

ARROWSMITH NATURALIST NEWSLETTER



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**To
Know,
Enjoy
and
Preserve
Nature**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

...and what a summer it was!

In the cool of fall, we (the near-roasted survivors) can now reflect back on many enjoyable summer events including great field trips, stewardship at the Englishman River estuary, our annual July club picnic, Kidfest, and farmers' market displays and begin to look forward to more enjoyable field trips and interesting programs, the exciting new mid-island MUSHROOM SHOW on October 18th, our November A-Nats elections, the Christmas Bird Count followed by the Oceanside famous CBC pot-luck dinner, and other A-Nats activities.

Our already robust membership continues to be enriched by new members. A hearty welcome to each! And—don't be shy. There are many opportunities available in our club to get involved and make new friends. Several positions are

coming up on the executive committee and we find that new voices have been good additions. Jump in and soon we'll all be the better for it. It's exciting to know that what we offer as a club is in demand.

As you read through this newsletter take note of various programs and activities coming up. There are opportunities to volunteer your valuable knowledge, skills, and/or friendly face to help out. Remember—the most important person in the club is—YOU! Singly and collectively your participation in Arrowsmith Naturalists' programs, activities and events helps you and all those we reach in our community to better know and enjoy nature and to keep nature worth knowing.

Lynne Brookes, President

**SUN. DEC 20 PARKSVILLE/QUALICUM BEACH
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

This will be the 25th year for our BCPQ Bird count, also the 116th CBC.

Volunteers needed to join a team in the field, usually 3-7 birders with a mix of skill levels, or count birds from home for the Feeder Count.

For more info and to sign up contact: Sandra 250.248.5565

Our annual, CBC, Pot Luck Dinner at St Anne/St Edmunds, immediately follows the Count at 5:00 p.m. All Club members are welcome to the pot luck. Tea and coffee are provided.

What to bring to the Pot Luck: *a pot luck item & serving utensil (salad, main/entree or dessert); dinner plate, cutlery, mug; small side plate for dessert - optional.*

For more info re pot luck contact: Marg Hill 250.752.2728

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 **January 29th** for the **February 2016 edition**.

Hand-written or typed articles and photos are accepted. Some editing may be required for length or held off for another edition as per available space. Please e-mail articles to m.e.6@me.com or send by mail to:

Margaret Hill, **Editor**

#9 - 177 West 2nd Ave, Qualicum Beach, B.C. V9K 2N5.

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 the club newsletter in February, June and October.

New memberships are always welcomed...Family \$35.00, Single \$25.00. Annual membership dues are collected at the October club meeting.

MEETING TIME/LOCATION:

Meeting is held at Knox United Church; fourth Monday of Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June, Sept, Oct, Nov.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Meeting begins at 7:30.

Arrowsmith Naturalists Officers and Contacts:

President: Lynne Brookes - Executive Business
(250) 586.4595

Vice President: Elaine Lefebvre -
General Meeting & Club Activities

Past President: Dave Hutchings

Secretary: Sue McLean
and Sue Wilson

Treasurer: Derrick Grimmer

Membership: Toni Wyckoff

Directors:

Dave Erickson

Derrick Grimmer

Terry Taylor

Rosemary Taylor

BC Nature Rep: Sandra Gray

E-mail Correspondence: Bill Campbell

ConservationEnvironment: Gary & Ronda Murdock
(250) 248.3667

Field Trips: Ed Wilson

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Hill 250.752.2728

Promotion: Sallie Dabb

Refreshments: Ron Wyckoff
and Dave Erickson

Speaker Program: Alison Bakker

Stewardship: Dave Hutchings

Dave Hutchings is taking over the job of Broom Bashing coordinator from Maggie Little. Note the schedule change as follows:

Participants will meet on the **first and third Thursdays of the month at 9:30am** at the bottom of Shelley Road, Parksville. Weather permitting, they will do a tour of the estuary and see what areas need attention.

Young Naturalists: Alison Bakker

Web Site: David Helem

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

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.

RESPECT FOR CLEAN AIR**NO SMOKING**

Smoking is not allowed anywhere in, on or around

New Wildlife Friendly Garden at NIWRA

By Lynne Brookes

Over the summer Arrowsmith Naturalists volunteers Lynne Brookes, Dave Erickson, Derrick Grimmer, and Ron Wyckoff helped develop a new wildlife nurturing and educational wildlife garden at the North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre (NIWRA) in Errington. The “Dan's Nook Wildlife Garden” is 103 feet long by 25 feet wide and completely enclosed by deer/rabbit/cat and anti-bullfrog fencing (yes—we're somewhat picky). It has three sections: a large area of raised beds, a good-sized wildlife pond, and a mini-wetland area with informational signage throughout. There are nearly 250 plants in the garden--mostly native with some non-invasive wildlife friendly ornamental plants. Within the raised bed area there are benches, a gently bubbling faux rock water feature, and a sign thanking those whose contributions made building this wildlife haven and outdoor classroom possible.

