stock will suffer irreparable damage in the long run. Ten years later, in the fall of 2009, the MBS made an expedition to the Swift Aquaculture Farm in Agassiz. There, closed containment integrated aquaculture farming is undertaken on a small, but environmentally-friendly scale: coho salmon are farmed but have no contact with ocean-going salmon at all. On the same day, MBS members were able to witness wild sockeye, pink and chum salmon spawning in Weaver Creek.

But to date closed containment technologies, either land-based or coastal (at present experimental), have also not proved problem-free, sustainable or economically viable on a large scale basis as an alternative to open-net cages.

### Marine Fishes and Mammals

At our monthly meetings, MBS members have been introduced to the natural history, intelligence, social complexity and cultural behaviour of many of BC's species, including bluntnose sixgill shark and great white shark. Our speakers have helped us dive with graceful manta rays off the Revilla Gigedo Islands, nose up to tiny endangered seahorses, and slip-slide with sea otters. We have spy-hopped with five cetacean species of whales and a dolphin, and pinnipeds such as sea lions and harbour seals. We have learned of the tragic eradication of BC's plankton-feeding basking sharks between the 1940s and 1970s because it was thought they harmed the salmon fishing industry (VN 10:3, 2008). Since the 1970s, sightings have been rare but a recent record of several basking sharks near the Gulf Islands in 2009 brings hope of their survival. Dr. Lance Barrett-Lennard, Marine Mammal Research Scientist at the Vancouver Aquarium, revealed the complex social organization and ecological specialization of the three distinct populations of Orcas in the Pacific Northwest: fish-eating residents, mammal-eating transients and lesser-known offshores (VN 7:4, 2005). Now termed sentinels of global pollution by Dr. Peter Ross, Fisheries and Oceans Canada Research Scientist, Sidney, (VN 9:4, 2007), the top trophic level Orcas in the Salish Sea are telling us that we must confront pollution seriously if they — and we — are to survive.



**Southern resident Orcas swimming in the Strait of Georgia past the Harmac Pulp Mill south of Nanaimo, around 2001. Photo by Graeme Ellis.**

Finally, the immense skeleton of the blue whale, the first to be placed on display in Canada (VN 10:4, 2008) was presented to us by Dr. Andrew Trites, Director of the Marine Mammal Research Unit at the new Beaty Biodiversity Museum, UBC. It is an exciting preview of things to come.

### **Marine Protected Areas and Rockfish Conservation Areas**

The fascinating ecosystem of glass sponge reefs growing in Hecate Strait was introduced by Natalie Ban, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, BC Chapter (VN 5:2, 2003). Discovered in 1987, these living–fossil reefs were thought to have gone extinct 30,000 years ago. BC’s ‘Jurassic Park underwater’ contains not only the world’s oldest multi-cellular organisms but also the only known living glass sponge (hexactinellid) reefs that remain in the world. They are estimated to be at least 9,000 years old — one of the great wonders in Canada’s oceans. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans recently banned bottom trawling of the reefs in perpetuity and announced the reefs as an “Area of Interest” for a future Marine Protected Area (MPA). If wisdom prevails, these ancient reefs will be fully protected and declared a World Heritage Site by 2012 (CPAWS, 2010).

The seriously declining populations of rockfish species, especially in the Salish Sea, are now considered the greatest fisheries crisis in BC's history. Rockfishes are very long-lived (often 80 years or more), slow to reproduce (generally, at least 15 years) and are susceptible to overharvesting and habitat destruction as explained by Dr. Jeff Marliave, Vice President Marine Science, Vancouver Aquarium, in January, 2010. By 2007, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans had established a network of 164 closed areas known as Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) but many advocates, e.g., Marine Life Sanctuary Society, believe that only a network of No-Take (no-harvesting) MPAs will assist the recovery of Salish Sea rockfish populations. In November 2010, Mike McDermid, the Ocean Wise Program Manager of the Aquarium, informed us that individuals can take action against overexploitation and promote responsible, sustainable ocean harvesting by using the Ocean Wise seafood program to make informed consumer choices (VN 12:3, 2010).

### Marine Invertebrate Diversity: The Essence of Life

A major component of marine biodiversity in terms of species and abundance are the invertebrates (animals without backbones). Most invertebrates are small relative to sharks and marine mammals but their importance as part of the marine food web is enormous: the existence of many organisms depends on them. For example, plankton dwellers known as krill (euphausiids) are a prey food item of sea jellies and of the huge basking shark, blue, and humpback whales. Krill are also a primary food source of many fish species. Years of research along the west coast of Vancouver Island by Dr. Ron Tanasichuk, Pacific Biological Station, Nanaimo, has shown the direct effect of ocean systems (including temperature, currents, and upwelling) on the abundance of krill and how the abundance of krill, in turn, affects the survival, abundance and annual return of predatory herring and salmon that feed on them (VN 11:1, 2009). Such are the tangled tales of our marine coastal ecosystems.

At meetings, MBS members have been steeped in invertebrates from the simple to the complex forms: from the scanning electron microscope images of bizarre-looking plankton to the stinging world of sea jellies, from the ornate marine worms to

the commercial management and harvesting of shellfish (e.g., abalone, geoduck, clam, oyster, mussel, etc.). From the ecology of the North Pacific Ocean's jade coast to the ecosystems of the Juan de Fuca Ridge deep-sea hydrothermal vents, we have journeyed to marine fossilized remains of flora and fauna that lived 515 million years ago at the Burgess Shales, Yoho National Park, BC. Every invertebrate species has its own history to tell.

One of BC's most popular invertebrate species is the giant Pacific octopus. Jim Cosgrove, former Collections Manager of the Natural History Section, Royal British Columbia Museum, beguiled the audience with the natural history of this intelligent, superbly mobile creature with three hearts and blue blood — the largest known octopus in the world (VN 7:3, 2005; VN 11:3, 2009).

### Tracking Real Life

The Victoria Experimental Network Under the Sea (VENUS) is a cabled undersea laboratory for ocean researchers and explorers. VENUS has led the world into a new approach to ocean research by delivering real time information from seafloor instruments through fibre optic cables to the University of Victoria. Scientists such as Dr. Verena Tunnicliffe, University of Victoria Professor and Canada Research Chair in Deep Oceans, conduct experiments at depth (~100 m) to determine plankton migrations, oxygen behaviour and even forensics via VENUS systems installed in Saanich Inlet and the Salish Sea (VN 9:1, 2007). Another more broad-scale application, Pacific Ocean Shelf Tracking (POST), uses acoustic telemetry to track marine creatures that travel immense journeys, e.g., salmon, as they cruise through the depths of North America's west coast (VN 11:3, 2009).

### Seagrasses and Seaweeds

Seagrasses and seaweeds are an integral component of coastal ecosystems. Cynthia Durance, Precision Identification Ltd., revealed the many benefits of eelgrass, an oxygen-producing, carbon-sequestering flowering plant adapted to saltwater tidal areas. The vast eelgrass meadows are important as nurseries, cafeterias, or refuges for many species, especially juvenile rock-fishes. Losses of optimum eelgrass habitat through human coastal





**The superbly mobile and beguilingly clever giant Pacific octopus (*Enteroctopus dofleini*), Browning Passage, northern Vancouver Island. Photo by Jim Cosgrove.**

degradation over the last 100 years has led to compensatory eelgrass transplant and habitat restoration efforts to protect rockfish nurseries (VN 12:1, 2010). Similarly, Tsimshian First Nation communities strive to improve a declining stewardship for ‘nori,’ a dried red seaweed, once a food staple for aboriginal peoples (VN 10:3, 2008).

### **Field Trips**

Generally organized by the MBS Field Trip Coordinator, field trips tend to complement the evening program topics. Spring and summer months provide excellent low tides for intertidal exploration at popular locations in Stanley Park and Tower Beach, Vancouver; Lighthouse Park and Whytecliff Park, West Vancouver; Ocean Park, 1001 Steps and Crescent Beach, White Rock; Roberts Bank, Tsawwassen; and even Hornby Island.

Excursions from Steveston provide opportunities to view sea lions and Orca whales in the southern Salish Sea. Longer trips have



included Smelt Bay, Cortes Island, the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, the Marine Ecology Centre in Sidney (now the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre), and the Bamfield Marine Station on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Port Moody Reed Point Marine Education Centre and Vancouver Aquarium's Marine Mammal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Burrard Inlet provide opportunities to see research and rehabilitation programs with Steller sea lions, harbour seals and other marine organisms.

Fall field trips have been offered to the Adams River, to Chehalis Creek and Weaver Creek near Harrison Mills, and to the Capilano Salmon Hatchery, to observe the remarkable return migrations of the wild Pacific salmon. As mentioned earlier, the Swift Aquaculture Farm in Agassiz provides an interesting perspective on a land-based, closed containment farm undertaken on a small, but environmentally-friendly scale.

Alternative indoor adventures during the winter months offer hands-on experience with live animals in the Wet Lab at the Vancouver Aquarium, or a diverse array of preserved specimens at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum.

## Topical Research and Display Boards

Behind the scenes, Nellie Bacou has quietly promoted and advertised the evening programs, and participated in many VNHS outreach events. From 2002 to 2008, she developed increasingly in-depth, creative and colourful research displays to accompany or complement the evening program topics. Nellie's dedication, thorough planning, and organizational abilities have provided a strong, steady keel for the Section.

## Publications

Many members of the MBS Committee have contributed articles and photographs to Nature Vancouver publications. Enthusiastic naturalists, including Ann Kent, Kyle Elliott, Margaret Butschler, Bob Holden, Wally Kiel, Laura Jordison, Annie Prud'homme Généreux, Viveka Ohman, Sheila Byers and Joan Lopez, have written articles for *Discovery* and *Vancouver Naturalist*. Annie Prud'homme Généreux and Nigel Cornwall co-authored a chapter on marine life in the VNHS publication, *Wilderness on the*

*Doorstep* (Parkinson, 2006). Annie continues to support YNC's *NatureWILD* (NW) with her articles (e.g., NW 7:1, 2006; NW 11:1, 2010). Sheila authored and coordinated the publication of a waterproof intertidal pamphlet, "Explore the Rocky Shore at Stanley Park" (2009). The banner sea-nymph, a marine polychaete or bristleworm, is one of the many common organisms readily found in the intertidal areas of our local rocky shores.

## The Future

The local conservation concerns for the present are clear. With 2010 celebrated as the International Year of Biodiversity, there is still much left over that we can do to engage, educate and promote enjoyment of nature's biodiversity to people of all ages, in all communities. If enjoyment of nature promotes awareness, and awareness breeds respect, and respect implies possession, there is a greater chance that individuals, feeling that nature is theirs, will better understand the importance of conserving it and reducing our personal footprints on it. It seems then, that John Davidson, the founder of VNHS in 1918, was ahead of his time when he envisioned the importance of promoting the enjoyment of nature. It is not just for our gain but for that of nature itself. Perhaps our work has just begun.



**In 2007, this banner sea-nymph (*Nereis vexillosa*) marine worm was seen at the rocky point north of the SS Empress of Japan Figurehead, Stanley Park. Photo by Sheila Byers.**

*Marine Biology is one of the most fast-developing and exciting disciplines in the study of natural sciences today, and the Marine Biology Section reflects that vibrant atmosphere. Sheila Byers, a marine biologist herself, has been a firm supporter of the Section since its beginning. She has also led Explorer Day activities for the Young Naturalists' Club. — Editor*

## MARINE BIOLOGY SECTION CHAIRS AND PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Ann Kent	2001–2004
Annie Prud'homme Généreux	2004–2005
Nigel Cornwall	2005
Sheila Byers	2005–2008
Leigh Wilks	2008–2009
Joan Lopez	2009–present

## MARINE BIOLOGY FIELD TRIP COORDINATORS

Kyle Elliott	2001–2004
Margaret Butschler	2005–2006
Joan Lopez	2006–2009
Jennifer Ingram	2009–present

# Field Trips, Camps and Tours



# Field Trips

*By Bill Kinkaid*



**T**he standard image outsiders have of Vancouver (and many of us who live here come from someplace else) is of a land of rocky seashores and mountains carpeted with an evergreen rainforest. But looking closer, one can see that the Lower Mainland and its environs are home to what is possibly the greatest diversity of landscapes and ecosystems in Canada.

The coastal cedar-hemlock forest is dominant, but at low elevations we also have vine maple jungles, alder swamps, cattail marshes, peat bogs, sandy beaches, mud flats, tidal marshes, rocky bluffs, the Fraser River and the sloughs, channels and islands of its estuary. Nearby Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, and even the edges of the continent at West Vancouver give us semi-arid meadows and savannahs dominated by Garry oak and arbutus. At higher elevations, we have mountain streams, montane and subalpine forests with huge old-growth mountain hemlock and yellow-cedar, alpine meadows and tundra, and glaciers and post-glacial landscapes in the Garibaldi Provincial Park and Mount Baker areas.

