

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS NEWSLETTER

TO KNOW, ENJOY AND PRESERVE NATURE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Sally Soanes

Hello Everyone

I think I'd better introduce myself as I've only been in the club for a short while and many won't know me. My husband and I moved here from North Bay ON about 13 years ago and it was a wonderful move for us. I began volunteering at the North Island Wildlife Recovery Association almost right away and fell in love with it. I became a tour guide, educator, fundraiser and general fetcher and carrier. I still do most of that but thanks to the superb Lynne Brookes I am now what I like to term a gardener. I'm not really but I do work well with close supervision!

Because, Lynne and Dave Ericson always spoke so well of ANATS I finally drifted along to a meeting and saw what they so enjoyed. A room full of friendly, enthusiastic, interesting and knowledgeable people. That's how I came to be involved. Plus Lynne promised me a gavel, something I've always wanted.

I'm very happy (and with some trepidation!) to be your new president. I've already experienced a bit of the great work this club does. Dave Hutchings introduced me to the wonderful world of planting down at the estuary and I survived and can only hope the plants did. Sandra Gray, who you already know is amazing put up with me on the CBC. Her organizational skills and patience truly exemplify what this club does. So many wonderful volunteers donating their skills for the betterment of the community.

I'm hoping you all forgive my missteps as I try to manoeuvre this new post and know that any suggestions will be listened to with an open mind (such as it is!)



IN THIS ISSUE	Page		Page
President's Report	1		
Club Information	2	The Biggest Mushroom in the World	7
Speakers Program	3	Book Reviews	8
Club Outings	3-4	Western Australia	9-10
Regarding Field Trips/Outings	5	Palm Warbler	10
Beached Bird Survey	5	The Ancient Pine White	10
Pacific-Slope Flycatcher	6	BioBlitz Event	11
2018 Declared Year of the Bird	6	In Memory of Will Lemmon	11

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS CLUB/MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

General Information: Club membership information is available at both Parksville and Qualicum Beach public libraries; on the web-site <http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>; or by writing to Arrowsmith Naturalists, Box 1542, Parksville, BC V9P 2H4.

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

Meeting Location: St Ann & St Edmund Anglican Church, 407 Wembley Road, Parksville, BC.

Meeting Dates: 4th Monday of January to June and September to November.

Meeting Time: Doors open at 7:00 pm and meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Respect for Clean Air – No Smoking & Scent Free – Smoking is not permitted in or around St Ann & St Edmund Anglican Church. Please refrain from wearing perfume or scented products.

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS OFFICERS AND CONTACTS

President: Sally Soanes

Vice President: Doug Elias

Past President: Lynne Brookes

Executive Secretary: Claire Summers

General Meeting Secretary: Sue Wilson

Treasurer: Derrick Grimmer

Membership: Toni Wyckoff

Directors: Al Kirkley; Teri Hitch; Terry Taylor; Rosemary Taylor

BC Nature Rep: Al Kirkley

E-mail Correspondence: Elaine Lefebvre

Conservation/Environment: Gary & Ronda Murdock

Newsletter Editor: Maggie Green

Promotion: Maggie Little

Refreshments: Ron Wyckoff; Dave Erickson

Speaker Program: Ronda Murdoch

Stewardship: Dave Hutchings

Oceanside NatureKids:

Archivist: Pam Helem

Broom Bashing: Dave Hutchings

When: 9:30am - 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month:

Where: Bottom of Shelley Road, Parksville. Weather permitting. Areas needing attention will be determined.

Facebook: Kat Derksen; Tom Constable

Web Site: David Helem

Field Trips: Frank Van Manen

SUNSHINE – If you know of an Arrowsmith Naturalist who is ill, in hospital or recently bereaved, please contact: Pam Helem at arrowsmithnats@gmail.com.

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS SPEAKERS PROGRAM LIST

February – June 2018

February 26, 2018 – Members photo night.

March 26, 2018 - Catherine Conservancy Hornby Island Topic: Marine Conservation Initiative

April 23, 2018 – Peter deKoning, Professional Registered Biologist . West Coast Conservation Land Management Program. Peter will recap the work Nature Trust completed in the Englishman River estuary last summer and the ecological changes they hope to see.