One hour after the first garden plants were in two male Annas arrived and started squabbling over the flowers. Three days after water was in the pond damselflies began laying eggs! A month later the well-planted pond hosted hundreds of pond critters and a variety of birds drinking and bathing along the constructed shallow pebble beach end. Many daily visitors have been surprised by and greatly enjoyed this garden. The first wedding was already held there (an A-Nats member was the Celebrant) and the first VIU Elder College course (Garden Wild!) will hold two classes in the garden Spring 2016. Next year NIWRA will begin educational programs for adults and children. (See www.niwra.org for updates) Come and enjoy this wildlife and people friendly garden!

MUSHROOM SHOW

On October 18th, the Arrowsmith Naturalists, hosted their first Mushroom Show at the North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre (NIWRA). Earlier this fall, due to drought, it was questionable as to what the mushroom sprouting season might produce. Well, Mother Nature sure did look after that concern providing almost perfect weather conditions.

Many volunteers brought to NIWRA on the Saturday and Sunday large quantities and an array of mushroom species. Those volunteering were delighted although it was almost overwhelming with the types and quantity of mushrooms received. Eventually with the advanced expertise of Terry Taylor, and the expertise of local mushroom aficionados, (Jessica Wolf, *Fungi Ron and Mitch*), along with the help of many volunteers, the mushroom species were organized and put on display.

Now if it was thought that the the types and quantity of mushrooms received was overwhelming, that thought didn't come close to the super-sized number of guests (in excess of 800) that arrived at NIWRA to take in the Mushroom Show and for many, a first time visit to NIWRA.

There is no doubt that an annual, Mid-Island Annual Mushroom Show is an event worth considering.

Congratulations to: Terry Taylor for the idea; Lynne Brookes for her enthusiasm and support; and to each and every volunteer who added to the success of the first, A.Nats Mid-Island Mushroom Show.

A grateful and special thank you is extended to NIWRA for offering their facilities, grounds and co-hosting the Mushroom Show.

By Marg Hill, Newsletter Editor

GIFT OF WEEDS - Observations

by Maya Carson

Our little Parksville tour, September 5th, about 'the Gifts of Weeds' led us from the mown field beside the City Hall to the uncut meadow near the Oceanside Place arena.



Despite the season, the mown field has no seeds to offer. Canada geese came to hang out and eat some of the grass, freshly sprouted, due to the heavy rain after the drought.

Not until we stood in the Wembley - Meadow did I pay attention... what a difference...the sounds! The meadow was buzzing with insects, spiders weaving webs between grasses taller than I am. Crickets in concert and little songbirds lifting off, deer pellets beside a blackberry thicket and seeds galore from various grasses, yarrow, thistles, dandelions, burnet, plantain, burdock, just to name a few!



The mown field downtown was a desert in comparison! Maybe easier on the eye due to conditioned expectations, but absolutely deprived of the wealth Nature has to offer. Though we seem to be completely blind to it. We'd rather put feeders out with birdseed (a limited, hardly organic and probably GMO'ed selection) than allowing something wild and untended to grow and spoil an immaculate, deadheaded and synthetically fertilized backyard and lawn.

This meadow is loaded with healthy bird / animal feed. Naturally fertilized, it is thriving within the natural cycles of weather, growth and ripening, offering birds healthy and appropriate choices. Nobody bothered to water during the drought, yet the meadow is alive and teeming. There is absolutely no harm done to the environment: air, water, soil, our most precious resources...quite the opposite!



Each plant is producing an abundance of the most interesting seeds, sharing and securing life for future generations...not just of plant and animal. It is keeping the ground cool or insulated, depending on the season, while pavement and cleared lots do the exact opposite.

Compared with a 'weed' most nursery plants require a lot of attention and protection: planting, watering, feeding, pest and disease management in order to thrive. All with considerable impact on the environment: from the production of tools, pots, plastic, landscape fabric, pesticides and ...cont'd p.5

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fertilizers, to fences, machinery, greenhouses, hoses and packaging, to name just a few. We superimpose our own ideas onto life's most intelligent creations, polluting and poisoning our most essential goods for short-lived pleasures and material gain. Do we have to? I don't think so!