All of these places are visited on Nature Vancouver field trips. Our trips can be a one-hour scramble on the rocks at low tide, a half-day bird walk at Lost Lagoon with Cathy Aitchison or at Reifel Bird Sanctuary with John Chandler, or a longer walk around Deboville Slough and Minnekhada Regional Park with Larry Cowan. Other trips are more demanding: a wander through the woods in Capilano Canyon with David Cook, exploration of various parts of Cypress Provincial Park with Katharine Steig, a full day hike in the Chilliwack area, or even an overnight backpack in Garibaldi. Nature observes no borders, and cross-border birding trips to Point Roberts or hikes to Mount Baker are common and popular.

There are trips for everyone. Some trips are mini-lectures on geology or forest ecology, some trips are specifically birding or marine trips, and on others we look for whatever we can find. On



**Elk Mountain near Chilliwack is a steep hike but the meadows are a wildflower extravaganza, especially in early summer. Photo by Bill Kinkaid.**

some trips we can spend a couple of hours on our hands and knees looking for fungi and lichens and not lose sight of the parking lot; on others we hike steadily for four hours up a steep mountainside to get to a flowering alpine meadow.

Spring trips to the Gulf Islands and to Horth Hill near Swartz Bay on Vancouver Island (the latter generally drawing dozens of participants on an annual pilgrimage led by Marian and John Coope) are particular favourites. The keen birders are out on deck during the ferry ride, with others on the lookout for seals, porpoises and orcas. The Island warms up a bit earlier, and spring flowers tend to come out sooner than in Vancouver, so it's a good head start on the season.

The VNHS, or Nature Vancouver as we now call it, was officially created in May of 1918. The Society was three days old when founder John Davidson led 34 members on the first field trip to Burnaby and Deer Lakes. This is still a popular destination, with birding trips regularly being led by George Clulow and Istvan Orosi. It's nice to



**Snowshoeing in Yew Lake Meadows in Cypress Provincial Park. With the meadows under two to three metres of snow, we got a very different perspective on the ecosystem. Photo by Bill Kinkaid.**

imagine that some of the spring warblers seen on trips in the twenty-first century are descendants of the birds seen by John Davidson!

“Nature Vancouver’s field trips are scheduled for most weekends throughout the year and occasionally on weekdays. As such they are an important and integral part of Nature Vancouver’s calendar of events. Field trips may also be organized during the Society’s Summer Camp or during nature tours.” This quote is from the Field Trip Policy section in Nature Vancouver’s policy binder. Field Trips are indeed integral to our activities, even our existence. The VNHS’s various lectures and meetings carried on in the city between September and May each year have brought the enjoyment and experience of the natural world, near and far, to many thousands. However, where we really get to know nature is out in the natural world itself, and there is no substitute for a “boots on the ground” experience — no substitute for the pleasure of seeing a rare shorebird for the first time, learning how varied components from algae to bears interact to make an old-

growth forest function, or simply enjoying the colours of an alpine meadow in its all too short flowering season.

Field trips are the public face of our organisation. They are a recruiting tool — many have joined us to be able to go on organized trips and hikes. They are also educational for the general public. On most trips, at least one passer-by is drawn to stop and check out what all these people are looking at. This gives us a chance to share our knowledge and enthusiasm with others; oftentimes the result is an excited “Thank you — I’ve walked here a hundred times and never noticed that before.” We also have opportunities to (gently and tactfully) reproach people for transgressions such as picking wildflowers or letting dogs run loose in wetlands.

The best thing about field trips is sharing knowledge and experiences. On any given trip, I reckon that roughly half the people on it know more than me, and the other half know less. Some trip leaders are authorities in their field, both amateurs and professionals — an expert, for example, might identify an uncommon lichen at fifty metres — whereas some participants are completely new to exploring nature and are excited by learning the song of a robin. But sometimes the participant knows more than the leader. Field trips bring together these extremes and all points in between to share, and a good trip is one where everyone, or nearly everyone, comes home with new knowledge about a creature, a plant or fungus, or a natural process.

Organized field trips don’t just teach us about birds and bugs, but also about places in our world. We get to go to places we wouldn’t necessarily go on our own for various reasons; we discover some places we’d never even have heard of otherwise. Hiking together as a group is not only enjoyable for the sharing of knowledge and the social interaction, it’s safer than hiking alone. The wind may be blowing sixty kilometres per hour at Brunswick Point, it could be pouring rain in the forest in Stanley Park, or we may have to hike through half a metre of snow to get to that alpine meadow on Mount Frosty in Manning Park; even so most of the time the experience of seeing or learning something new together makes it worth it.

*Bill Kinkaid is one of Nature Vancouver’s true all-round naturalists and a keen camper. He has been leading field trips since 2002.*



# Wilderness Camps

1994 to 2010

*By Kitty Castle*



Summer camps continue to be very popular and allow our members to become closer to nature and to experience different areas of the province. Since 1994 we have camped from Smithers to the Kootenays and we have returned to several favourite locations including Cinnabar Basin in the South Chilcotin, Manning Park, Meadow Mountain and Monica Meadows. We aim to offer two years of alpine remote camps, and one “drive-in” camp every third year. The latter offers limited accommodation for those who prefer not to tent and also gives tenters the chance to bring in extra comforts. Our camps cater to a wonderful mix of people, mostly adults, but also often some children and grandchildren. A succession of camps over the years has seen members of the Edgell and Peck family grow up, and they are continuing to attend up to the present day.

This province is vast but it is still challenging to find suitable camp locations. Key considerations continue to be ease of access, an adequate water supply, variety of hikes, sufficient flat area for the cook and dining tents, the distance from the helicopter base to the staging area and then to the camp site. Location choices have become a treasure hunt, with the Internet and Google Earth providing invaluable clues. Some of the less populated areas are particularly welcoming and happy to encourage tourism by having our camps. The aim has always been to offer the camp at a reasonable cost to members. Helicopter support is one of the most expensive items in putting on an alpine camp and can represent one third of the total cost. With increasing fuel costs in mind, we have replaced most of the older heavy equipment with lighter items.

Environmental concerns now govern our camping style. Cooking is done on propane stoves; campfires are a distant memory



**Monica Meadows Camp, 2006. Phil Edgell and hiking group setting off for Isis Peak, with the Horseshoe Glacier in the background. Photo by Kitty Castle.**

because of forest fire concerns and the wish to leave the camp sites as undisturbed as possible. We are using more environmentally friendly products from shampoo to soap. We protect heavy traffic areas such as in the cook tent with coconut matting, and also now peg down plastic snow fencing on sensitive trails as at Monica Meadows in 2006. Gone are the days of cutting down trees for awning props or biffy building. Biffy and shower enclosures are placed over their own plastic pipe frames, and solar shower bags are now suggested on the equipment list.

Traditionally, our week-long camps have been held during the last week of July or the first week of August and registration fills up very quickly every January. Since 2000 we have been able to run some camps back-to-back at the same location. This depends very much on the availability of the cooking staff, camp managers and hiking leaders. Camp numbers vary, but generally 45 members is our limit. Numbers can be lower in a particularly sensitive area. Such a large group may sound intimidating to a newcomer, but



**Ghost Peak Camp, 2003. Hikers crossing a shale slope on their way to the Tarns. Our camp is in the distance beyond the lakes. Photo by Kitty Castle.**

everyone is made to feel very welcome. Campers choose where they will pitch their tents so as not to feel crowded, with some close in and others preferring a longer hike to the dining tent as the price for a perfect wilderness setting.

**Camp Organisation:** Camp organisation has changed over the years, but the camps have always been run by volunteers. A camp committee meets throughout the year to plan locations and logistics. However, the registration process has radically changed as the use of personal computers has grown. Registration is now available online in January, with camp details, application forms, equipment list and maps on the camp webpage. For our alpine camps, a small exploratory expedition (a recce) goes into the camp site the previous summer to check on suitability and again about two weeks ahead of time, to check on snow and approach-road conditions. At Meadow Mountain in early July 2010 the recce team found deep snow at the campsite but luckily it had melted

by the start of camp three weeks later. All campers assemble early at the helipad to drop off their heavy luggage and walk up to the camp — typically, a three hour hike — and set up camp together. Many hands are needed to put up the large dining tent (18 x 40ft) and cook tent (14 x 24ft), both of which were purchased in 1992. Certain key campers such as Louise Irwin, Bob Holden, and more recently Nigel Peck, are essential to a smooth camp setup. Camp managers who have managed several camps in recent years include Lorne Payne, Hugh Hamilton, David Foreman and Gordon Squire, and all deserve special recognition. During the camp valuable records are kept of the plants, birds and mammals under the careful eye of Bill Kinkaid, our main trip leader in recent years. Following the camps, these lists, together with a full camp article are published in *Discovery*. Bird sightings are forwarded to the BC Breeding Bird Atlas.

**Hikes:** Hikes are organized daily by the trip leader and offer a choice to campers. Some may involve longer routes up to the ridges, some may be a hike with a focus on botany, and others may be a gentle meander around camp. In 2008 one group of hikers had an unexpectedly long day going up to The Galleon in Babine Mountains Provincial Park, but they arrived back safely at Smithers Driftwood Lodge at 10 p.m.

**Camp Equipment and Gear:** During most of the year, camp equipment is stored in a New Westminster Public Storage locker. A look into the locker reveals some unusual equipment such as rolls of chicken wire. This is used as protection around the parked vehicles at certain camps, such as Meadow Mountain in 2010, because porcupines find tires and rubber hoses irresistible. Personal gear has become much lighter and, if gear is going in by helicopter, may not exceed 20kg per person. The suggested gear list nowadays includes adjustable hiking poles, Goretex jacket and gaiters, down sleeping bag, thermarest, mosquito netting and repellents and LED headlamps. There is nothing to beat a warm sleeping bag on a cold night after a good day's hiking. Nowadays, with the aid of a rented satellite phone, a call to the helicopter company for injury or medical emergency can result in evacuation

in a matter of hours, as was the case at McGillivray Pass in 2004. In fact, there has been only one mishap with gear coming in by helicopter. At McGillivray Pass in 1996, some items including cook Angie Berger's tent and sleeping bag fell out of the net and were only spotted on the way out. But replacements were found, and Angie took these mishaps in her stride. Some of our campers, Leo Eutsler in particular, have become experienced swamper: they set up and hook the loads for the helicopter at one end and receive the loads at the other.

**Cooks:** Essential to the well being of all campers are our cooks, and we have been very fortunate over the years. There was a long and happy association with Angie Berger who cooked for 30 years up to 1998, as Roy Edgell remembers (*Discovery* Fall 2002 31(2): 5–6). When Angie started, each camper provided the food for the cook to prepare, but she soon put a stop to this logistical nightmare. The food supply then became the cook's responsibility. Then Lance Weisser cooked for seven summers and also found time for watercolour painting. Now we are fortunate to have Jane McClinton, from McBride, who is both an excellent cook and a very cheerful member of the team. Novice campers will be surprised at the fresh, delicious and varied menus, which emerge from a few burners and no ovens. Dry ice and regular ice in our coolers keep our perishables in good condition and act as camp fridges.

**Weather:** No rules govern camp weather and it is always a concern. At almost every alpine camp, but notably at Ghost Peak in 2003 and Monica Meadows in 2006, we have had snow. When the tents are put up, they are securely anchored down, but winds have upended the dining tent at least twice in the last few years. At Mount Assiniboine in 2000, "a sudden gust of wind picked up the dining tent carried it about 10 metres then dumped it down again, buckling the poles in one corner" (*Discovery*, Winter 2000 29(2): 25). Then at Ghost Peak in 2003, "we were visited by a violent windstorm which came close to destroying the large tent" (*Discovery*, Fall 2003 32(2): 32–33). On both occasions, the tent was successfully repaired, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Forest fires deposited ash on tents at Ghost Peak (2003) and forced



**McGillivray Pass Camp 2004. Gary Thompson giving a photo-essay talk outside the dining tent. Photo by Kitty Castle.**

the cancellation of Cinnabar Week Two in 2009 due to the extreme fire hazard in the area. Cinnabar was very wet and cold in 2001 and very hot in 2009.

**Swimming:** Swimming is a given even if it is only the shallow pond nicknamed “Hugh’s swimming club” at Cinnabar (2009). After hiking we would go straight to the swimming pond, float around blissfully in whatever we were wearing, being careful not to kick or splash so as to avoid disturbing the silt. Hugh made sure the pool didn’t diminish in size and let the hose run into it at night. Our warmest lake was at McGillivray (2004), less than an hour’s hike above camp. One of the coldest lake swims was at Blowdown Lake (2007) at the Southern Tarns, with Helen Gowans swimming among the icebergs.