Monday May 28, 2018 - Michelle Young, Georgia Strait Alliance CPA, CA Clean Marine BC Coordinator Topic: Southern Resident Orca's

June 25 2018 - Dave Manning Pender Island "The Old Man and the Vultures," a book based on Dave Manning's experiences with vultures.

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS OUTINGS SCHEDULE - SPRING 2018

Sunday, March 25-Brant in the Bay Join the naturalists on the eastside of Parksville Bay at the point to view the brant through birding scopes. Learn about about this amazing goose that stops here on on its migration to the artic to fatten up. Public are welcome for this free Brant Wildlife Festival event.

Tuesday, March 27–Englishman River Estuary/San Paniel–Birding Walk Arrowsmith Naturalists 'Birders' will lead families/individuals to see birds and explain 'Birding Techniques'. Meet :Plummer Rd Trail Head. Directions: Island Hwy (19A) to Plummer Rd, southside of Orange Bridge. Travel approx. 1 km on Plummer Rd along the Englishman River past Shorewood Dr. Meet at Trail Head on left 9:00am (\$1 fee for general public).

Friday, March 30-Rathrevor Provincial Park Beach–Birding Walk Arrowsmith Naturalists 'Birders' will lead families/individuals to see birds and explain 'Birding Techniques'. Meet Main Parking Lot, Rathrevor Provincial Park, 9:00am Leader: Sandra Gray (\$1 fee for general public).

Wednesday, March 28–Filongley Park & Boyle Point Denman Island We are hoping for lots of blooms on these Parks and also see some lingering scoters or loons off Filongley Park. Bring Lunch. Meet: QBT 8:30am; Sunnybeach 8:45am for 10:00am ferry. Leaders: Duncan Campbell

Saturday, April 7–Little Qualicum Falls Park Enjoy this beautiful park with dramatic waterfalls, early spring flowers, mosses and lichens. The flow over the falls should be heavy at this time of year. Proper boots are advisable but the steep sections can all be avoided. Bring lunch. Meet: QBT 9:30am. Leader: Terry Taylor

Saturday, April 21–Comox Bluffs, Courtenay Discover the amazing variety of plants in this Ecological Reserve, some rare ones, found on the dry hillside. We ask you to limit your walking to avoid damaging these plants on the bluff. Wear good treads. Bring lunch. Meet: QBT for 9:30 start. Here is a link to a website about the Comox Bluffs.

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco_reserve/comoxlk_er/comox.pdf?v=1460674789413 Leaders: David & Pam Helem

Wednesday, May 2–Harewood Plain, Nanaimo This is a wildflower splendour well worth catching. Participants should wear boots and pack a lunch. Another useful item to have along is the book "Plants of Coastal BC" by Pojar & McKinnon. We will see many wildflowers that are illustrated and described in that book. Meet: C&J 9:30am; N&P 10:00am. Leader: Kent Anders

Wednesday May 9-Honeymoon Bay Eco Reserve, Skutz Falls+other sites Anticipating spring lilies in bloom and more. We are most fortunate to have Genevieve Singleton to lead us and share her knowledge in this lovely area. We anticipate some fine natural treasures today. **Note: earlier than usual start time.** Lunch: pack lunch. Meet: C&J 9:00am.; N&P 9:30am; Hwy 18 turnoff to Cowichan Lake asap (shortly after 10:00am) Leaders: Frank & Brenda Van Manen

Saturday, May 12-NALT-Nature's Abundance Native Plant Nursery. Tour to include beaver pond, house & property where the owners are still living; a short but lovely trail and what remains of the once prosperous asparagus fields; an explanation and history of and a view of trees of Canada /USA; the propagation shed, office & the history of the lands etc.;how the trust operates, all the volunteers involved, directorate, the City of Nanaimo. Get your ideas here for gardening with native plants as well as seeing a display of native shrubs and trees. Outing time to coincide with Nursery's 11:00am opening time. Meet C&J 10:00am; 10:30am N&P. Leader: Judy Mazurski

Wednesday, May 16–Beachcomber Park & Wall Beach Tide Pool Tour We are timing this outing to co-coincide with the low tide, just after 1:00pm for maximum sightings of pool critters. Eagle chicks may be in the nest at Beachcomber. Have an early lunch or bring lunch or we could go to the Rocking Horse Pub afterwards. Meet C&J 10:30am. Leaders Gary & Rhonda Murdock

