



*To Know, Enjoy and  
Preserve Nature*

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## President's Report

If the Arrowsmith Naturalists' Club was a corporation and I was "Chairman of the Board", I would be reporting that we have had a good year. The Club can boast of solid finances, an active, enthusiastic Executive and a core group of spirited volunteers who do their utmost to "keep nature worth knowing".

What is particularly gratifying is that for the first time in a number of years we have an almost full Executive. At our November meeting, all of the Directors' positions were filled when Lynne Brookes, Cindy Cosentino and Ed Wilson stepped forward. Earlier, Sandra Gray agreed to become our new liaison person with BC Nature. This position entails not only keeping the membership up to date with the actions of our parent organization, but also contributing in part to the Club Chat column in the BC Nature magazine. Of course, Sandra still coordinates the Christmas Bird Count as well as contributing bird data to other provincial agencies. Thank you all. Already the new Executive has benefited from the fresh perspectives you bring to our discussions.

But I would be remiss in not thanking also those who have continued to serve on the Executive – Pam (Secretary), Bill (Vice-President), Carol Anne (Treasurer), Gail (Membership), Roger (Past President) and Gilles (Director) – and those who take on other vital responsibilities – Marg (Newsletter), Maggie and Penny (Field

trips), Sallie (Publicity), Alison (Young Naturalists and Refreshments), and Ken (Refreshments). Each of you provides so much of the work and energy which keeps a Club such as ours viable.

If you are one who is seeking a way to become more involved, there are other volunteer opportunities. In particular, two come to mind. For some time we have been making do without a person, or persons, to coordinate the indoor programs which we all enjoy at our monthly meetings. This is a role that two or three members could share, thereby easing the load and providing a balance to our programs. Whoever steps into this position will have the full support and assistance of the Executive.

Sandra Gray would also like to share some of the responsibility for the Christmas Bird Count program. Certainly, in light of her new liaison duties, if someone was to take on the coordination of the backyard feeder count portion of the CBC, Sandra's considerable responsibilities would be lightened somewhat.

For those of you who already volunteer your time and effort in the Club's other activities – the Fall General Meeting, the Brant on the Bay, eradication of invasive species, the CBC, Kidfest, Rivers Day, the shoreline clean-up, and so on – THANK YOU. For those who may be hesitant for some reason, we are able and

*PRESIDENT'S REPORT...cont'd*

willing to provide whatever support and encouragement is needed. Only through the work and energies of us all can the Arrowsmith Naturalists' Club continue to thrive and provide a much-needed opportunity for our members and the greater

community to "know nature and keep it worth knowing".

*Dave Hutchings, President*



*Harbour Seals*

Princess Margaret Island story on pages 7 and 8

Photos provided by Ronda Murdock

*Gary and Ronda on Princess Margaret Island under a very old Rocky Mountain Juniper*



*Coastal Reindeer Lichen on Princess Margaret Island*



**THE ARROWSMITH  
NATURALIST ...**

is published three times a year in February, June and October. Articles on birding, travel, botany and environmental matters are welcomed by the end of the month prior to publication. The next deadline is May 2012 for the June 2012 edition.

Hand-written or typed articles and photos are accepted. Some editing may be required for length or held off for another edition according to available space. Please e-mail articles to [mmhillm@shaw.ca](mailto:mmhillm@shaw.ca) or send by mail to: 194 Valdez Ave, Qualicum Beach, B.C. V9K 1R8. **Editor:** Margaret Hill (250) 752-2728

**General Information:**

Club membership information is available at both of the public libraries, on the web site <http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>, or write to Arrowsmith Naturalists, Box 1542 Parksville, B.C. V9P 2H4

Membership includes monthly meetings (talks and/or slide shows), regular outings (bird watching, botanical), BC Nature newsletter four times a year and club newsletter in February, June, October.

New memberships are always welcomed.

**Arrowsmith Naturalists  
Officers and Contacts:**

**President:** Dave  
Hutchings (250) 752-1613

**Past President:** Roger  
Simms

**Vice President:** Bill  
Campbell

**Secretary:** Pam Helem

**Treasurer:** Carol Anne  
Phillion

**Membership:** Gail  
Armstrong

**Directors:**

Lynne Brooks

Cindie Cosentino

Gilles Gratton

Ed Wilson

**Programs: Acting -** Dave  
Hutchings **Acting -** Bill  
Campbell

**Field Trips:** Maggie Little  
and Penny Marshall

**Promotion:** Sallie Dabb

**Refreshments:** Alison  
Bakker

**Young Naturalists:**  
Alison Bakker

**Conservation/  
Environment:**

Gary & Ronda  
Murdock

**Web Site:** David Helem

**BC Nature:** Sandra Gray

**PARKING**

If you find you have to park in the over-flow lot down the street from the school, be aware that the gates are locked at 9:30 p.m. One of our members was locked in and had to phone for a ride home.