**Entertainment:** There is usually some form of evening entertainment at camp: skits, music, singing and story telling. We have had duets from Mike Castle on banjo and eight-year-

old Felix Parkinson on fiddle with tunes such as “Whisky Before Breakfast” at McGillivray in 2004. There have been plays such as the thrice-performed botanical *A Midsummer Night’s Dream As You Like It* (*Discovery*, Fall 2001 30: 48, 60–63) and poems such as Marian Coope’s tongue twister “The Naming of Peaks” at the 2007 Blowdown Camp (*Discovery*, Fall 2007 36(2): 38–39). Nan Gregory has kept campers spellbound with her stories.

**Bears:** We come prepared for bear encounters with trip leaders ready with bear spray and bangers. However, sightings are usually at a distance and not around any of the tents. At Assiniboine, three campers had a close encounter with a large male grizzly on a trail, recorded by Marian Coope as “Incident at Camp II” (*Discovery*, Winter 2000 29(2): 33). One grizzly came wandering close at Cinnabar in 2001 and the “rest of the afternoon was spent with all present perched on a hillock with binoculars and cameras trained on the bear as he continued to graze unperturbed by our presence.” (*Discovery*, Fall 2001 30: 45). At Ghost Peak in 2003, a family of grizzlies — mother, one second-year and two first-year cubs — were spotted near the camp. Later, hikers Cynthia Crampton and Donald Burton had a closer encounter in the meadow above the camp. Each party was unaware it was sharing its lunch spot with the other some 150 metres away. Between them lay a snowy, narrow pass overlooking the camp. When Cynthia and Donald woke up to the situation — Donald left a note for the rest of the hiking party: “Grizzlies! Gone back to camp” — they struggled into their boots and hightailed it over the pass back to camp. The bears followed them to the pass, where they were seen crossing the snow, leaving their prints and scat, by David Foreman with his binoculars trained on them from below. But from the pass, the bears turned back into the meadows. “David was able to corroborate our story when we puffed into camp,” said Cynthia. “Well, we weren’t really puffing, but we were certainly not stopping to smell the arnica.” The next group that came that way saw the note and fresh bear scat, but no further sign of the animals in the meadows. Cynthia observed that their ascent up to the pass had been very gingerly over the scree, but they were quite unaware of it when they came down again.



**Bob Harris:** At Cinnabar Basin in the summer of 2001, a memorial plaque to Bob Harris (1922–1998) was installed and dedicated up at Camel Pass in freezing wind and rain. Bob was a remarkable naturalist, historian and mapmaker, and Cinnabar was one of his favourite places. The BC Geographical Names Office designated a ridge above Cinnabar Basin as Harris Ridge (*Discovery*, Summer 2000 29(1) 8–19 and *Discovery*, Fall 2001 30: 43–44). Camp files hold many fine examples of Bob’s meticulous and detailed hiking maps used at camps that he helped organize.

**Summary:** Nature Vancouver has a remarkable and proud history of running summer camps since 1918. Anticipation starts in mid-winter when thoughts run to long summer days and a chance to get out into the back country and parts unknown. Campers look forward to a week in the wilderness with the bonus of a cheerful cook providing delicious meals. For some the main attraction may be those alpine meadows full of colour and beautiful flowers, the small lakes and streams and the camaraderie. For others it may be the hikes up into the mountains and onto the ridges to get those glorious views. The pace is up to the individual and can be energetic or as relaxed as a slow explore when Don Griffiths leads the way. Do come and join us!

*Kitty Castle was Chair of the Camp Committee from 2004 to 2010. Her article is based on “VNHS Summer Camps from the Beginning to the Present” (Discovery, 37(1): 34–40, Spring 2008).*



# Nature Tours

1991 to 2002

*By Bill Merilees*



The VNHS has a long history of organizing nature travel, an activity always of great interest to its members. In the late 1950s, under the direction of Bill Hughes, members, primarily birders, would board an early plane at YVR to meet with their counterparts in Victoria for a day's birdwatching, then fly home in the evening. Long weekends provided opportunities for car-pooled group travel, sometimes led by the Brinks or the Stace-Smiths, to the Okanagan (May 24<sup>th</sup> weekends) or Long Beach at Tofino (Thanksgiving), and to other destinations within the province. International travel, for those with a botany interest, took members to Europe under the guidance of Fred and Emi Fisher. In addition, various commercial companies — Goldeneye World Travel, managed by Shelagh Mannering, comes to mind — specialized in sending many members, in small groups, to fascinating nature destinations around the world.

These were a few of the travel opportunities available to VNHS members that were greatly appreciated.

At Birder's Night in October, 1990, Audrey Viken, Kelly Sekhon and Bill Merilees put their heads together and came up with the idea of organizing a bus tour to the Columbia Gorge in the Spring of 1991. The discussion concluded with a rough outline of a format and process that was to prove practical. A charter bus, motel accommodation (Best Western or equivalent) and field lunches would be provided. Cost would be established based on 25 participants. Included in the cost would be a 10% contingency margin which, if it proved a surplus, would go into a VNHS special projects fund. All costs for the tour would be payable directly to the VNHS, and the leaders' trip expenses would be reimbursed by the Society's Treasurer, upon the tendering of verifiable receipts.



**Bryce Canyon, Utah, June 1995. Photo by Bill Merilees.**

This scheme received the endorsement of the VNHS Executive Committee, an endorsement that became an annual ritual to ensure all activities of the Nature Tour Committee were understood and officially sanctioned by the VNHS. For the first trip there was some anxiety on the part of the Executive Committee, but as the trip was oversubscribed, resulting in a nice surplus, future and more ambitious trips were approved more easily.

As experience grew, an easy multi-step formula was developed that enabled an accurate method for reliably predicting a tour's cost. No tour ever lost money though one came close, netting the Society just \$62. The Grand Canyon Tour, the longest and best subscribed of all the bus tours, provided a profit of more than \$15,000! In total, just over \$800,000 from the Nature Tours passed through the Society's bank account, with a surplus of about \$114,000. By agreement with the Committee, the VNHS directed 60% of the surplus to Society special projects or to the Society's Endowment Fund, with the 40% balance being divided between the Nature Trust of British Columbia and the World Wildlife Fund, to further their good work. The latter was by request of the Committee.

International Coach Lines provided all our buses, and because our tours were relatively leisurely and interesting (as compared



**Wildflower assortment near Coulee City, Washington. Photo by Bill Merilees.**

to their regular Reno or Las Vegas routes), we were singled out as a plum job by their most experienced drivers: Bruce Simpson (occasionally accompanied by his wife Sharon), Orville Brown, Rick McIver and Kenny Rockum were superb!

Over the next 12 years (until 2002), one or more tours were organised each year with the exception of 1997. In total, 54 trips of various types, from day trips to Nanaimo to view sea lions and seabirds feasting on herring, to a twelve-day bus tour via Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon and the National Parks and Monuments of Utah, were organised. Other destinations included the Alaska/Cassiar Highways, Haida Gwaii, Cypress Hills/Grasslands, Drumheller, the Chilcotin via Bella Coola, and the Oregon Coast. Nearly 1,100 members and friends participated in these trips.

To provide more time outdoors for the enjoyment of nature, field lunches became a regular feature. When an interesting roadside location was encountered, the bus would pull over. Audrey Viken masterminded smorgasbord lunches in which a hand-picked crew would assist with setting up tables and food preparation.

Travellers then assembled their own lunch from the materials presented. By the third day, the tour group was finely honed to the routine, and with friendly co-operation everything ran smoothly. The variety for lunches was excellent and ever-changing. On one tour, during Easter, we even had a full sized Easter Bunny distribute Easter eggs to all on-board!

In time the committee expanded with the addition of Cathy Aitchison and Terry and Rosemary Taylor. One Alaska/Cassiar Highway trip was co-managed in partnership with the Federation of B.C. Naturalists. Anne Murray, then FBCN President, was added ex officio, to the Committee. David Stirling (from Victoria NHS) and Brian Self lent a helping hand on occasion.

If we had a motto, it could have been “Getting there (and back) is **all** the fun.” Apart from our major destination, each day was interspersed with many surprise stops. Roadsides, knolls, sand dunes, sloughs and forest trails — anything that looked promising for natural history observation kept interest levels high. Experts on board provided colour commentary and there was ample opportunity to ask questions.

Choosing a suitable lunch stop sometimes required imagination and occasionally created some anxiety. State or Provincial Parks and wayside areas that offered washrooms as well as nature appreciation opportunities were the ideal, but not always possible. Winds, rain, broiling sun, even snow at Yellowstone, also became part of the challenge. Gas station canopies, abandoned buildings, and parking lots then had to serve as shelter.

In all such endeavours there are invariably some interesting stories. At Seaside, Oregon, our bus was impounded by the police when we parked in a **No Parking** zone. Our driver also had an outstanding Oregon traffic violation. After a long discussion, we, the passengers, paid the parking infringement, and the driver his fine. At Salt Lake City, in the ‘dry’ state of Utah, a wine and cheese social began with the tour leader being taken soaking wet from the Motel swimming pool and driven by limousine to a wine store to purchase the beverages required. Motel staff were not permitted to engage in this task.

No one was ever left behind or lost. However one person accidentally took a wrong turn on a trail and was ‘misplaced’

for over two hours before finding his way back. And a lady was observed running after the bus (and quickly rescued) when an inaccurate head count indicated all were on board.

In Spokane, we had a smorgasbord that really knocked our socks off for its diversity and culinary excellence.

At Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park on the Dean Channel we chanced on a re-enactment photo shoot of a Hudson Bay Company party that included period-dressed actors impersonating Sir Alexander and one of his voyageurs. (Note: Mackenzie was employed by the North West Company, not the Hudson Bay Company.)

At the Grand Canyon, Roy Edgell and Halvor Lunden hiked all the way to the bottom (more than 1,800 metres) and back again in time to catch the bus.

Grizzly bears, a partial solar eclipse through cloud, *Darlingtonia* (a carnivorous plant half a metre tall), and a Sora Rail that walked along a roadside marsh the whole length of the bus, giving everyone a magnificent view of this very secretive bird, were some of the memorable sightings.

And finally, during these excursions the sun almost always appeared to shine on our activities.

Somewhere it is written “The joy of a beautiful thing is the happiness sharing it can bring.” For what became known as the Nature Tours Committee, it was the wonderful Society members travelling with us who really made these trips flourish and a joy to be part of.

*Bill Merilees joined the VNHS in 1953, was president 1988–90, and from 1989 to 2001 was a co-chair of the ‘trips committee’ that arranged bus tours for members to various destinations in Western Canada and the United States. Since that time, he has led trips as far afield as Antarctica and Madagascar.*

# Photography & Publications



# Photography



By Cynthia Crampton  
& Marian Coope

**F**or many Nature Vancouver members, photography and the observation of nature go hand in hand, a fact the Society has always appreciated. Over the years, the Society has organized occasional courses on photography for members, and it has always used members' photos to enliven the Society's publications. Since 1989, the Society has held annual photographic competitions as well, so photography continues to flourish.

## Photography Basics

From the start, the Society has provided opportunities for its members to hone their skills through articles and courses. In the 1920s, Philip Timms, a professional photographer, was an active chair of the only Photographic Section the Society ever had. In the 1980s, Roy Edgell, Ervio Sian and Gabor Halasz wrote articles about nature photography. Other keen writers on photography were Bill Merilees, Deborah Kerr and Al Grass. Starting in 1994, Duane Fast produced five articles in *Discovery* called "Photography Basics" to help members with their photography questions. These articles covered "Equipment," March 1994 23(1); "Lenses," June 1994 23(2); "Film," September 1994 23(3); "Technical Stuff," December 1994 23(4); "Macro Photography," June 1995 24(2); "Flash," 1994 23(3); and "Composition," December 1995 24(4).

When digital cameras became common, the Society began to offer workshops in **digital photography** to its members. In 2006, Jude Grass signed up Ron Long, a retired full-time photographer from Simon Fraser University, to provide digital photography workshops. These are usually held out at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary. They have always been fully subscribed, and have enabled our members to learn from one of the best local experts how to move into the world of digital photography.