Saturday May 26-Yellow Point Park This mature growth park should display many and varied spring flowers but can be boggy and wet. Wear your boots. An intermediate walk. Bring lunch. Meet C&J 9:30am or N&P 10:00am Leader: TBD

Wednesday, June 6-Summit Lake There should be lots of biodiversity at the top of the hump on the way to Port Alberni. Bring Lunch. Meet: QBT for a 9:30am start. Leader: Toni & Ron Wyckoff

Saturday, June 16–Trent River, Courtney Wildflowers, Fossils & Birds Come and see the wild flowers and fossils. Bring Lunch. Meet QBT for a 9:30 am start. Leader: Tom Constable

Wednesday, August 1-Hornby Island Fossil Search with Graham Beard Participants need to be able to walk over rough rocky beaches-not great big boulders, just not smooth and sandy when the tide's out. Wear wellies or other waterproof footwear with fairly high cuffs to cope with wet beaches. Bring binoculars/cameras/lunch/sunscreen/rain gear etc.-whatever appropriate at the time. If anyone has a geology hammer they're welcome to bring it with protective glasses. Graham mentioned that he'd bring a few extra hammers for anyone who'd like to try their hand at cracking open concretions which may or may not have fossils inside. He will be happy to show everyone how it's done. People can participate and be a rock hound or simply watch and learn as Graham tells us all about the game. Pack lunch. All day event. Meet QBT: 8:00am for the 9:00am Ferry from Buckley Bay. Leaders: Terry & Rosemary Taylor

A Can/Bottle Return Account is available at the Qualicum Beach Recycling Centre at 141-4 Ave E, Qualicum Beach. You can donate the proceeds off your returns to the Arrowsmith Naturalists account. Please make the request to credit Arrowsmith Naturalist account before your bottles are counted by staff at the centre. Please mention this to friends & family.

REGARDING FIELD TRIPS/OUTINGS

By Frank Van Manen

Many thanks for all those great volunteers who signed up to 'Lead' Field Trips this spring. For all of us who are able to attend these so frequently, it is always a wonderful way to discover new sites in the area (new for some, old for others). It is also a great way to record changes to these areas, for good or bad, and for the Club to be aware, generally, of changes to the region. We certainly have access to a wealth of very diverse and beautiful environmental sites in the region.

Generally, when an Outing starts, members will try to carpool prior to getting under way. This certainly helps to reduce our carbon footprint. When the meeting time is set it is an indication of the time we need to **'get on the road'** in order to meet up at the next collection point, when there are more than one site – so please arrive **early to 'sign-in'**. This keeps things moving along. As well, there has been an understanding developed over the years, that those folks who do 'hitch' a ride from another member, they contribute to the driver a sum of \$5.00 per person as a courtesy to help pay for fuel costs – but strictly voluntary – and roughly based on distance travelled.

Leaders of Field Trips have a responsibility to have every member, who does show up, to fill in the 'Sign-in Sheet' so we can keep record of the number of people who attended. As well, for those people who are not members, there are 'non-member' Waiver forms to have signed and \$1.00 per person collected. Members of other clubs sign in as 'members' on the sign-in sheet. This is for insurance purposes. Forms and moneys collected is handed in to Toni Wyckoff. Apart from that it is important that attendees inform leaders if they are leaving early or generally cutting short their participation in the Outing. We are always grateful when someone offers to 'Lead' an outing.

Please let me know if there are destinations that you think would be of interest to the membership. We are always looking for new destinations and I will do my best to include them in a future schedule.

BEACHED BIRD SURVEY

By Toni Wyckoff

Most Naturalists go out with Binoculars and Cameras to look at lovely twittering flying birds. Ron and I do something a little different. We look for the dead variety. Why? You ask.

The Beached Bird Survey is done from California to Alaska on the last week of every month to compile data. The biggest problem we face is deciding when to do the survey. It is to be done shortly after the highest tide. High tides can be any time of day or night so this is why you can pick and chose your day of the week. The weather is another obstacle. If the tides are too high or the winds are forcing the waves up, there are 2 points that are impassible. We also don't go out in torrential rain. Why on a high tide? When a dead bird is brought to ground, it soon gets scavenged on. We usually find scattered feathers before the bird. Once eaten, it's harder to tell how it died and not much left to study. In 5 years, Ron and I have only found 3 birds. We consider ourselves lucky as we get to spend more time like other Naturalists and watch the live varieties. Walking 3k round trip of the Little Qualicum Estuary is quite a pleasure.