**NO SMOKING**

Smoking is not allowed anywhere on school property.

**SUNSHINE**

If you know of an Arrowsmith Naturalist, who is ill, in hospital or recently bereaved, please contact: Pam Helem, at (250) 468-7475 or at [arrowsmithnats@gmail.com](mailto:arrowsmithnats@gmail.com)

**CLUB PUBLICATIONS**

A reference copy of the current newsletter is available at each of the libraries in Parksville and Qualicum Beach.

Meetings and Outings information sheets are available at Mulberry Bush Book Stores in Qualicum Beach and Parksville.



## ARROWSMITH MEMBERS' READING DISCOVERIES

### Naturalist Author, Bernd Heinrich

*Review by: Ed Wilson*

I have just discovered this great naturalist author, Bernd Heinrich. The first book of his that I stumbled across was The Snoring Bird. The artwork on the front of the book attracted my attention because it was a 1920's era sketch of the snoring bird. The Snoring Bird is an account of the Heinrich family's adventures in biology for over a hundred years.

Bernd's father, Gerd, had a particular interest in Ichneuman wasps. Although untrained in biology he described thousands of new species. Personally, I was scarcely aware that Ichneuman wasps existed. But consider this: every moth and butterfly, except webworms, is parasitized by its own Ichneuman wasp. The

interaction of the caterpillars, wasps and trees is amazing.

At the end of WWII they (the family) barely escaped the Russian army to get to the west and eventually emigrated to the the USA. Bernd went to school in the US and studied biology. He is currently a professor emerti of biology at the University of Vermont.

Two other books of his that I have read are Summer World and Winter World. The books, while scholarly, are easy and enjoyable to read. I heartily recommend them.

*These books are available at the Parksville Library.*

<Bernd Heinrich - Google Docs.pdf>

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## HAVE YOU READ...?

### Songbird Journeys: Four Seasons in the Lives of Migratory Birds, Miyoko Chu.

2006. ISBN 0-8027-1468-4 Walker Publishing Co., Inc. New York, New York

*Review by: Lynne Brookes*

An extraordinary book! Chu provides us with an exquisitely written exploration of the unfolding story of songbird migration and of these birds

lives throughout the year. From Christopher Columbus's notes on birds resting on his ship and his following (migrating) flocks to find land in the fall of 1492, to gripping tales of the earliest field research, to a look at the most current scientific studies, the reader feels a part of this great adventure of discovery. As fascinating as migration is, the chapters that follow about the lives of species and individual birds after their arrival at nesting grounds is equally spellbinding. An absolute "must read" for all interested in the lives of birds.

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### The Life of Birds, David Attenborough, 1998. BBC Video. © 2002 BBC Worldwide Americas, Inc. *Review by: Lynne Brookes*

This amazing beautifully photographed and well presented BBC video program series came out a while ago but is well worth re-watching if you've seen it or seeing this wonder for the first time. The viewer will be astounded by the glimpses of the life strategies developed by birds over millions of years in every nook and cranny of our

planet. You will be mouthing "how did they ever get that footage?" throughout the series--guaranteed. Watch South American eagles taking monkeys from inside the forest canopy, long snouted hummingbirds snacking off insect excretions, clever Woodpecker Finches and others using tools to capture insects, and African Oxpeckers eating giraffe earwax and parasites with an occasional swig of blood! You'll be impressed by the lifestyles of the richly diverse and famous-for-flight birds with whom we share this world.

## Ribbit for DL33

Can you hear my tiny voice,  
Do you hear me croak?  
Am I insignificant,  
Perhaps even a joke?  
You may not care about my life  
But I may be the clue  
I am an indicator of  
The things affecting you

My home is in the forests  
On this planet you call Earth  
But humanoids are clear-cutting  
The trees for all their worth  
I need someone to speak for me  
And others of my kind  
All the creatures of the forests  
Little saviours of mankind

We're disappearing one by one  
And you don't blink an eye  
Tomorrow may just be too late  
To ask the reason why.  
If I should face extinction  
Perhaps you will not mind, but  
It may just indicate  
That you may not be far behind!

We're only little creatures  
And we do not have a choice,  
so...  
Is anybody listening  
Can you hear my tiny voice?