**From the 2005 Photo Competition: “A Rainbow Seastar and Tidepool with Sculpin, Whytecliff Park,” by Annie Prud’homme G  n  reux. (Honourable Mention. Category: Other Natural History).**

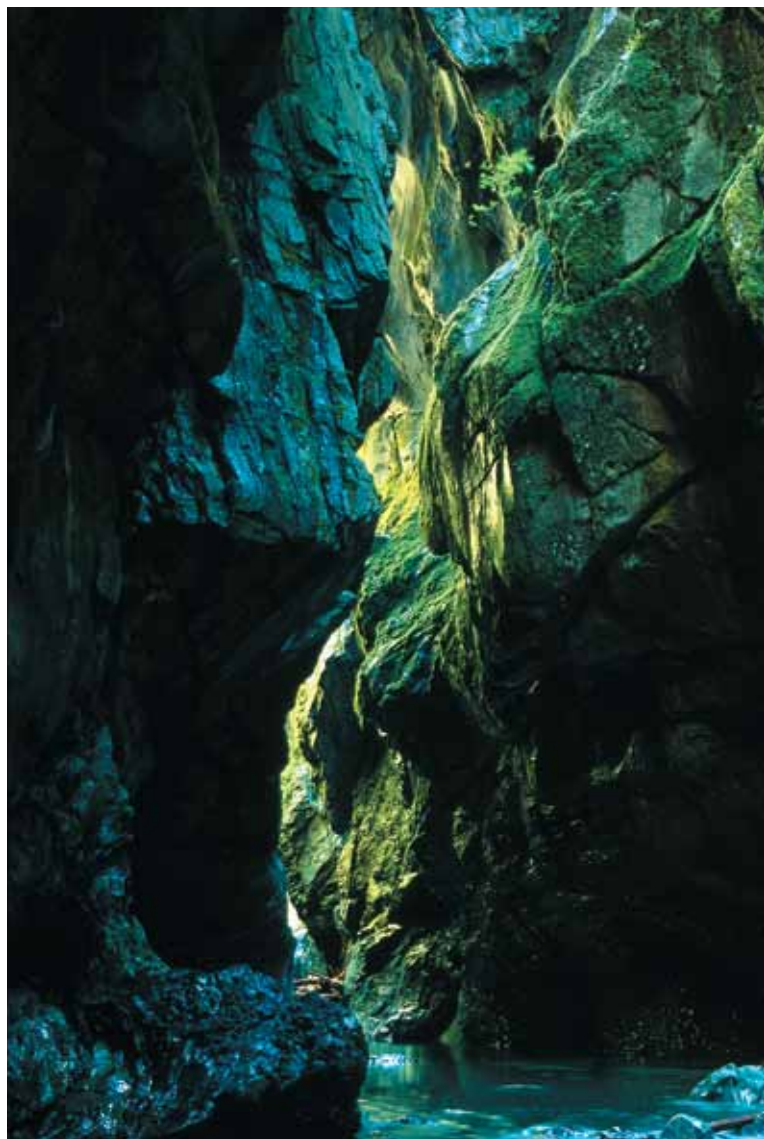
### ***Discovery* Cover Stories**

One of the most widely appreciated pleasures for members is the nature photographs on the front and back covers of each issue of *Discovery*. The photographs are chosen from summer wilderness camps and other field trips, and even members’ backyards — anywhere and everywhere our members are out in nature. They are accompanied by a “Cover Story” in each issue. From 1991 on, these beautiful covers have appeared in colour, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Don and Barbara Atkins of Benwell Atkins, our former printers, who covered the cost of them. It should be noted, also, that the quality of printing of all black and white photos, both in *Discovery* and in the *Vancouver Naturalist*, has improved enormously in the past few years.

### **Photography Competition**

The meeting at which the awards for the Photo Competition are presented is much anticipated and enjoyed by members. The competition has five categories: Birds, Mammals, Botany,





From the 2005 Photo Competition: "Sculptured Walls," by Phil Edgell. (Honourable Mention. Category: Other Natural History).

Entomology and Spiders, and Other Natural History (including reptiles, marine biology, geology and landscape). In 2009, a new category for Young Naturalists replaced the Novices category. The winner receives the Al Grass Award.

Members can submit a total of 15 photographs in three categories. In an article titled "Thoughts on the Annual VNHS Photographic Competition, (*Discovery*, Summer 1999, 28(1):49–50), Roy Edgell, who ran the photography contest for years, accepting the photographs and submitting them anonymously to the judges, wrote the following:

The 1999 Photographic Competition is the tenth consecutive contest in which the writer has been involved, besides five or six others some 20 to 25 years ago....Appropriate and fair judging is the most difficult requirement. Judging is always a very subjective process, and the natural history photographic competition, with its need for balance between photographic quality and natural history content, poses a challenge for judges. How exactly do you compare an excellent photographic representation of a commonplace subject against a not-so-good presentation of a rare or difficult subject? This, after all, *is* a photographic competition but then we *are* a natural history society....Hence we vary the judges. In one year we have three experienced photographic club judges, the next year three naturalists, and the following year maybe a mix of the two.

In the beginning the entries were slides, said Roy, but prints began to be submitted too. After reaching 30% of the entries, however, the number of prints submitted declined because they cannot be shown successfully in an evening meeting, nor compete with the impact that a slide can make. Recently, when submissions in digital photography were received, Ron Long joined forces with Roy in running the contest. Roy felt that someone adept in the world of computers should be connected with the contest: "I am an Ancient Briton" he said of his resistance to the digital age. In 2006, digital photographs had their own category, but they quickly overwhelmed the slides, and by 2008, the competition had become purely digital. Roy has retired now, after more than 20 years of running this popular competition. He and his wife Helen, who died in 2009 and is remembered with much love and affection,

also provided the homemade refreshments at the awards evening. Roy evidently did the baking. We are most grateful to Roy for his contribution to photography in the Society over so many years.

The Photographic Competition has too many results to list, but the winners from 1998 to 2011 can be seen on the Photography tab at Nature Vancouver's website. Nature Vancouver's most frequent winners from 1994 to 2010 are listed below, with the category in which they predominate being added where relevant. "Best in Show" is indicated by an asterisk in parentheses, e.g. (2\*), after the total number of wins.

## CATEGORY WINNERS

Michael Wheatley (Botany)	20	(2*)
Virginia Hayes (Birds)	10	(5*)
Ursula Easterbrook	7	
Betty Andres	6	(1*)
Carol Fuegi	6	(2*)
Edwin G.A. Willcox	6	(1*)
Elliott Chafe	4	
Ian Lane (Butterflies)	4	
Gary Thompson	4	
Morris Beattie	3	
Phil Edgell	2	(1*)

# History *of the* Website

By Kelly Sekhon



The original website was created by Eric Greenwood and inaugurated in January 1998. It was hosted by HELIX, a Vancouver-based service provider now integrated with UNISERVE, under the domain name [www.naturalhistory.bc.ca](http://www.naturalhistory.bc.ca) with sponsorship provided by IntraNet Resource Group (Eric's own company). The website was fully launched for the membership in the spring of 2000.

Until 2007, Eric single-handedly maintained and updated the website. Around 2004, it was pointed out by several members that the website needed to be more user-friendly and professional looking. Since by then Eric was too busy to make improvements, other volunteers were approached to take on the job, but none was able to make a commitment.

In April 2007, Tim Blair offered to redo the website. He worked through his summer break to get it completed and in September 2007 the new website was launched under the domain name [www.naturevancouver.ca](http://www.naturevancouver.ca).

Tim provided the technical know-how to get the website transferred to the new domain and Kelly Sekhon transferred all the content to the new website. Kelly has been the content editor since that time. Tim soon decided to move the website to [www.ecobtyes.net](http://www.ecobtyes.net) owned by Matthew Carroll, who had provided Tim the technical help he needed.

Shortly afterwards, Tim's time was taken up by his studies at UBC and he was no longer available to provide technical help to Kelly. In April 2009 a new member, Murat Gungoraydinoglu, offered to help. He quickly solved a long list of problems, designed a new look for the website and added new features to it. As a result the website now looks very professional, is user-friendly, and easy to maintain and keep updated.

In the *Vancouver Naturalist* of December 2007, Kelly introduced the new website to members. His article is reproduced in full here:

## **New Website for Nature Vancouver**

By now most of the members of Nature Vancouver know that we have a new website at [www.naturevancouver.ca](http://www.naturevancouver.ca). Some of the features of the new website are:

**Content Management System:** This is the most significant change from the old website. Now Section Chairs can update the content of their respective areas from their home computers without having to buy or learn any complicated software. Field trip Leaders can also post the field trips directly on the website.

**Calendar:** Members can readily see all the scheduled events and activities on the Calendar.

**Photo Gallery:** Every member has about 20mb of disk space to create an album and upload photos to share with other members.

**Members' Forum:** Members can post their trip reports; ask questions about identifying a bird or plant species; and comment on any of the items already posted on the Forum.

**Mass E-mail System:** Weekly e-mail reminders and updates can now be sent directly from the website. Members will have the option not to receive such e-mails, if they so wish. The system also allows e-mails with attachments.

**Member-to-Member Communication:** Members can contact other members directly from the website.

**Privacy Protection:** In accordance with the Nature Vancouver Privacy Policy, names and e-mail addresses of members are not accessible to anyone other than the website administrators. The list of members' names is available to other members, only after they log in and agree to have their names (not e-mail addresses) displayed on the list. Non-members visiting the website do not have any access to the Members' Area of the website.

The website can be only as useful and up-to-date as we all make it. We strongly encourage all members with internet access to log in and report any errors or out-of-date content. If you do not remember your password, go to the home page and fill in your e-mail address (the one to which you receive the weekly messages) in the “Request Login Info” and a new password will be sent to you. The e-mail you receive will have a link that will allow you to log in to the website and edit your account to choose a new password that you can remember. You will have to do this within 24 hours or request new login info again.

After logging in, you will be able to access the Members Forum and Photo Gallery. There you will be able to post comments on photos or forum topics or share your own nature photos and ideas with other members. If you have any comments or questions about the website, please let me know. You can easily do so by clicking on “Contact Us.”

*Kelly Sekhon joined NV in 1983 and served as President from 2002 to 2004. He is the Content Editor for the website.*

# Bill Merilees *and the* V.N.H.S. Newsletter

By Cynthia Crampton



**I**n 2005, Bill Merilees undertook to compile articles of interest from the Society's publication that preceded *Discovery*. In his "Introduction to the V.N.H.S. Newsletter Project," he wrote:

Although the Vancouver Natural History Society had its origin in 1918, it was not until 1943 that the Society began producing a newsletter. Although titled *V.N.H.S. News* [and some years not titled at all] it was simply referred to as 'The Bulletin' and began as a way of informing members of the Society's activities. Under the direction of Allan Wooton, accounts of field trips began to appear, primarily those led by our first President, Professor John 'Botany John' Davidson. Up to the time that the first edition of *Discovery* appeared (March, 1972), 153 editions of 'The Bulletin' had been produced.

Bill noted that an Index to *Discovery* was published in 1994, but "the content of 'The Bulletins' has largely remained 'hidden' in the Special Collections (U.B.C.), the Vancouver City and VNHS Archives. Without easy access to these newsletters, some fascinating aspects of Greater Vancouver's early natural history, and our Society's accomplishments, have been somewhat overlooked. A great many dedicated members recorded their observation or are mentioned in the *V.N.H.S. News*."

So Bill undertook a project to "bring this record forward into the present and to recognize the contribution our Society and its members have made to the understanding of Greater Vancouver's natural heritage," through the compilation 'Selected Excerpts from the Vancouver Natural History Society 'Bulletin,' with Notes and an Index, (Number 1, September, 1943 to Number 153, December 1971).' The Index is comprehensive: all species of plants and



**Bill Merilees, with the Nanaimo Field Naturalists, was a leading light in the preservation of the Buttertubs Marsh, a bird and wild-life sanctuary in Nanaimo.**

animals are listed under the common names in use in the year 2000; also listed are locations (field trip destinations, etc.), members, and authors of the excerpts where mentioned. Nature Vancouver arranged for a limited number of the manuscript to be reproduced. The more than 320 pages are bound with clear plastic covers and can be found on request in the principal libraries, universities and colleges of the province. The Society also has copies on file, available for loan on request.

Bill lists “a number of knowledgeable, energetic leaders [who] strongly influenced the Society’s program.” To that list should be added the name of Bill Merilees himself, for having the initiative to compile these excerpts from the “Bulletin.”

*Cynthia Crampton was President of Nature Vancouver from 2007 to 2010.*



# *The History of the* **Vancouver Naturalist** *1999 to 2010*



*By Julian Hudson  
& Kelly Sekhon,  
with Marian Coope*

**V***ancouver Naturalist: Newsletter of Nature Vancouver* is a quarterly publication for members, providing them with up-to-date information on forthcoming evening programs and field trips, and the annual summer camps. It also reports on other Society activities: News and Information from the Board, Society Awards, Elections, Conservation Reports, Treasurer's Reports, Section Reports and details of such events as the Society Photo Competition. *Vancouver Naturalist*, printed on letter-sized paper, with high-quality black and white photographs, is published in the first half of March, June, September and December.

The first issue appeared in March 1999 after the Board of Directors decided to reduce *Discovery* from four to two issues a year, publishing only articles of general interest, and to use *Vancouver Naturalist* for Society news and all time-sensitive announcements.