In November we found a very large gull. As I am tagging, doing measurements, and taking pictures, there is a Herring Gull making a ruckus over my head the whole time. As soon as we left the gull flew off. I question if it thought I was dining on it's poor dead mate. Yes we leave the bird where we find it to let the tide take it back out for the crab feast. It has a tag on it so if it washes up on someone else's beach they will report it. All the data taken on weather, wave action, wrack line, driftwood, wind, etc is then entered in the computer. Their major questions are on "Any Oil Present?" When the tanker traffic increases on our coast, are we going to be a lot busier finding dead birds. WE HOPE NOT!

PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER 2016

By Stuart Spracklan & Virginia Taylor

For several years we would hear the Flycatchers in the green belt behind our home in Eaglecrest but very rarely saw them. That was probably due to their small stature and colouring. In June we occasionally saw a flycatcher perched in our weeping birch, located in the back corner of our garden, close to the green belt. We have a “Robin” nest box tucked under the eave on the south (quiet) side of our house which has remained un-used for several years. Walking by the nest box in early June, 2016 I was surprised to see a tidy clump of moss & grass on top of the nest box! Hmm... There appeared to be no activity and since I could just reach the eave, I retrieved my small digital camera from the house and returned to the nest site. I slowly reached up to the eave and aimed (a bit of a guess) the camera down into the mossy clump. To my surprise the camera revealed one small egg! Using the egg photo and the fact that we had seen/heard the Flycatcher around, we confirmed that the bird had sneakily built a nest and laid an egg. Wondering if the nest & egg had been abandoned, I decided that I would return later in the day and take another photo (only if there no activity). TWO eggs. So, the nest was active! With caution I continued to take regular photos, right up until the FOUR young Flycatchers fledged. We still hear, and sometimes see, the flycatchers but they did not return to the same nest site. The accompanying photos show the progression from June 15 to July 15, 2016.



2018 DECLARED YEAR OF THE BIRD

By Lynne Brookes

More than 100 organizations join forces for 12 months of storytelling and science to examine how our changing environment is impacting birds around the globe. 2018 marks the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird protection law ever passed. In honor of this milestone, National Geographic, the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdLife International will join forces with more than 100 other organizations and millions of people around the world to celebrate 2018 as the “Year of the Bird.”

This effort aims to heighten public awareness of birds because of their wonder and beauty and because they symbolize nature’s interconnectedness and the importance of caring for our shared planet. Through 12 months of storytelling, science research and conservation efforts, Year of the Bird will examine how our changing environment is driving dramatic losses among bird species around the globe and highlight what we can do to help bring birds back. <http://www.audubon.org/news/audubon-and-national-geographic-declare-2018-year-bird>

THE BIGGEST MUSHROOM IN THE WORLD

By Terry Taylor

What is the biggest mushroom? That depends on how you define biggest, and what you consider to be a mushroom. The biggest fruiting bodies are some of the hard bracket fungi, if you consider them to be mushrooms. The largest single mushroom fruiting bodies are the *Termitomyces* which grow on termite nests in Africa. The caps are reported to reach a metre in diameter. If, however, we consider the largest mushroom to be the largest fungus, rather than the largest fruiting body, we get a different situation entirely. By this definition, the largest mushroom is a species that is very common in our local area. It is the honey mushroom (*Armillaria ostoyae*).

The largest individual honey mushroom known grows in eastern Oregon. It covers 8.8 square kilometres, and is estimated to be 2400 years old. That is twice the area of Stanley Park, and it started to grow in the days of classical Greece! It has been called the Humongous Fungus. The reason for this phenomenal size is due to the fact that honey mushrooms produce structures that other mushrooms do not. These are tough root like growths called rhizomorphs. Some other fungi make rhizomorphs but they are much more fragile than those of *Armillaria*. These rhizomorphs are so tough and woody they are often called shoestrings.

Honey mushrooms are parasitic, and they make shoestrings to expand their territory. They can live on either living trees or on dead wood. This gives an expansionist fungus a great advantage because in a forest there are lots of stumps and logs. The rhizomorphs are designed to grow like roots. They can reach out from the tree that is the original infection site, growing through the forest soil, until they find another tree, log or stump. From here they can colonize other sites, essentially controlling resource islands of woody material.