We could respect the Life Force and interact with nature instead of trying to control what made us in the first place, defending and promoting these 'wild lands', organic food source for our beloved birds and all else that is part of the most intelligent force in the universe.



The apple I brought for a snack is representing a very fragile being in the big picture. Producing few seeds per fruit, which, if they do, will take a very long time to grow into a fruit bearing tree. The future for the species, its wealth, is in the apple seed, not in the colour or size of the fruit. By Nature it would be carried away in the digestive tract of animal or man to be planted (fertilizer included) far enough from the mother plant to have a chance to grow into a mature fruit bearing tree. But, we people eat and flush the seeds of our food, drowning them in the ocean...of all places...polluting instead of creating.



There is a worm (moth) that likes to start its journey in the centre of an almost ripe apple. In its greed for the sweet flesh it completely destroys the seeds which are rotting in its waste. The worm is therefore destroying the future of the apple species...and, its own food source and survival...Sounds familiar?

Stewardship Report

The "broom-bashers" have had a great summer. Ordinarily, our work parties meet twice each month to attack invasive non-native plants on the Englishman River Estuary, but this year we decided to step things up by cutting and pulling Scotch broom every week for a good part of the summer. Several large patches of the noxious weed further out on the Estuary and on the perimeter of the Englishman River Art Gallery property were cleared before the seeds could be set for a new generation. It was gratifying to see large grassy areas free of broom, at least for the time being.

Our dominant strategy has been to clear out the established plants and then go after the seedlings which spring up in the following months and years. water which appears to weaken or kill off the broom in some lower-lying locations.

cont'd on p. 7

STONES IN A STREAM BED

By Terry Taylor

Have you ever walked the Top Bridge Trail, along the Englishman River, and wondered about the stones on the river bed? Most of them are the same kinds of stones that are embedded in the cliffs. The story of the stones is the story of two rivers. Two rivers separated by an immense period of time.

The stones along the Englishman River have come from basically two sources. Some were brought from the north by the glaciers of the Pleistocene ice ages, but most of them have come from the conglomerate that makes up the rock faces bordering the river. Conglomerate is gravel from river deposits that has been cemented together by water carried chemicals such as calcium carbonate. The stones that are contained in these cliffs are very rounded. They have been moved a long way downstream on the previous river bed, and this movement has removed any rough edges they may originally possessed. They were probably laid down by the river delta as it advanced into the sea. The Englishman River is moving them back into the sea.

The Englishman River is cutting down through deposits from a previous river, and re-depositing them on its own river bed. So how long ago did the original river flow here? About 80 million years ago.



That was in the Cretaceous Period, when dinosaurs like those whose fossils are preserved in the Alberta badlands were at their height. It would be another 15 million years before the meteorite hit and the volcanoes spewed massive lava flows across the Deccan Plateau of India.

It is difficult for us to contemplate 80 million years, but we can get some idea if we compare a year to a second. There are roughly 30 million seconds in a year, so if we had a time machine that went back a year each second it would take almost three years to get back to the old river delta.

Let's look at this from an astronomical perspective as well. Not only does the earth revolve around the sun, but the sun revolves around the Milky Way galaxy. It takes about 200 million years for one revolution. If you look towards the southern horizon on a clear summer evening you will see a concentrated part of the Milky Way in the constellation Sagittarius.

This is the direction of the galactic centre, which cannot actually be seen as it is obscured by clouds of dust.

When the ancient river flowed, the Solar System was 60 thousand light years away, on the other side of the Sagittarius star clouds!

These stones were made in a river, but they were in a river for a fleeting period of time. Most of their existence has been within sedimentary rock. They are fleetingly in a river again, but may be moved by water and ice to be encased in rock again.

Opal Squid *Loligo opalescens*

Habitat

Opal squid are found along the west coast of North America from southern Alaska to Baja California, with the most significant populations occurring off the coast of California. Opal squid live at depths from the intertidal zone to about 250 metres.

Species Description

Opal squid have an elongated, tapered mantle with two triangular fins and a head with large eyes, eight arms and two feeding tentacles. When at rest, their flesh is a translucent white, with a faint bluish tinge and blue-green opalescent patches. However, they can change their colouration when their mood changes or when they are trying to blend in with their surroundings - anything from an angry red to a mottled gold. Opal squid grow to an average of 15 to 20 centimetres in length (not including tentacles) and weigh between 14 and 70 grams. They live less than two years, and males grow larger than females.

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

For further information see: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas/Csas/status/1999/C6-04e.pdf>

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/2006/StateoftheCatch.pdf>

B.C. is at the northern edge of Opal squid habitat. Opal squid, found predominantly in the nearshore and inshore areas south of Vancouver Island's Cape Scott, live less than two years and die after reproducing. Spawning squid form large aggregations in sheltered bays. Opal squid are carnivores that display multiple colours over their body when catching prey.