*Poem by: Norma Pain, Parksville*



## GOING SQUIRRELLY

*By Nancy Whelan*

"They're so cute; they're a nuisance; they're a rodent" ... and all the descriptions apply to the squirrels of Vancouver Island. During the latter half of my first decade, only the first of these made an impression and I spent my summer

Ontario island weekends planning, stalking, and trying to catch one live.

Vancouver Island has one native squirrel and one big, marauding intruder. The Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), a native denizen of coniferous forests can be found across Canada. The Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) like many BC emigrees, invaded the Island from

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eastern Canada and most often inhabits human-settled areas. Two other squirrels are native to BC but not found on the Island. The Douglas Squirrel or 'Chickaree' (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*) inhabits a small coastal strip of the lower mainland and Cortes Island. The widespread but seldom seen Northern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) is also found Canada-wide.

The Red Squirrel is a chattering, fast little acrobat, scurrying along even the underside of branches and leaping seemingly impossible distances. They sport tiny ear tufts, a creamy-white underside, and in summer, an olive-green coat which moults to a more reddish colour in the fall. They eat seeds and nuts among other vegetation, but are not averse to robbing a nest of baby birds. For some reason, perhaps related to Ice Age activity, this squirrel is absent from Haida Gwaii and the Douglas squirrel's small mainland habitat.

The Douglas Squirrel is quite easily identified by its yellowish underparts and behaves similarly to the Red Squirrel. Like its cousin, it is a diurnal forager, and active even in very cold weather, though it may 'den-up' during severe storms. Both the Red and Douglas squirrels take their genus name from the tongue twister which means "the steward who sits in the shadow of his tail"

The Northern Flying Squirrel takes off only during the night which accounts for its rare sightings. "Flying" is a bit of a misnomer, for this squirrel does no flapping of wings, but spreads the folds of skin between front and hind legs and glides through the forest in search of its nocturnal supper. In summer and fall it often feeds on fungi and does the forest a favour in distributing the spores of the critical mycorrhizal fungi. This airborne squirrel depends on mature forests to provide their attendant fungi and lichens as well as necessary nesting cavities.

So to the infamous Grey Squirrel. My father, a Montreal native, used to regale me with tales of hunting this larger squirrel for the pot; BC has no hunting season for Greys because the Wildlife Act classifies them as pests. Almost twice the size of

our native squirrels, this one is not necessarily grey – it may also be brown or black or some shade in between.

The Greys were introduced to BC from Ontario to Stanley Park in 1966, and some got their start on the Island after escaping from a Metchosin game farm. The smaller native squirrels spend a lot of time and energy defending their perceived territories while the larger Grey simply wanders at will with no defined boundaries to his foraging.

There are conflicting opinions on whether the invasive Grey is truly a threat to the native squirrels. A UBC PhD. candidate stated that human development, not competition from the Greys is responsible for the decline of our smaller squirrels. The BC Ministry of Environment on the other hand declares the Greys an "Alien Species" (which technically they are) and asks people to report sightings of any Greys north of Duncan or west of Sooke by calling 1 250 751 3100. Cute? Nuisance? Rodent? You decide.

And yes, I did succeed in my live-trapping; two, actually - later released when they refused to tame.

*Photo by: Nancy Whelan*



"Long-tailed-smart-meter-reader"

## **Arrowsmith Naturalists - Membership**

**Report by:** *Gail Armstrong, Membership Convenor*

We meet regularly on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:30 pm at Springwood Middle School 450 Despard, Parksville. Usually a special guest speaker is hosted on some form of nature, or slides. On Members night, photos and travel tales are presented.

Outings are on Saturday mornings, and 10 days later on Wednesdays, when some area of nature: birds, plants, estuaries etc. is explored.

Becoming a member is as easy as filling out a Membership form and waiver form and paying a fee of \$22.00 per Individual or \$35.00 for a Family membership. These forms are available on our website at [www.arrowsmithnats.org](http://www.arrowsmithnats.org) or at the membership desk at monthly general meetings.

If we have visitors on an outing, a special Day Membership form is available for a required signature. A nominal fee of \$1.00 per person is charged for the day trip. The signature and fee is a requirement of the club's liability coverage.

So far this year, 57 members have paid. This includes includes 3 Life members and 9 New Members.

Special wooden name tags can be ordered for \$8.00 each. See me, Gail, at the Membership desk to order a name tag.

The Arrowsmith Naturalist club is a part of BC Nature and a portion of our fees is paid to BC Nature. In return, each membership receives the "BC NATURE" magazine and insurance on the outings and meetings. These fees are paid by March 15th each year.

Come join us...as we have a lot of fun continually learning about nature, our surroundings and the natural world around us.