## **Editors**

Reto Riesen was the first Production Editor, with Pat Miller as Departments Editor and Maggie Kasekende in charge of advertising. Over time there have been several changes in editor. In June 2000, Kelly Sekhon became Production Editor. Marian Coope continued not only to proofread the final copy but also provided considerable editorial advice. In 2002, Kelly asked Marian to be the Contents Editor but she preferred to keep the title of Editorial Assistant as she was editing *Discovery*. Since Kelly was responsible for soliciting and collecting all the material and producing the newsletter, Marian suggested that his title should really be Editor. The editing conventions followed are based on the *Discovery* Style

Guide, originally put together by Deborah Kerr and later revised by Christine Adkins and Marian Coope.


In June 2004, Julian Hudson took over as Editor from Kelly. Marian Coope continued to proofread the final copy, and Pat Miller to act as Department Editor until 2010. Kelly then took over Pat's responsibilities and combined them with his role as Editorial Assistant. He stepped down from that position in January 2011 to concentrate on managing Nature Vancouver's website.

## Production

The technology and programs used to produce the *Vancouver Naturalist* have changed considerably over time. Currently the publication is produced in InDesign on Nature Vancouver's own computer, and it is printed and mailed by Infigo in Richmond. In order to keep down costs, the publication is in black and white only, and printed on letter-sized, good quality cream-coloured paper.

## Contents

The newsletter has been through many changes as it has evolved and the tasks have changed hands. The initial intention of the newsletter was to provide information to members of Nature Vancouver about upcoming programs, field trips and other events. Over the years, articles written by members about conservation issues and other items of interest were included. In his first few years as the editor, Julian attempted to



### Vancouver Naturalist

The Newsletter of Nature Vancouver

Autumn 2009 Volume 11, Issue 3

#### Bird Banding at Muguha Marsh

By Julian Hudson

The temperature has finally dropped from a recent heat wave that has kept the previous autumn, in the region, an amazing month, and Muguha Marsh has been a wonderful place, offering me thoughts and inspiration. I have been very busy in the past few months, as I have been the volunteer coordinator of the Vancouver Nature Observatory's migration station. I would like to make a few comments on the bird banding at Muguha Marsh. I would like to make a few comments on the bird banding at Muguha Marsh. I would like to make a few comments on the bird banding at Muguha Marsh.

All numbers are birds banded during the period 1990-2008.

Although the *Empidonax* (hummingbird) are not on the map, they are, however, present in the area, especially in the morning. The *Empidonax* are represented by 8 species in total: *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*, *Empidonax*. (Note: I have included *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds), *Empidonax* (17 birds).


#### Independence and Wildlife

The location of the Muguha Marsh, within the Rocky Mountain National Park, is one of the best places to see the birds. The location of the Muguha Marsh, within the Rocky Mountain National Park, is one of the best places to see the birds. The location of the Muguha Marsh, within the Rocky Mountain National Park, is one of the best places to see the birds.

Between 1990 and 2008, 37,510 individual birds representing 101 species have been banded at Muguha Marsh. The banding program has been very successful and an average of 4000 birds have been banded each year. The banding program has been very successful and an average of 4000 birds have been banded each year.

Species	Total Number
Red-winged Blackbird	1445
House Finch	1402
Pine Siskin	2980
Mountain Bluebird	2077
Common Yellowthroat	1762
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1280
Orange-crowned Warbler	1057
Dark-eyed Junco	1057
Yellow Warbler	1052
Wilson's Warbler	1052

Julian Hudson would like to see the high up there in the sky where the birds are. He would like to see the high up there in the sky where the birds are. He would like to see the high up there in the sky where the birds are.



Forrest Miller looking at Muguha Marsh, photo by Julian Hudson



### Vancouver Naturalist



Newsletter of Nature Vancouver

September 2010 Volume 12 Issue 3

**The Vancouver Naturalist.**  
**The Autumn 2009 issue,**  
**top, and the September**  
**2010 issue.**

add more content, but the added work involved turned out to be too time-consuming, causing delays in meeting the deadline.

In 2009, discussions began with the Board of Directors to remedy the situation. The Board suggested that the newsletter be simplified and returned to its original intent. At the same time, the website had been evolving into an excellent portal for all of Nature Vancouver's information. Several options for the future of the newsletter were considered and a survey of members was carried out to decide which direction was best. One option was to eliminate the physical newsletter and depend on the website and weekly e-mails. Many members, however, indicated that they preferred a printed newsletter. The survey figures, combined with the relatively small number of members currently using the website and email list, resulted in a decision to retain the newsletter but limit the content to program and field trip information and urgent conservation issues. Articles of a more general interest, such as after-the-event field trip reports and short but informative botanical essays, would no longer be included unless space allowed. The publication process was also streamlined with the June 2010 issue. All program and field trip information as well as field trip reports are first posted on the website. The information is then copied and printed in the newsletter.

*Julian, who has a Diploma in Renewable Resources, joined NV in 2003 and became the Vancouver Naturalist's Editor in 2004, less than a year later. He has continued in that role to the present time. Kelly Sekhon was Production Editor for Vancouver Naturalist; Marian Coope was Assistant Editor for nine years from 2001 to 2010.*

**From the Board of Directors:** Nature Vancouver would like to express its appreciation for the diligence and hard work shown by the Editors of *Vancouver Naturalist*. This handsome publication, with its beautiful photos, many by the current Editor and his partner, is a newsletter we can be proud of. Thank you both.

# Discovery

## *Nature Vancouver's Journal*



By Marian Coope,  
with Daphne Solecki

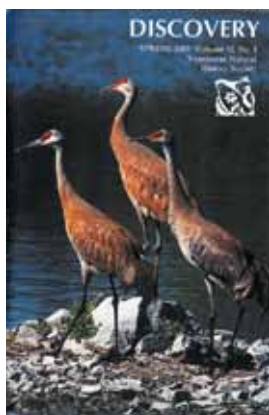
**T**he first Nature Vancouver publication to carry the name *Discovery* appeared in 1970. Previously the newsletters were titled or were referred to as the “Bulletin.”

In 1968, when the Society celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the handsome VNHS emblem designed by Hilary Stewart first appeared on the cover of Bulletin No. 140, but no title appeared at all for two more years. *Discovery* was truly launched in its present form when the editorship was taken over by Keith Wade in June 1971.

Covers for *Discovery* evolved slowly: at first drawings of natural subjects by Society members adorned the covers (the first being a frog by the Editor himself), then drawings gave way to black and white photos. In March 1991, with great excitement, *Discovery* celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the first front and back cover photos in colour. Since that time, entries from the annual photographic competition, winners or not, are frequently featured as covers for *Discovery*. Some images, like Michael Wheatley's picture of a dragonfly against a sun low in the sky, are intensely dramatic (see page 114), while others, like Morris Beattie's mountain sheep with her tiny kid, are charming but taken at considerable risk to the photographer, still others show wildflowers, birds, marine life and mountain scenery; indeed, every facet of nature that we enjoy.

While the coloured covers add considerably to our pleasure in reading the journal, they are, of course, expensive, and for many years now the cost of our covers has been most generously covered by Don and Barbara Atkins, our former printer and his wife.

Cost of production has been problematic for *Discovery* from the beginning. In 1973, two years after its launch, the journal cost as much to produce as the Society collected in dues. However, rather than give up publication, dues were raised.



It was felt that a publication of lesser quality would not serve the Society well in its mission to provide members and the public with the information necessary to protect the habitat of our native flora and fauna. Publication of observations and non-technical articles about nature form a vital part of developing a general awareness of ecological problems among amateur naturalists and even among professional specialists.

This view is as valid today as it was in 1973. Unfortunately rapidly rising costs (especially mailing) forced the Society in 1999 to cut publication to two issues a year, even though the cost of the coloured covers is sponsored separately.

In recent years even two issues a year have been difficult to achieve, largely due to lack of volunteers to edit *Discovery*. The position of editor is demanding, even with the assistance of an editorial committee. Editors need to know what goes on in the Society. Articles must be solicited (for which University connections are useful as professors and graduate students are often in a position to provide them). Then, when articles arrive, they must be edited, proofread and refereed before they can appear in print. Photographs must be chosen, book reviews incorporated (for many years, these have been provided by stalwart contributors Christine Adkins and Betty Cannings in 'Book Reviews' and 'Books in Brief'). More proofreading and seeing the publication

through printing are the last steps before *Discovery* reaches members' hands. It is a long but satisfying process.

Since computers have come into common use, most authors will submit articles electronically, allowing easy editing — some of the handwriting earlier editors had to contend with was a challenge, to say the least. On the other hand, now that *Discovery* publishes no Society news, only articles, more of the latter must be commissioned and dealt with, and computers also provide headaches of their own.

Editors in the period covered by this *Portrait* have done a wonderful job; some have dedicated many years, some considerably less, most only a year. The longest lasting are Roland Wahlgren (1990–1994), Marian Coope (2002–2008), and above all, Production Editor Deborah Kerr (1990–1998). A more complete list will appear, together with a fuller account of *Discovery*'s history, in the new *Discovery Index II: 1994–2010*.

Readers beware: the future of *Discovery* hangs in the balance. Named after Captain Vancouver's ship *H.M.S. Discovery*, our journal without an editor will be like a ship without a captain, and will surely sink.

*Former Editor Marian Coope has a full collection of Discoveries in which she finds all sorts of treasures, the old as valuable as the new. Daphne Solecki finds them useful too.*

**On the left, *Discovery* covers spanning several years.**

**Top: The September 1993 issue. Cover photo: A dragonfly at sunset by Michael Wheatley.**

**Middle: The Spring 2003 issue. Cover photo: A trio of Sandhill Cranes photographed at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary by Virginia Hayes.**

**Bottom: The Fall 2005 issue. Cover photo: A White-Lined Dirona Nudibranch (*Dirona albolineata*), photographed in the waters off Whytecliff Park by Annie Prud'homme G  n  reux.**

# Books

By Alison Parkinson



**B**etween 1993 and 2010, Nature Vancouver published eight titles: seven books and one pamphlet. Three of the books were enhanced versions of previous publications.

## ***A Bird Watching Guide to the Vancouver Area***

**Coordinated by Val Schaefer (1993)**

To provide both local and visiting bird watchers with information about places to go in Vancouver for the most exciting and rewarding birding experiences, many members of VNHS contributed to *A Bird Watching Guide to the Vancouver Area, British Columbia* (1993), published by Cavendish Books, Vancouver. Following its success, in 2001 an updated and enhanced version of the book was published: *The Birder's Guide to Vancouver and the Lower Mainland*. It is described below.

## ***The Birds of Burrard Inlet***

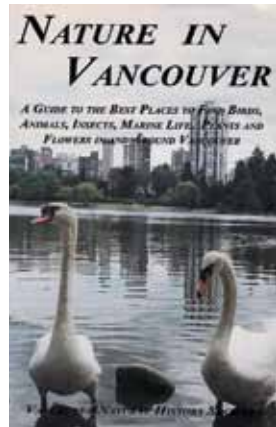
**Coordinated by Val Schaefer (1995)**

At the suggestion of the Burrard Inlet Action Program (BIEAP), the Birding Section of the Vancouver Natural History Society produced a book titled *The Birds of Burrard Inlet* (1995). At that time, several members of the Birding Section were already monitoring the bird life in eight general habitat areas along Burrard Inlet. Their new purpose was to assist BIEAP in recording the current, baseline state of an environment potentially threatened by future disasters such as oil spills and development. For each of the eight areas, Point Grey–Kitsilano, West Vancouver, False Creek, Stanley Park, Central Harbour, Port Moody Arm and Indian Arm, the book provides a comprehensive narrative of all the bird species found. The book also includes some maps, colour photographs and a Vancouver Bird Checklist (155 species). It is a useful reference for those observing birds in these areas.

## **Nature in Vancouver**

**Coordinated by Bill Merilees and Val Schaefer (1996)**

To encourage the general public to explore the natural wonders of Vancouver by public transit, VNHS produced the book *Nature in Vancouver: A Guide to the Best Places to Find Birds, Animals, Insects, Marine Life, Plants and Flowers in and Around Vancouver*, published by Cavendish Books, Vancouver. An updated and enhanced version of the book was published in 2009: *Parks and Nature Places Around Vancouver*. This book is described below.



## **Vancouver Birds in 1995**

**Coordinated by Kyle Elliott  
and Wayne Gardner (1997)**

So that future changes in bird sightings in the Vancouver Checklist area would be more easily discernible, the Birding Section recorded in 1995 the seasonal occurrence, abundance and distribution of each bird species in their publication *Vancouver Birds in 1995* (1997). The book's bird sighting statistics were based on the field work of 193 bird observers, Christmas bird counts, bird banding activities, bird surveys, rare bird alerts and a May birdathon. Listed for each bird species, the statistics indicate the abundance, arrival dates, migration numbers, high counts, departure dates and noteworthy records. There are also coloured photographs of some of the more remarkable sightings.