Photos by Dave Erickson



KIDFEST 2015

One of the live 'creatures' brought in by Pam Helem, for this year's Kidfest touch tanks display, turned out to be a mass of squid eggs. After laying their eggs, the Opal Squid die...it's thought that this is what happened in the Gorge Waterway in 2013 when a large quantity of Opal Squid were found dead along the walkway.

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This seems to be working. In some areas we are aided, too, by the incursion of salt water which appears to weaken or kill off the broom in some lower-lying locations.

We must acknowledge the help of the two co-op students from KSS who came out, under the guidance of Lynne Brookes, as well as the summer work students from VIU who were working with The Nature Trust of BC. What a relief to have a few strong, young backs to share our task.

Spotted knapweed is another noxious invader which we have sought to control for the past few years. Luckily, the knapweed is confined mainly to a fairly discrete area near the wildlife viewing stand. Our control method is to remove the flower stalks before they can bloom and set seed. David Helem's "weedwhacker" has made short work of any large patches of the plant, leaving the rest of us to reach into the thorny thickets of Nootka rose to chase down the other individual plants which have evaded David. However, this year, the knapweed seemed to be not as plentiful and we're not certain whether we are winning the battle or whether the summer drought had weakened the plants.

Over the past few years we have planted conifers, at this time of year, in some of the areas which have been cleared of broom - but with little success. Dry summers have taken their toll. With what we have learned, we hope this year to resume some planting of more resilient species which have a greater chance of survival, given the poor soils and ever drier conditions.

We are happy to welcome Karen Barry, who has been appointed to oversee the restoration of the Nature Trust lands on the Island. As many will know, Karen served for many years with Bird Studies Canada. She brings to this new position some real enthusiasm and focus in supporting our efforts to eradicate non-native invasive flora on the Englishman Estuary.

A huge "thank you" and "well done" to the faithful A.Nats volunteers who have come out faithfully and spent many hours over the past year to support our stewardship of the Englishman River Estuary.

Dave Hutchings, Past President

MABRπRI
Biosphere in Your Backyard
VIU at Milner Gardens Sept. 26, 2015

It's a long handle, but MABRRI (Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve Region Research Institute), hopes to become better known as they engage the Oceanside community in expanding our knowledge of nature and how it impacts our lives. The institute will study our relationship with the environment, culture and the economy of the area. *The area*, encompasses some 1200 km² stretching from Qualicum Bay to the Nanoose Peninsula. It is unique among biospheres in Canada as it has a vertical range of 2100 m, from the top of Mount Arrowsmith to the bottom of the Salish Sea. This fact allows for great biodiversity in the 3 bio-geo-climatic zones. Two interesting examples are that the McLaughlin Ridge is an important wintering ground for goshawks and also used by Marbled Murrelets.

Dr. Pam Shaw of VIU (Vancouver Island University) and her students put on the course at Milner to expose participants to the history of the Mount Arrowsmith Region and its connection to the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. MABRRI is interested in looking at many areas of interconnection including our historically resource-based economy and the concept of sustainable development. Climate change and the resulting shifts in species distribution is another area of study. The importance of collecting baseline data was stressed so that changes in the environment can be tracked. Dr. Shaw's team has already started research on eel grass monitoring, building an Atlas of MABR and identifying groups in the community where they could assist with data research and analysis.

As stated in the latest MABRRI newsletter, "Together with VIU, the City of Qualicum Beach (and recently the City of Parksville), First Nations, and other important regional stakeholders, the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region aims to be an international model, demonstrating how humans can live, work and play without unfairly compromising the biodiversity and ecological health of our planet."

Look for more info: mabr.ca

By Catherine Watson

'SHROOM' ROOM



*Views of the Mushroom Show 2015 at NIWRA. Kudos and huge thank you's to all our volunteers and community support. A special thank you to all who took photos. **These photos by Les McLean***

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS MEETINGS AND OUTINGS*November to February 2015*

CARPOOL IF POSSIBLE. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: ED WILSON: (250) 248.7280

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 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; Sunnybeach = Hwy 19A north & Sunnybeach Rd

Please respect Knox Church policy of "No perfumes or scents when participating in activities or meetings".