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## **Princess Margaret Island - Gulf Islands National Park Reserve**

*By: Ronda Murdock  
Feb. 2012*

Princess Margaret Island, previously known as Portland Island is a gorgeous 534-hectare Island that for thousands of years served as a home and food gathering site for Coast Salish peoples. For thousands of years one Hul'q'umi'num' language group named this place Sxec`oten which translates to "Dry mouth village." There are several archaeological sites that indicate human use of the island for over 3000 years as is evidenced by the shell beach middens that can be found on the island.

In 1859 Hudson Bay's chief hydrographer, Captain Richards named it Portland Island naming the island after the HMS Portland, flagship of Rear Admiral Fairfax Moresby. That same year, the Hudson Bay Company gave Portland Island to a group of Hawaiians known as the Kanakas, who had acted as interpreters between coastal natives and English speaking fur traders.

Portland Island was given as a gift to Princess Margaret to commemorate her visit to British Columbia in 1958. The island was named after Princess Margaret when she returned the island to British Columbia as a Provincial Park in 1967.

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In 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chretien's government announced that a portion of the southern Gulf Islands in the Salish Sea (Strait of Georgia) were to be proclaimed Canada's newest National Marine Park. Today Princess Margaret Island is one of many Gulf Islands that are situated within the area known as the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Princess Margaret Island features rare cliffs, protected coves and sandy beaches. Being located in the rain shadow of the mountains of the Olympic Peninsula and Vancouver Island it has many of the rare coastal bluff ecosystem plants growing on shallow soils that must contend with long dry periods. Coastal Douglas fir, Arbutus, Garry oak, Brittle prickly-pear cactus (*Opuntia fragilis*) and the uncommon Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) are found on the island.

A wonderful sight for us on our January day trip was the extensive dense mat forming carpets of Coastal Reindeer Lichen and Licorice Fern. Reindeer lichens are slow growing and long lived. Average growth rates of 4.8 to 11.1 mm/year [and average ages of over 100 years have been reported]. The surrounding waters are home for Orcas, Porpoises, Sea lions, Seals, Otters, resident and

migratory species of seabirds, shorebirds and waterfowl. The highlight on January 11<sup>th</sup> when we were there was the Harlequin ducks, the large Rocky Mountain Juniper trees and the huge patches of Coastal Reindeer Lichen. Portland's human history can be seen in the shell midden beaches and also in fruit trees, roses and garden plants from the Hawaiian immigrants who beginning in the 1880's settled and farmed on the island.

Pacific Rainforest Adventure Tours are offering tours to Princess Margaret Island. Explore the Island and see the splendid meadow & coastal bluff wildflower display and plant life in the heart of the Gulf Islands National Park. We catch the Mill Bay ferry to Brentwood Bay then travel up the Saanich Peninsula to Canoe Cove. We travel from Canoe Cove on Eco Cruising's covered, comfortable boat with marine ecologist guide. This trip includes a 45 minute guided tour enroute around Goudge, Coal, Knapp, Pym and Princess Margaret Islands. Bring your lunch and spend three to 4 hours on the Island exploring the flora and fauna. We may even find a sharp tailed snake! Our next tour is planned for Chocolate Lily, White Fawn Lily, Common Purple Camas and Sea Blush wildflower bloom in early April. Our website is <http://rainforestnaturehikes.com/>

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*Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,  
Thy sky is ever clear,  
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,  
No winter in thy year.*

*O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!  
We'd make with joyful wing  
Our annual visit o'er the globe,  
Companions of the spring!*

Michael Bruce, from "Ode to the Cuckoo"  
(Contributed. by LB)

*Anna's playing in Crocosmia*

*Photo by: Martin Hill*





**ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS MEETINGS AND OUTINGS***FEBRUARY 1, 2012 - June 6, 2012*

CARPPOOL IF POSSIBLE. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: MAGGIE: (250) 757 - 2328 OR DAVE HUTCHINGS: (250) 752-1613

Please note – Guests are very welcome. A Guest Waiver and Day Membership forms are available at the time of an outing or on the website: [www.arrowsmithnats.org/membership](http://www.arrowsmithnats.org/membership) These forms must be read carefully, completed and signed with an accompanying \$1.00 fee before participating in an outing.

Meeting Locations Key:

C&J = Craig and Jensen; QBT = Qualicum Beach Tourist (centre on 19A); N&P = Northfield and Parkway rest stop parking lot.