## **The Birder's Guide to Vancouver and the Lower Mainland** **Edited by Catherine J Aitchison (2001)**

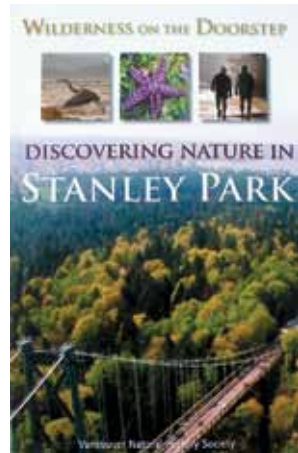
Several VNHS members contributed their time and expertise to the production of *The Birder's Guide to Vancouver and the Lower Mainland* (2001), published by Whitecap Books. This book is an updated and much enhanced version of *A Birdwatching Guide to the Vancouver Area, British Columbia* (1993). It provides both Lower Mainland residents and visitors from further afield with information on destinations for birdwatching and the bird species



to be found. The birding locations are grouped geographically so that several locations can easily be visited in succession. Maps and habitat descriptions clearly indicate the bird species sighted in each location. The book also provides a list of 406 bird species in the Vancouver area, and indicates their observed abundance for each month of the year. Specific sighting instructions are provided for about 80 selected bird species that are of most interest to local and visiting birdwatchers.

***Wilderness on the Doorstep***  
***Discovering Nature in Stanley Park***  
**Edited by Alison Parkinson (2006)**

*Wilderness on the Doorstep* is an update of Nature Vancouver's book *The Natural History of Stanley Park* (1988). Many books have been written about Stanley Park's history and attractions but *Wilderness on the Doorstep* particularly portrays the natural history and is written by experts from Nature Vancouver in non-technical language. The book begins with descriptions of nature walks around the lakes, along the seawall and through the forests of the park. Subsequent chapters describe the park's trees, forest vegetation, ornamental trees, mosses, liverworts and lichens, fungi, birds, mammals, insects, spiders and arthropods, amphibians and reptiles, marine life and geology. As the biodiversity of Stanley Park is representative of many areas of the Lower Mainland, this book is an informative introduction to the area's natural history. Many authors and photographers contributed to this book, very attractively published by Harbour Publishing.

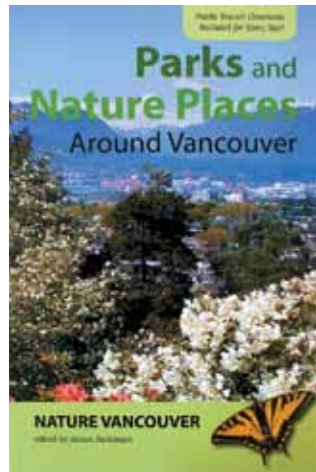


***Parks and Nature Places Around Vancouver***  
**Edited by Alison Parkinson (2009)**

For Nature Vancouver's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Society produced an update of *Nature in Vancouver* (1996). This new guide book, entitled *Parks and Nature Places Around Vancouver* describes

more than 60 natural history-rich places in the Lower Mainland with information about how to reach them all by public transportation. Locations were selected based on this accessibility. The book involved a considerable portion of the Society's membership in writing park descriptions, providing transit information, checking details, creating maps, or photographing the animals, plants and scenery to create the very colourful and comprehensive volume published by Harbour Publishing. The focus of the book is to

encourage the public to visit interesting and enjoyable locations away from buildings and urban development and to appreciate the natural history they find there. The immense variety of parks within our grasp is emphasized; they include meadows, mountain slopes and mountaintops, lakes, riverbanks, canyons and estuaries, seaside beaches, forests and woodland, bogs, cultured parks and a conservatory.



### ***Explore the Rocky Shore at Stanley Park***

**Authored and coordinated  
by Sheila Byers (2009)**

In November 2009, the Marine Biology Section of Nature Vancouver published the intertidal pamphlet, “Explore the Rocky Shore at Stanley Park.” As part of their contribution to the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, it was designed to raise the public’s awareness of the value of the organisms in the urban intertidal zone. The pamphlet is a pocket-size, waterproof field guide to 40 prominent intertidal

species of marine life including seaweeds, invertebrates, fishes and birds. Photographs identify the important characteristics unique to each species, and the text provides details on their predators and specific prey items. The pamphlet also recommends beach manners for conserving the vulnerable environment of the intertidal zone. Although the guide highlights the marine life inhabiting the rocky point jutting into Burrard Inlet north of the Vancouver Aquarium, many species are also present at other rocky locations of the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. The pamphlet has been distributed and incorporated into many nature programs throughout BC and northwest Washington State. It has since been reformatted into a booklet where each photo and description of an organism are together on facing pages.

*Alison Parkinson, a former high school science and math teacher, is a retired technical writer who has produced and edited two Nature Vancouver books.*



**Snowy Owls (*Bubo scandiacus*). Photo by Mark Habdas.**

# Society Activities



*Nature Vancouver's*

# 90th Anniversary

*By Margaret Coutts*



**I**n 2007, Daphne Solecki, a long-time Board member and past president, suggested that we plan special projects and events to celebrate Nature Vancouver's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008. Several members enthusiastically supported the plan and came forward with more ideas than we had the resources to complete. A Committee was formed to oversee the events and projects, and with the assistance of many people, we accomplished the following activities — all but two events involving the public and promoting Nature Vancouver.

## **Presentation**

At the request of the Committee, Libby Coyner, a graduate student at UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, created a PowerPoint presentation of the history of Nature Vancouver. This was shown to the membership at the 2008 Annual General Meeting which also included a special tribute to Bert Brink for his many years of conservation work. The presentation had an enthusiastic reception and is now available on a CD to any member who wishes to utilize it when promoting Nature Vancouver.

## **Evening Talks**

A series of three educational evening talks at the Downtown Branch of the Vancouver Public Library was suggested and arranged by Rosemary Taylor on the theme of Nature and Climate Change. The invited speakers were John Nightingale of the Vancouver Aquarium on climate change and oceans, Dick Cannings on climate change and birds, and Keith Wade of Capilano University who spoke on climate change and vegetation. Daphne Solecki and David Cook were most helpful in obtaining the speakers. These



**From left to right: Past Presidents Kelly Sekhon, Dick Stace-Smith, Cynthia Crampton (current President), Bill Merilees, Noreen Fairweather, Kevin Bell, Adrian Grant Duff, Norm Pursell, Jude Grass, Jeremy McCall, and Daphne Solecki. Photo by Joseph Lin.**

lectures were well attended, and introduced Nature Vancouver to many members of the public.

### **Picnic**

On a beautiful day in July, a picnic for members was held at Deas Island Park. Metro Vancouver Parks partnered with us, providing free of cost the heritage schoolhouse, canoes and guides, and park interpreters for nature walks. Ninety members attended, and enjoyed an afternoon of socializing, birding, walking and canoeing. We were also joined by several Young Naturalists with their families who had a special interpreter to lead them around the park. Children and adults all particularly enjoyed the very large number of Skippers (butterflies) to be seen there. Cynthia Crampton, along with Stephen Suddes and Jill Deuling from Metro Vancouver Parks, were responsible for the success of the event.

## Gala Event

Finally, on October 23, a gala event celebrating Nature Vancouver's conservation successes over the years was held at the UBC Graduate Student Centre. A large number of members attended, along with invited guests, including past presidents and representatives of organizations with which Nature Vancouver has had a close association. The evening featured displays of special conservation areas, Libby Coyner's presentation on the history of Nature Vancouver, and a keynote address by Marvin Rosenau on the present state and future of the Fraser River. The contribution of the Conservation Section, especially of Jeremy McCall, and the organizational work of Cheryl Kinkaid, ensured that this excellent evening was enjoyed by all.

## Lapel Pins

Jeremy McCall ordered special lapel pins to commemorate the anniversary, combining the Society crest and both the Society's names. These beautiful pins, whose origin is described earlier in this volume, are still much worn by members.

## Pamphlet

The Marine Biology Section published a handsome intertidal pamphlet created by Sheila Byers with the encouragement of Viveka Ohman, titled "Explore the Rocky Shore at Stanley Park." A feature of the pamphlet is the waterproof paper on which it is printed. Initially, copies were provided to the Vancouver Aquarium and the Stanley Park Ecological Society for use in their educational programs. Since then, Sheila has led several workshops, and intertidal talks and walks, based on the pamphlet. Nature Vancouver was further promoted when Sheila gave a presentation on the pamphlet at the Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators Conference which was held in the summer of 2009 at the Vancouver Aquarium.

## Books

*Parks and Nature Places Around Vancouver* was published in 2009. It is a substantially rewritten and updated edition of *Nature in Vancouver*, first published in 1996. The new book, the product



**Al Grass, Noreen Fairweather, Bill Merilees and Norm Pursell.  
Photo by Kelly Sekhon.**

of many contributors and edited by Alison Parkinson, describes 50 parks and other natural areas in Vancouver and its surroundings that can be reached by families using public transport. An exceptionally beautiful book, *Parks and Nature Places Around Vancouver* was a great success, ranking in the top sales category of BC books during the spring and summer of 2009. Alison was interviewed by the media and attended Nature Vancouver outreach events where a substantial number of volumes were sold.

Also as part of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Nature Vancouver is publishing this *Portrait* and the updated *Discovery Index*, as explained in the Introduction.

*Margaret Coutts was the coordinator for these celebrations. She was also President of Nature Vancouver from 2010 to 2011.*



# Community Outreach

By Nigel Peck



One of the primary mandates of our Society since it was founded has been “to foster public interest and education in the appreciation and study of nature.” In November 2004, a retreat focusing on community outreach and led by facilitator Anne Morrison was held for the VNHS Board and other key people. This process was the beginning of an expanded outreach program. The retreat focused on ways to increase the Society’s contact with the wider community, and to partner with mutual support communities through joint lectures and field trips.

Since then, Community Outreach has been the section of the Society charged with carrying out this mandate: to make the wider community aware of the activities, talks and special programs the Society offers.

A mainstay of Outreach since the 1990s has been the Public Service Announcements promoting the monthly general meetings. This task is currently carried out by Nellie Bacou. After advertising the Marine Biology sections for some years, Nellie has mastered the art of researching, planning, and timing the announcements. On a monthly basis, she distributes posters to community centres, city libraries and community boards, as well as placing electronic postings on various online websites such as Global TV, Joy TV, radio and other general community websites. She also sends notices to local community newspapers including the *Vancouver Sun*, *Province* and *Georgia Strait*. The Botany Section’s programs are advertised by David Cook.

The new avenues for promoting events that have arisen since the 1990s include, of course, Nature Vancouver’s own redesigned website. This project, championed by Kelly Sekhon, now functions as a public news source for promoting all Nature Vancouver programs and activities. The website offers a resource for all areas of the Society, a historical perspective of each area,



**Nature Vancouver volunteers David Foreman, Adrian Grant Duff, Cynthia Crampton, Eva Nagy and Nigel Peck enjoying a gorgeous spring day at the 2008 Jericho Park Earth Day celebration.**

and is a key communication tool for organizing ongoing outdoor activities and talks.

If Public Service Announcements are a key component for promoting the weekly programs, Outreach displays are the bricks and mortar of front line public interaction. At community events, Nature Vancouver sets up displays. These have developed over the years from simple table top exhibits to a large fold-up panel featuring photographs and, more recently, a tent in which the photographs and our collection of natural history items can be set out and discussed. These items include shells, eggs, bones, nests and even a stuffed Hawk Owl which people can touch. The display is always a hit with children and adults alike. It features new Nature Vancouver publications and information about the Society's activities. Questions about Nature Vancouver are always answered by volunteers, and leaflets are given out to the general public.



**Nature Vancouver volunteer Susan Garber appreciating natural treasures with families at the 2008 Jericho Earth Day celebration outreach display table. Photo by Nigel Peck.**

Key Nature Vancouver members involved in Community Outreach have included Jeremy McCall, Daphne Solecki, Adrian Grant Duff, David Foreman, Marian Coope, Eva Nagy, June Ryder, Ann Kent, Bob Holden, Rosemary Taylor, Bill Kinkaid, Sheila Byers, Wally Kiel, Nellie Bacou and Outreach coordinator Nigel Peck.

Over the years, Nature Vancouver has participated in events such as Earth Day at Everett Crowley Park, Jericho Beach Park and Burnaby Lake, the Coho Festival in West Vancouver's Ambleside Park, Fraser River Days, the Van Dusen Plant and Flower Show, West Coast Native Plant Sale, Vancouver Farmers' Markets, Richmond Environment Days, Vancouver Car-Free Day, World Oceans Day and the World Rivers Day celebration in Burnaby.