Mon Oct 26th: GENERAL MEETING - at Knox United Church, 345 Pym, Parksville @ 7:00 p.m. *Please respect Knox Church policy of "No perfumes or scents when participating in activities or meetings".* **TOPIC:** Summer project on bringing back the Bluebird **SPEAKER:** Reanne Shelling, Gary Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team

Saturday. October 31st Jack Point & Biggs Park: Easy walk with some stairs along the peninsula jutting out from the eastern side of the Nanaimo River Estuary. Lunch at the Crow and Gate Pub. Meet at Craig & Jensen at 9:30 or Arlington Inn, Nanoose Bay at 9:45. **Leaders: Rob and Jeanne Schippers**

Week of November 9th NOTE - Date to be confirmed by e-mail to members. - Riefel Bird Sanctuary: Probably the best opportunity most of us will have to see a huge and wonderful variety of migrating birds this year. *There are both longer and less demanding circuits to walk.* Bring lunch. **Meet C & J 6:30 am, depart C & J at 6:45 am for the 7:45 Duke Point ferry** and return 3:15 pm from Tsawwassen. **Leader: Dave Erickson**

Saturday November 21st Rosewall Creek, south of Fanny Bay: Join us for a moderate walk up this picturesque creek to a falls. No paddle needed! Carry a lunch to eat at the falls. Meet at Qualicum Tourist Bureau at 9:30. **Leader: Maggie Little**

Mon Nov 23rd: GENERAL MEETING - at Knox United Church, 345 Pym, Parksville @ 7:00 p.m. *Please respect Knox Church policy of "No perfumes or scents when participating in activities or meetings".* **TOPIC:** Vancouver Island Tours **SPEAKER:** Gary Murdock

**SUN. DEC 20th PARKSVILLE/QUALICUM BEACH
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

This will be the 25th year for our BCPQ, also the 116th CBC. For info and to sign up for the CBC contact: Sandra 250.248.5565

All club members are welcome, following the CBC, to the pot luck @ St Anne/St Edmunds...see p. 1

Saturday, 16th January - Buttertubs Marsh, Nanaimo

One of our most productive birding areas, the marsh is an easy morning's walk. Lunch at the Black Bear Pub. Meet C&J 9:30 **Leaders: TBA**

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS MEETINGS AND OUTINGS*November to February 2015*

Mon Jan 25th: GENERAL MEETING - at Knox United Church, 345 Pym, Parksville @ 7:00 p.m. *Please respect Knox Church policy of "No perfumes or scents when participating in activities or meetings".* **TOPIC:** Members Night with slides and photos

Wednesday, 27th January - Cathedral Grove and Cameron Lake

An Island jewel! Gaze in awe at the giant centuries old Doug Firs in this rare remnant ecosystem and explore the far side of Cameron Lake. Bring lunch. Meet QBT, 9:30. **Leader Ron Wyckoff**

Saturday 6th February – Fanny Bay Conservation Area and Ships Point: A walk along the dyke and shore- line for winter birds. Wear good footwear for mud. Meet at the Qualicum Beach Tourist Office at 9:30 or Sunny Beach Rd. in Qualicum Bay at 9:45. Bring lunch to eat on the spit. **Leader: Maggie Little**

Wednesday 17th February - Deep Bay - Little Qualicum Falls Park

Always an enjoyable hike through one of our local parks. There may possibly be some winter mushrooms but the Falls is the main attraction, of course. Bring lunch. Meet at Qualicum Tourist Bureau at 9:30. **Leader: TBA**

Mon Feb 22nd: GENERAL MEETING - at Knox United Church, 345 Pym, Parksville @ 7:00 p.m. *Please respect Knox Church policy of "No perfumes or scents when participating in activities or meetings".* **TOPIC: SPEAKER:**

Saturday 27th February - Deep Bay

An easy birding and beach walk on a falling tide. In an area which often yields a good variety of seabirds. Hope to see some long-tail ducks! The walk is along slightly uneven terrain. Bring a bag lunch. Meet QBT, **9:30. Leader TBA**

Wednesday 9th March - Qualicum Beach Museum

Check out the new displays and fossils with Graham Beard

Meet at the Museum 587 Beach Rd, Qualicum Beach at 1:00pm Leader David Helem

Saturday 19th March Herring Run

We can hop up or down the coast and set up our telescopes wherever the action is thickest. If the fish are late in arriving an option is birding from the road at the Marshall Stevenson. Bring lunch Meet: QBT 9:30 **Leader: TBA**

Wednesday 30th March - Englishman River Regional Park

Enter the park from the Middlegate end and walk along fish channels through a mature mixed forest to the hatchery. We can also check out the clay bank which threatens Parksville's water supply. There may be some early flowers. Bring Lunch. Wear suitable clothes and shoes for mud. We will need to negotiate a slope to get to the river. Meet C&J, 9:30 **Leader TBA**