**Feb 1, Wed, Hamilton Marsh & Englishman River Falls Park** – Enjoy winter birding in the marsh and woodland areas. Wear good footwear. Bring lunch. Meet C&J for 9.30 start. Leader: Sandy

**Feb 11, Sat, Little Qualicum Spawning Channels** – Easy walk with good forest and riparian birding opportunities. Bring lunch. Meet QBT for 9.30 start. Leaders: Gary and Ronda

**Feb 20, Mon, General Meeting at Springwood Middle School, PV: 7:30**

Speaker: Steve Mitchell of Bee Haven Farms, Duncan; Topic: Apiculture

**Feb 21, TUES, Fanny Bay Oysters** – Tour this aquaculture facility and find out what it takes to grow world renowned shellfish. Bring lunch and join the sea lions for lunch or eat locally, your choice. Meet QBT for 10.00am start. Cost - approx. \$7.00. Leader: Maggie

**Mar 3, Sat, Jacks Point and Bigg's Park, Nanaimo** - Good mixed birding in surrounding estuary, ocean and forest. Bring lunch. Wear good footwear. Meet C&J for 9:30 start; Arlington 9:45; N&P 10:00. Leader: Penny

**Mar 14, Wed, Denman Island** - Could be Herring Spawn time. Wonderful wildlife sightings expected. Bring lunch. Carpooling suggested. Ferry car cost \$22.00. Seniors free. **Meet QTB for 8:45 start to catch 10:00 ferry.** Leaders – Marg & Martin

**Mar 24, Sat, Herring Spawn** - Expect spawn to be in full swing. So enjoy the feeding frenzy at local hot spots such as Columbia Beach, French Creek Estuary, Parksville Bay etc. Bring lunch. Bring scopes. Meet C&J for 9:30 start. Leader – Sandy

**Mar 26, Mon, General Meeting at Springwood Middle School, PV: 7:30** - Presenters: The Guardians of the Mid-Island Estuaries (Tim Clermont, Danielle Morrison, John Cooper)

**Mar 31, Sat, BRANT ON THE BAY Parksville Community Park:10am - 2pm**

Come join other Arrowsmith Naturalist Club members at Parksville Bay for wildlife viewing. Several Club member will have their spotting scopes available for close up views of Brant geese, waterfowl, shorebirds and sea lions. The Club display, tent and banner will also be set up. This is an opportunity for members to meet and greet the public and encourage them to 'know nature and keep it worth knowing'.

**Apr 4, Wed, Bowen Park and Buttertubs Marsh, Nanaimo** - Spring birding and early flowers along the Millstone River. Easy walking. Bring lunch. Meet C&J for 9.30 start, Arlington 9:45; N&P 10:00. Leaders: Pat B & Jim

**Apr 7, Sat, Big Day Bird Count** - A fun event that gives people of all experience levels a chance to test their abilities at finding birds. Anytime after 4:30 am to 3 pm. Contact: Sandy (250) 248-5565 to register your team.

**Apr 14, Sat, The Notch, Nanoose** - Gary Oaks and flowers and spectacular views. Wear good shoes for the climb uphill. Bring lunch. Meet: C&J for 9:30 start. Leader: Pat Audley

**Apr 23, Mon, General Meeting at Springwood Middle School, PV: 7:30**

**Presenter:** Lynne Brookes, Ph.D. **Topic:** Birds of Iowa and the Midwest

**Apr 25, Wed, Pipers Lagoon and Neck Point, Nanaimo** - Spring flowers and birding. Easy, pleasant Walk. Lunch at Pipers Lagoon Pub. Meet C&J for 9:30 start; Arlington 9:45. Leader: Roger

**May 7, Mon, Top Bridge Park and Englishman River Estuary** - All hands on board to help host the Cowichan Club Members as we tour them around our special jewel, and tweak our skills in preparation for the FGM! Tim Hortons pit stop. Bring lunch. Meet C&J for car pooling & 9:30 start. Coordinator – Dave

**May 16, Wed, Westwood Ridge, Nanaimo** - A gentle climb will bring you to spring flowers above the lake. Wear good shoes. Bring lunch. Meet: C&J for 9:30 start; Arlington 9:45; N&P 10:00. Leader: Maggie

**May 26, Sat, Comox Bluffs, Courtenay** - Join the very experienced Eco Warden and discover the amazing variety of plants found here. Spectacular views. Wear good treads, rocky. Bring lunch. Meet: QBT for 9:30 start. Leader: Pam

**May 28, Mon, General Meeting at Springwood Middle School, PV: 7:30 TBA**

**June 6, Wed, Kinsol Trestle, Cowichan** - Explore the refurbished bridge and trail and surrounds. Easy walk. Bring lunch. Meet C&J for 9:30 start; Arlington 9:45; N&P10:00. Leader: Gilles

**Jun 25, Mon, General Meeting at Springwood Middle School, PV: 7:30 - TBA**

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