Organizations that Nature Vancouver has partnered with in these endeavours are the Everett Crowley Park Committee, Evergreen, Vancouver Farmers' Markets, Jericho Stewardship Committee,

Coho Festival Society, False Creek Watershed Society, Mountain Equipment Coop, the Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver City Parks, and Metro Vancouver Parks.

As mentioned, the displays have seen many forms and styles, but what they all come down to is getting out and meeting people who have a common interest in Metro Vancouver's natural environment. For many passersby, the displays are the first introduction into activities and talks about nature that they always were interested in but never knew they could learn more about through a local organization. In addition, the displays are often the occasions for happy reunions with former Nature Vancouver members.

For those staffing the events, each display is a satisfying opportunity to share their appreciation of natural history with novices and experts alike. As often as not, a question posed by one visitor may be answered by a knowledgeable visitor wandering by the next moment. The events are always enjoyable and educational for everyone involved whether guest or Nature Vancouver volunteer.

On Earth Day in 2009, the Nature Vancouver guide to reaching nature sites by public transport, *Parks and Nature Places Around Vancouver*, edited by Alison Parkinson, was launched with an excellent interview of Alison by host Sheryl McKay on CBC's "North by Northwest." This interview brought many interested listeners out to purchase the book at our display at Jericho and learn about Nature Vancouver. Beautifully produced by Harbour Publishing, its publication was a huge success, with the book ranking in the top sales category of BC books during the spring and summer of 2009. (See the Books article by Parkinson in the Publications section.)



I hope this gives a small sense of the effort and endeavours in promoting public outreach and building membership for Nature Vancouver over the years. It always has been and continues to be a challenge, perhaps now more than ever. For the urban community, interest in nature is receding as development crowds out natural areas. People simply do not see nature in their daily lives, and they become less conscious of how necessary being out in nature is to their physical and mental health. There are so many other things for people to do, so many personal and family commitments, and



**The Nature Vancouver Outreach booth at the Trout Lake Farmers' Market (2006). Photo by Nigel Peck.**

such an explosion of different groups and organizations to attract the public, that it is a challenge to keep Nature Vancouver visible in the Metro Vancouver activity scene.

It is, however, a critical challenge. Nature Vancouver is an organization with important values and goals. It offers benefits not only to its members but to the wider community as a whole and as such is worthy of concerted effort to ensure its continuation and growth. In the Community Outreach group, we always welcome new members, and ideas on how to promote the Society to the community. If you have any ideas, please join us.

*Nigel Peck came to Nature Vancouver via the summer camps: his first was in 1994 with his parents, John and Dornacilla Peck, at the legendary Cinnabar Basin Camp. He did not return until the 2004 McGillivray Pass camp, but since then has been a regular camper with his life partner Sue Garber. He joined the Camp Committee after McGillivray Pass, and has acted as truck driver and latterly as Camp Manager. He was elected to Nature Vancouver's Board of Directors in 2005, focusing on Outreach as a critical means of attracting new members to help ensure a strong and vibrant Society.*

*How It Began:*

# **The Young Naturalists’ Club of British Columbia**

*By Daphne Solecki*



## **Background**

A few years ago, in common with most naturalist organisations in Canada, the BC naturalist community became concerned with the fact that their members were aging and that younger, more vigorous members were not being recruited. Young people no longer knew very much about the natural world. Perhaps the biggest change between those days and now is that early naturalists were surrounded by nature — they just stepped outside and there it was. Nowadays, the great majority of the population is urban and the natural world is hard to find without some guidance.

Yet environmental concerns have become ever more important to the world; indeed, the environmental movement in this province originated in the naturalist clubs, many of them started as long ago as the early 1900s with a strong conservation ethic. At that time, with a smaller population, there was a close relationship between naturalists, academia and government. In the '70s the population grew, and with the growth threats to natural habitat increased. This spurred the emergence of more activist groups. A split seems to have developed between these groups and the more knowledge-based naturalist clubs.

However, members of activist groups also needed to be well informed about the problems the natural world faces. Clearly it was necessary to develop a younger generation of naturalists who were both knowledgeable in natural history and ecology and prepared to take action on behalf of the environment.





**The originating YNC committee circling from the left: Monica Belko, Diane Lepawsky, Carol Grupe, Karen Buschert, Muren Schachter, and Daphne Solecki. Photo by Susanna Solecki.**

## **Action**

In 1993, Dr. Rob Butler proposed that the Federation of BC Naturalists (FBCN) create a young naturalist program based on the youth program of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (in the UK, Europe's largest conservation organization with one million members). Their youth program, the **Young Ornithologists' Club** (now known as **RSPB Young Explorers**), has been in existence for 60 years.

For various reasons, this initiative stalled until the Vancouver Natural History Society decided to act on behalf of all FBCN clubs to develop a program for young people. As a run-up, a local family program called 'Step into Nature' was started in 1997. The **Young Naturalists' Club of British Columbia** was launched in spring 2000 by a working group of VNHS members: Karen Buschert, Carole Grupe, Diane Lepawsky, Muren Schachter and Daphne Solecki (chair). Monica Belko joined us through the BC government's E-Team grant; she then became the production

editor for *NatureWILD* magazine and has continued brilliantly in that position ever since.

As it happens, the delay in getting the YNC off the ground — though frustrating at the time — was fortunate, because the launch coincided with the growth of electronic communication. Without the ability to communicate with leaders and members by e-mail and to make the YNC known via the website, the organization would never have grown as quickly as it has.

## Progress

In 1995, the author had visited the RSPB headquarters at Sandy, UK. The RSPB was very generous with help, advice and materials and an invitation to make use of everything that could be adapted to our local conditions, without further permission. We made full use of their generosity, starting with adapting their logo. Our logo was created by Claudette Poirier originally in black and white, and later, in a coloured version by Andrew Frank. We also adapted the main elements of their program — outdoor explorations and activities, action awards and a magazine — which evolved into (1) monthly Explorer Days (field trips); (2) Action Awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold) for activities involving nature study, sharing knowledge, outdoor exploration and community action; (3) *NatureWILD*, the only quarterly publication for children with a focus on BC nature and environment.



**Top: The RSPB logo. Middle and directly above: The YNC logo.**

## Developing the Membership

The first local YNC for families with children 5 to 14 years was inaugurated in the spring of 2000 at a children's event at Van Dusen Gardens. The first YNC on Vancouver Island was launched in Nanaimo. (Currently there is no BC Nature club in Nanaimo, but the YNC continues to flourish there and elsewhere on the island.)



In 2007, acknowledging that there are far more children in BC than could ever be reached through family YNCs, a new program for elementary schools was initiated — **Nature Clubs in Schools** — coordinated by Kristine Webber and supported by generous grants from government and business. Through the web-based **Virtual Clubhouse**, schools are guided through the process of beginning a club and provided with resources and support for activities.



**Ponding at Jericho Beach Park. Photo by Daphne Solecki.**

## Becoming Independent

In 2006, the Young Naturalists' Club of BC had achieved province-wide coverage and the decision was made to become a separate registered charity. Part of the reason was economic — through internal competition YNC might hamper Nature Vancouver and BC Nature in their own fund-raising efforts. The first Directors of the YNC were Rob Butler, George Bangham, Eva Nagy, Jeremy McCall, Anne Murray and Daphne Solecki.

## Today

There are over 50 regional family-based YNCs and school-based nature clubs located throughout BC, serving over 2000 children plus their parents and teachers. In addition, there are individuals and libraries subscribing to *Nature WILD*.

Until recently the YNC was coordinated by a volunteer, with the help of a part-time assistant. Originally operating out of the author's dining room, in recent years office space has generously been provided by BC Nature. In 2010, the positions of Executive Director and Clubs Coordinator (both part-time) were created as a step toward ensuring a stable future for YNC and a smooth transition as the volunteer Coordinator retires. Currently the Executive Director is Kristine Webber and the Clubs Coordinator is Tammy Keetch, taking over from Jennifer Swanston.

We are always looking to the future and for ways to grow and improve the program — for instance, finding ways to continue serving children who are moving out of YNC but are still too young for BC Nature Clubs.

## The Future

The Young Naturalists' Club of BC is unique in Canada in having initiated the first province-wide network of young naturalists' clubs. By providing support to local club leaders we hope that the clubs will continue and not fade away when a current leader leaves, as happened in the past. (There were flourishing young naturalists' clubs in Vancouver and Victoria in the seventies and many of today's active naturalists and scientists were involved in those programs.)

Alberta and New Brunswick have adapted the BC program to their regions, and interest has been shown by Saskatchewan,



**Looking at carnivorous plants at the UBC Botanical Lab. Photo by Eva Nagy.**

Ontario and Nova Scotia. Nature Canada is currently interested in working on a young naturalist program and has cited the YNC of British Columbia as a good model. We are looking forward to the establishment of a young naturalists' network from coast to coast.

*Daphne Solecki is an initiator, one who perceives a need in the community which, by dint of persuasion, managerial ability and sheer hard work, she succeeds in actualizing to the great benefit of her fellow citizens. As well as setting up the Young Naturalists' Club, now on its way to becoming a Canadian institution, she was the initiator and Chair of the steering committee that created the Nature House at Lost Lagoon in Stanley Park. With Patrick Mooney of UBC and Metro Vancouver Parks, she also initiated the marsh restoration project on Iona Island. Not surprisingly, she has received numerous awards for her work including, in 2002, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, and in 2007, the BC Arbor Vitae Environmental Award. — Editor*

# The Endowment Fund

*And Other Financial Matters: 1997 to 2010*

*“Great oaks from little acorns grow!”*

*By Jeremy McCall*



## **A Novel Idea**

At the regular VNHS Board of Directors meeting in August 1997, Dick Greyson came up with a novel idea. He suggested that the VNHS set up a new fund to support its future operations. At that time, when members of environmental groups such as the VNHS thought of “funds,” they generally thought of them in terms of accumulating donations for the purchase of conservation properties or for other conservation objectives, so Dick’s suggestion was initially thought to be somewhat radical. Nevertheless it was agreed that it should be discussed further.

## **The FBCN Dues Saga**

At that very same Board meeting the Directors had to consider a request from the Federation of BC Naturalists (FBCN) for an increase in the annual dues payable from \$10 to \$12 per active VNHS membership. This was at a time when the Society’s finances were already under some strain. The Directors decided to put this question before the members at an extraordinary general meeting to be held on the regular meeting night in November. The FBCN dues issue soon became extremely contentious and divisive and led to a number of members suggesting that the VNHS withdraw from the FBCN. During October there was a flurry of letters from various members, as well as an appeal from Audrey Hoeg, President of the FBCN. In the end the agenda for the Extraordinary General Meeting, held on 27 November 1997, included two motions: the first to decide whether the VNHS should continue as a member of the FBCN and the second whether to approve the \$2 increase in FBCN dues. After extensive discussion by VNHS members during

the EGM, and another appeal delivered personally by Audrey Hoeg, the motion to leave the FBCN was defeated, but so was the motion to approve the increase in FBCN dues!

After these two contrary decisions the VNHS Directors were left to determine whether the VNHS would continue to be a member in good standing, which in turn would determine whether the Society's members could continue to be covered by the FBCN third party liability insurance.

## **Developing the Endowment Fund**

While all this was going on, the Board had formed an Endowment Fund sub-committee to consider Dick Greyson's proposal. Several concepts for the management of a new endowment fund were considered, including the formation of a separate charity, or a public foundation similar to the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists' Foundation, but in the end the sub-committee decided to keep the Fund within the VNHS.

By the time of the February 1998 Board meeting, the Endowment Fund subcommittee had completed its deliberations. The committee members proposed a new Internally Restricted Fund, somewhat similar to the much valued Special Projects Fund that had been established some years back to accumulate the surplus from a series of highly successful nature tours. Internally restricted funds are those governed by the Society itself, as opposed to externally restricted funds, such as gaming funds, the rules for which are set by the BC Government or other outside agencies. However, in this case the sub-committee recommended that the rules governing the new Endowment Fund be embedded in the VNHS Bylaws so that they could not be altered by the Board of Directors alone, and the sub-committee proposed a detailed motion to achieve this end.

The five sections in the motion became what are now almost word-for-word the same as Sections 89 to 93 of the current Bylaws. Thus the basic rules of the Endowment Fund are as follows:

- The Fund is intended to be a source of revenue to supplement the other revenues of the Society and to give the Society a secure financial base.
- The Fund is to be invested in investment grade debt securities, such as Government of Canada bonds, but up to

half the book value of the fund at any time may be invested in dividend-paying equity securities subject to certain provisos.

- No more than half the income from the Fund is to be paid into the general revenue of the Society, and there are no conditions on how that revenue may be spent.
- The Board of Directors is to appoint an advisory committee each year to supervise the investment of the Fund. That committee may have up to two members with financial expertise who do not have to be members of the Society provided they have no financial interest in the Fund's investments.