Honey mushrooms grow as clumps on trees and stumps, and their white spores drift by the millions through our autumn woodlands. They spread the fungus farther than the rhizomorphs can, although the rhizomorphs are believed to be the main agents of honey mushroom expansion. If you see white resin running down the trunk of a Douglas-fir tree, this indicates that the tree is fighting an infection. That infection is usually honey mushroom.

How do you tell if the honey mushrooms on one tree are the same individual fungus as those on another tree? Until about 30 years ago it would be necessary to trace rhizomorphs connecting the two trees, and if the rhizomorphs had rotted away, it would not be possible to do so. At that date, however, molecular biology had become sophisticated enough to do DNA fingerprinting. At that time this was an expensive procedure, but economically important things get funded, and forests grow money. *Armillaria* infections produce significant timber losses. These studies showed that the honey mushrooms in some sites have the same genetic signatures over very large areas. How can one fungus move across an entire forest stand, and prevent competing honey mushrooms from getting established? *Armillaria ostoyae* occurs in Cathedral Grove. Are all the honey mushrooms here fruiting bodies of the same organism? Only genetic testing can tell.

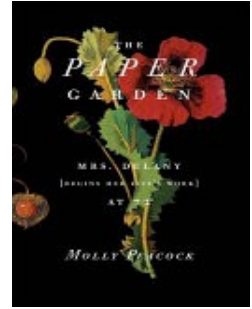
This is a major component of forest ecosystems that was completely unknown until a couple of decades ago. What other components of ecosystems are still unknown?



Armillaria rhizomorphs
Honey mushroom shoestrings
Cameron Lake

BOOK REVIEWS

***The Paper Garden: Mrs Delany begins her life work at 72* By: Molly Peacock Book Review by Rosemary Taylor**



A Christmas card arrived this year depicting a single sprig of holly on a black background. The back of that card showed that it was published by the British Museum, and that the holly twig was credited to one Mary Delany, (1700-1788), and described it as a reproduction of a collage she created. That was enough to pique my curiosity to learn more – I had no idea anyone made collages in the 18th century, and who was Mary Delany? How could this holly twig, which looked so much like a photograph, be so cleverly constructed with the coloured paper from which collages are made? This card surely had a tale to tell.

Delving into Mary Delany's background, it transpires that she began her work only when she was 72 years old, having lived a life of an upper middle class English lady and all that entailed, including surviving one very unhappy arranged marriage at an early age which, fortunately for her, didn't last long, and then many years later happily meeting and marrying a county clergyman in Ireland. Only after her second husband's death did she pick up a pair of fine scissors, and working with tissue paper she coloured herself, proceeded over the next 10 years or so to create 985 individual collages of plants and flowers, all botanically correct with their Latin identifications. Her work can be seen by searching her name at the British Museum.

Few books have been written about her, but one, *The Paper Garden*, by Molly Peacock, vividly recounts the life of ladies of leisure of that time, their daily routines, their long visits with friends and relatives, the fashions of the day, and their aims in life. In her later years, after the loss of her second husband, the serendipitous fall of a geranium pedal started Mary Delany on a completely new hobby which no-one had done before. Depicting the many botanical specimens she worked on required careful study of the plants, knowledge of paper dyes in order to get the vast array of shades and colours needed, finesse in cutting the paper correctly and the making the right type of glue to fix everything to a black background. Her life history is fascinating, her skills amazing and her work now visible on request in the British Museum, is a wonder to behold, all brought to light by author Molly Peacock. The moral to this story? Always read the back of your Christmas cards – it may open the door to a whole world you never knew existed.

***Raven Walks Around The World* By: Thom Henley 2017 Book Review By Toni Wyckoff**

I found this at the Library on the Express Read shelf. It was an Express Read alright because I couldn't put it down for two days.