The only subsequent changes made to the wording of the original draft Bylaws were changes to the names of the Toronto Stock Exchange indices that were used to describe the required quality level for the Fund's equity investments. The sub-committee's motion was approved by the Board of Directors and put before the general membership at the 23 April 1998 AGM.

There was a lengthy discussion at the AGM because establishment of a stand-alone Conservation Fund was also proposed. While the Society had often given grants for conservation causes over the years, it did not at that time have a distinct conservation fund. There was some confusion amongst the Society's members because the Conservation Fund was proposed as a separate charity, analogous to The Land Conservancy, whereas the VNHS Endowment Fund was to be an internal fund, which seemed counter-intuitive.

Some members thought there should just be one fund. However both Funds were approved at the 1998 AGM. Although the Conservation Fund was originally to be set up as a separate Society, with its own Board of Directors and charitable status, this in fact never happened and it became another Internally Restricted Fund within the VNHS, similar to the Special Projects Fund.

## **The First Donation**

A simple brochure to promote the VNHS Endowment Fund was then published. Its theme was "Building a Solid Base for the Future of the Society." In the brochure a commitment was made that the Fund would be audited with the VNHS accounts

but that level of scrutiny has been amended in recent years to what is known in accounting circles as a “review engagement.” Dick Greyson made the first \$100 donation to the new VNHS Endowment Fund in August 1998. It was to be the first of many donations by many members.

As of 31 December 1998, the year the Endowment Fund was established, Unrestricted Net Assets (commonly referred to as Members’ Equity) amounted to \$21,576. In addition, balances in the Internally Restricted Funds amounted to \$79,080. The principal amounts included in this total were the Education Trust Fund (\$9,491), the Special Projects Fund (\$28,103), the General Trust Fund (\$5,514), the Awards Trust Fund (\$10,095) and the brand new VNHS Endowment Fund (\$4,555). Also included was the Birding Publications Fund, which was established in that same year with a balance of \$2,388 from funds derived from a successful Vancouver Big Day Birdathon in 1997.

## **The Evolution of the Finance Committee**

With respect to the required advisory committee, a financial committee was already meeting on an annual basis; this committee met as both the Memorial Trust Fund Committee and the General Trust Fund Committee. The Memorial Trust Fund listed the names of particular deceased members and the amounts of the donations made in their names. It was used to fund the annual VNHS scholarship. Donations to the General Trust Fund were generally anonymous and were used to fund the annual awards given out by the Society. Details of both funds were spelled out in great detail in the notes to the Society’s annual financial statements. Since the cost of funding awards was not significant and not really comparable to the value of awarding a scholarship, in 2000 it was decided to merge the functions of the two Committees. They were renamed the Education Trust Fund Committee. At the same time the members of the two predecessor committees reconstituted themselves as the VNHS Finance Committee with the dual function of administering the Society’s finances, especially the Endowment Fund, and acting as the Education Trust Fund Committee for part of each meeting. The early meetings of the new committee took place annually in the pub at Stamps Landing.



## More About the FBCN

The FBCN fee increase remained a live issue for some time after this. Jeremy Gordon, VNHS President, attended the FBCN's 1998 AGM to propose amendments to the FBCN Bylaws concerning the way decisions were taken by the FBCN's membership, but the VNHS motions did not pass. At the VNHS Board meeting in June 1998, a motion was passed to accept the \$2 increase in FBCN dues, though several directors either voted against the motion or abstained. Anne Murray, the new president of the FBCN, addressed the VNHS Board at the July meeting and brought directors up to date on the FBCN's precarious financial position after it lost \$35,000 due to insufficient control in the final years of its successful Land for Nature program.

## Phillips, Hager & North

In November 2001, an investment account was opened at Phillips, Hager & North, (PH & N) then an independent and highly reputable investment and pension fund manager based in



**Angel wing, (*Pleurocybella porrigens*) October, Minnehada Park.  
Photo by Rosemary Taylor.**



Vancouver. The Finance Committee developed a policy whereby accumulated funds in the Endowment Fund would be progressively transferred to PH & N to be invested for the long term with 50% being allocated to its Bond Fund and 50% to its Dividend Income Fund, a conservatively managed equity fund. That policy continues to this day (see Table).

### **Some Milestones: Major Bequests Allocated to the VNHS Endowment Fund**

One of the main reasons the assets of the VNHS Endowment Fund have grown so rapidly is due to some very generous bequests made to the Society by long-time members. These bequests have been allocated to the Endowment Fund as a matter of policy since its inception and they include:

2001	Joyce Lucy Aikens	\$13,339
2003	Kay Beamish	\$11,429
2004	Norah Helliwell	\$1,000
	Willie Dickenson	\$45,545
2006	Edna Patricia Robinson	\$30,343
2007	Ruth Elizabeth Hodge	\$13,333
2009	Ruth Elizabeth Hodge	\$8,333
2010	Rose Naumann	\$30,000

The table on the following page illustrates the Fund’s growth. As of 31 December 2010, some 12 years after the Endowment Fund was established, unrestricted net assets (or Members’ Equity) now amount to \$49,731. In addition, the total balances in Internally Restricted Funds total \$336,867. The principal amounts included in that total are the VNHS Endowment Fund (\$249,657), Education Trust Fund (\$21,740), Special Projects Fund (\$13,439), Camp Reserve Fund (\$21,129) and Birding Publications Fund (\$6,187).

*Jeremy McCall has been Treasurer of Nature Vancouver since 2007. He first became a Director in 1993, and was President from 1999 to 2001.*

GROWTH OF THE VNHS ENDOWMENT FUND					
Year	Total Year End Balance	Invested With P H & N Book Value	Invested With P H & N Market Value	Operating Fund Share of Income	Major Bequests Received
1998	\$4,555	-			
1999	\$20,511	-			Note I
2000	\$33,404	-			Note I
2001	\$56,084	-			\$12,000
2002	\$68,206	-			\$1,339
2003	\$86,972	\$51,606	\$57,596		\$11,429
2004	\$137,224	\$120,927	\$134,824		\$45,545
2005	\$143,231	\$127,945	\$148,577		-
2006	\$176,472	\$177,571	\$214,610	\$2,313	\$30,343
2007	\$196,970	\$199,185	\$224,231	\$4,700	\$14,333
2008	\$200,558	\$205,940	\$187,983	\$3,377	-
2009	\$214,636	\$214,141	\$225,236	\$4,100	\$8,333
2010	\$249,657	\$242,395	\$266,509	\$4,127	\$30,000

Note 1: In addition to donations amounting to several thousand dollars each year, the significant increases in 1999 and 2000 resulted from the allocation of the surplus from 1999 Nature Tours.

# *The* Reference Binder

*By John Rawsthorne*



**F**or many years information and policies required to run the Society were not in any one central accessible location. In many instances recovering the required information depended on the memory of long-standing Board members or a tedious search of past minutes. When these approaches failed the information or policy had to be produced anew — a time-consuming process.

In 2002, past president Jeremy McCall proposed that all policies and information pertinent to the operation of the Society be assembled in one place, which was initially thought of as a policy manual.

The execution of this proposal turned out to be a sizeable project, undertaken jointly by Jeremy and John Rawsthorne. John became the coordinator of what was named the VNHS Reference Binder. Jeremy and John each wrote a part of the text, in some instances based on existing documents, and others from scratch. They acted as editor and critic of each other's work. When completed to their satisfaction, all documents relating to policy were then submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

The policies were packaged into like categories: Constitution and Bylaws, General Policies, Camps and Nature Tours, Finance and Funds. In addition to the actual policies, the Binder incorporates some history, a brief description of the way the Society functions, information on past Presidents, Camps, Nature Tours, Terms of Reference for the Society's various Committees, Guidelines for the execution of certain functions, Job Descriptions so that key persons know the scope of their responsibilities, and finally miscellaneous supplementary information of interest only to persons carrying out a specific limited function.

In 2004 thirty copies of the first edition were printed, incorporated into a loose-leaf binder and distributed to every Director, Section



**A Nature Vancouver Field Trip to Brandywine Meadows south of Whistler. Photo by Bill Kinkaid.**

Chair, Committee Chair, Finance Committee member and other key persons to whom the contents were deemed to be of relevance. Revisions to individual documents were issued from time to time and the Binder holders requested to update their copies. All copies of the Binder were numbered, and John as Binder Coordinator kept track of who held each Binder, as they were passed from person to person as roles changed.

The Binder has proved to be a valuable tool. As a result, in June of 2011 a second, up-dated edition was published and distributed to the current Binder holders. John continued as coordinator until the completion of the distribution of the second edition in July of 2011.

*John Rawsthorne and his wife Margot joined the Vancouver Natural History Society in 1996. John served on the Finance Committee from 2000 to 2008 and was a Director from 2001 to 2004. He was the Coordinator for the Reference Binder from 2002 until 2011.*

# Appendix A\*

## VNHS AND NV PRESIDENTS

1994	Val Schaefer
1994–95	Zsa Zsa Stiasny
1995–97	Linda Kingston
1997–99	Jeremy Gordon
1999–2001	Jeremy McCall
2001–02	Acting Presidents: Adrian Grant Duff (June) John Rawsthorne (July) Kelly Sekhon (August) Lorne Payne (September)
2002–03	Kelly Sekhon
2003–07	Adrian Grant Duff
2007–10	Cynthia Crampton
2010	Margaret Coutts

\* These appendices are continuations of those in *The Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918–1993*.

# Appendix B

## BIRD OF THE YEAR AWARD

1992	Hermit Warbler	Mark Wynja
1993	Not Awarded	
1994	Northern Parula	Mike Tootchin
1995	Williamson's Sapsucker	John Luce
1996	Common Eider	Ken Wright, Rick Tootchin, Tom Brown
1997	{Hooded Warbler	Patrick Mooney, Tom Plath, Rick Tootchin
	{Rock Wren	Len Jellicoe
1998	King Eider	Rick Tootchin
1999	Sage Thrasher	Janice Brown, Lauris Williams
2000	Hooded Oriole	Kay Landrack
2001	Ivory Gull	John King
2002	Prothonotary Warbler	Mitch Meredith

# Appendix C

## KAYE AND CHARLES NEY AWARD

*The Kaye and Charles Ney Award, the Premier Award of the Society, is given to a member who has shown exemplary service and dedication to the VNHS.*

1993	Kelly Sekhon
1994	Dick Cannings
1995	Bill Merilees
1996	Catherine Aitchison
1997	Audrey Viken
1998	George Clulow
1999	Pat Brandlmayr
2000	Eric Greenwood
2001	Laurence Brown
2002	Dr. Bert Brink
2003	Marilyn Dutton
2004	Brian Self
2005	Marian Coope
2006	Katharine Steig
2007	Not Awarded*
2008	Daphne Solecki
2009	Jude Grass
2010	Jeremy McCall

\* In 2007, there were no eligible candidates. Under the regulations of the time, members currently serving on the Board of Directors were not eligible. In 2007, a motion was passed at the AGM to make any Director who served on the Board for 10 years or more eligible to receive it. (*Vancouver Naturalist*, 9(2):7 June 2007.)

# Appendix D

## CAMPS

1994	Cinnabar Basin
1995	Monica Meadows
1996	McGillivray Pass
1997	Joe Lake
1998	Crooks Meadow
1999	Manning Park
2000	Mt. Assiniboine Provincial Park
2001	Cinnabar Basin
2002	Oyster River
2003	Ghost Peak
2004	McGillivray Pass
2005	Big Bar Ranch
2006	Monica Meadows
2007	Blowdown Lake
2008	Smithers Driftwood Lodge
2009	Cinnabar Basin
2010	Meadow Mountain



# References

## Introduction (Pages viii–ix)

1. *The Vancouver Natural History Society, 1918—1993*. J. Peacock. VNHS. 1993. Pp.76–77. The full text of this speech, “The Beginnings of Wisdom,” is in the ‘Selected Excerpts’ compiled by Bill Merilees. Pp. 191–197. See complete reference below.

## The Conservation Section (Page 4)

1. ‘Selected Excerpts from the Vancouver Natural History Society “Bulletin” (With Notes and an Index). (Number 1, September, 1943 to Number 153, December 1971).’ Compiled by Bill Merilees. VNHS. 2005. P. 118.
2. Ibid., pp. 138, 141.

## The Birding Section (Pages 54, 56)

1. *Discovery* 4(2):D, No. 165, Sept.–Oct. 1979.
2. *Discovery* 8(3):D, No. 181, Sept.–Nov. 1979.
3. *Discovery* 8(4):C, No. 182, Dec. 1979 – Feb. 1980.
4. *Discovery* December 1996 25(4):167.

## The Marine Biology Section (Page 72)

1. The Salish Sea is defined as the coastal waterways surrounding southern Vancouver Island and Puget Sound between Canada and the U.S. It was officially renamed by Canadian First Nations and government on 15 July 2010.

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