Thom takes you through his fascinating journey in the 70s from Michigan to Alaska to Haida Gwaii and many countries in the world. His kayak journeys, his house building and the many adventures of his 20's are riveting and humorous. His love of nature brings him to the public eye when the 14 year struggle to save Gwaii Haanas from the chainsaws is on every TV and Radio station. He co-founded the Rediscovery program for Youth of all description with great success. Thom found himself in Borneo, fighting for the rights of the Penan tribes people. It's hard to find someone who can go off the grid for months but still stay connected to reality.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2016

By Roger Simms

At 12:05 am September 23rd I flew from Vancouver airport to Brisbane on the East coast of Australia en route to Perth Western Australia to spend time with our daughter who had moved there in late 2015. From Brisbane to Perth there is a non-stop flight to Perth taking 5 hours 40 minutes. On arrival Melanie picked me up and we drove to her home in Wellard a suburb of Perth. Supper and an early night for me.

While there we took some local trips in a rented car first down to Albany on the south coast where we met up with the widow of friends Maggie and I knew while we lived in Barbados. We spent the day with Jean and she showed us around the area including the ANZAC Museum. The previous day I had tried unsuccessfully to go on a birding hike with a group from the Stirling Range Retreat by missing their visitor centre hidden from the road by a large tree. So on returning to Albany I birded on my own for a couple of hours. The next day Melanie had arranged for me to meet a local birder who showed me around Lake Seppings. The trail was very wet so we did not get all the way round, anyway we saw 14 species. Incidentally the locals were saying that this winter was the wettest and coolest in year.

Then on towards Pemberton and the coast. However our host at a Pemberton B & B advised to miss the coast due to wind and rain bringing down trees on the way there. There were a few days of shopping and birding around Melanie's local area and even a day trip to Margaret River on a cool day when several places were closed. We did stop at a coastal village called Pevelly but not much to see. Coastal birding not the best. Another day we drove inland to Merriden to visit one of Melanie's old school friends who had arrived and settled several years before, out in the country, married with 4 children and her and husband manage a farm. We took a different route home and stopped at Narambeam, Bruce Rock for lunch, Quairading and York. While staying with Melanie and helping with small jobs we also weeded her small yard and bought native plants to brighten up the outside. I was able to visit other places on my own once Melanie was back to work including Mandurah at the end of the line south from Perth, an interesting place to visit as well as King's Park and Bond Park both in Perth. In Mandurah I took a Dolphin cruise around the harbour, but no dolphins. Being late spring there were plenty of flowers still showing after the very wet early spring. All this time I was also accumulating a list of birds seen in the various stopping off places as well as the parks. My impressions of small town Australia are that they are well planned, landscaped and laid out, including very good and clean washroom facilities sometimes including showers. However as the weather warms up once over the Darling Range separating Perth from the interior there are flies in evidence. Other activities while in W.A. included visiting local Malls, friends and birding trips locally on my own. I did miss out on visits to nearby islands by ferry, but something to do next time.

My next venture after leaving Perth was to take the Indian-Pacific train from Perth to Sydney, Sunday morning to Wednesday just before noon. In the evening the train reached Kalgoorlie to visit the town and mine. I did not go and was told later I did not miss anything except a drink in town. The following morning we were stopped for outside breakfast at an abandoned railway station at Rawlinna, tables set up for about 240 guests and there was coffee, tea, orange juice, quiche, sausage and the largest mushroom I have ever seen. Next stop Cook in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain. Population 4. There had been 200 people before the railways were nationalized. The 4 remainders service the trains as they arrive including replenishing the water needed for the journey. The temperature was 33 c at 2:30 pm. Shortly after leaving we set our clocks and watches 2.5 hours ahead as we were then in Southern Australia. So the journey continued through Adelaide for an hour's visit, then on to Sydney.

While in Sydney I took a ferry ride around the harbour and the next two days I met up with one birder a day to see as many birds as possible. No photos! The birds that impressed me were Satin Bowerbird and Brush Turkey both nesting within feet of a road and the Eastern Whipbird most people hear but very few see, but I saw two with my second guide and finally the Wedge-tailed Eagle emblem of the

India Pacific Railway seen on the Nullarbor.

What do you do after all that, but go home arriving in Drew Road just before noon, October 29th. Total birds seen including with guides 190, 98 in Western Australia and 92 in Sydney and area of which 167 lifers. Of the 23 non-lifers I had seen several in New Zealand and some imports from Europe. Saving for my next trip. The following photos were taken from the internet.



Eastern Whipbird



Satin Bowerbird



Brush Turkey

PALM WARBLER

By Rosemary Taylor

I found it, somewhat exhausted, on our deck one day. I picked it up to put it somewhere safe while it regained its composure, and noticed yellow colouring on the tail feathers which didn't fit with any bird I know. I took some photos for id. purposes and sent one to Sandy Grey and Roger Simms, who both identified it as a Palm Warbler, which was a real surprise as it's not common in the area but at least one had been seen in Parksville by the expert birders who were watching for it.



THE ANCIENT PINE WHITE

By Larry Williams

Now is the time of the ancient Pine-white
 Who visits earth's gardens and stays to dine,
 But who loves at much, much greater height:
 White flecks among the tallest D-fir or Pine.

Females are shy of common ground and flit
 In and out of dense needle clouds.
 A male arrives. The pair spiral up, then split
 Apart, then flutter down: Confetti bits unseen by crowds.

I'm prone as for the Perseids, but no collective sighs
 Are heard. I am alone in a wooded yard.
 Yet I feel less alone than when rocks pinprick the skies:
 It's life, of course---It's love that here is starred.

So I look up on cooling afternoons
 When tall conifers still receive the sun
 And watch butterflies dance to love's tunes
 Until a soft curtain flows and their day is done.

Do insects and rocks also share? How long the briefest is, how brief the longest?
 Well, perhaps. Let's save that for another day. Right now I'm a lepidopterist.

BIOBLOTTZ EVENT – SATURDAY APRIL 21

The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region will be hosting its third annual BioBlitz on Saturday, April 21 at two locations: Milner Gardens & Woodland from 9:00am to 4:00pm and Englishman River Regional Park/Top Bridge Park Tail Head from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Registration will be announced soon. As with last year, Milner Gardens will be the host site for community members to learn how to Blitz alongside students and community experts. The second site, Englishman River/Top Bridge Park, will be for community members that already have some experience with species identification and do not require much or any guidance. We will need volunteers at both Milner Gardens and Englishman River Regional Park. If you know of any experts or individuals who would like to get involved please contact us at mabr@viu.ca.

IN MEMORY OF WILL LEMMON

By Nancy Whelan

‘Will’ (William James Andrew) Lemmon was a long time member of the Arrowsmith Naturalists and served two terms as its President some years ago. Early in 2009, Will suffered a severe hemorrhagic stroke. He was given little hope for survival, but happily fooled us all and gave us nine more years of his company, wit, and expertise in all things ‘nature’ on Vancouver Island.

Will was a self-taught naturalist and loved the beauty, diversity, and opportunities for fun found in nature. He remembered early hikes with his parents when he took in the sights from his viewpoint in a pack sack. Around the age of eighteen he started his mountain climbing activities in the Rockies and became a member of the Alpine Club of Canada. He harboured a bit of the poet too, when he insisted that when skating on the ice of Lake Louise ‘that ice sang to you’.

Born in Northern Ontario, and spending growing-up and working years in Calgary, the city life began to pall, and he joined a surveying crew in the northwest corner of BC where he became acquainted with the antics of grizzly bears. “When those bears came to eat the soopolallie berries, the bushes were cleaned of berries while all the leaves looked untouched; with their long prehensile lips they had eaten only the berries”.

In the early nineties, Will moved to the Island, living first on Nanoose waterfront and later in the Dunsmuir area. Shortly after becoming an Islander, he joined the Arrowsmith Naturalists. “I felt I had found a new home,” said Will. When presented, in October of 2007 at Harrison, with the BC Nature Education Award by ANC’s Pat Bourgeois, he commented, “I was speechless”. In July of 2005, ANC President Roger Simms presented Will with an acknowledgement of his “invaluable contribution to the growth of the Club”. Even after his stroke, as a resident of The Gardens, in Qualicum Beach, Will often became the “go to” person for advice and expertise on items in the bird, animal and plant world.

As a true believer in John Burroughs’ words, “I go to Nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.” Will Lemmon will be missed.



The Arrowsmith Naturalist Newsletter is published three times a year in February, June and October. Articles on birding, travel, botany and environmental matters are welcome. The next deadline for submissions is May 31, 2018 for the June 2018 edition. Please email articles and photos to: green@shaw.ca. Some editing may be required for length or held off for another edition as per available space.

A reference copy of the current Arrowsmith Naturalist newsletter is available at each of the Parksville & Qualicum Beach libraries. Meetings and Outings sheets are available at Mulberry Bush Books in Parksville and Qualicum Beach.