

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS NEWSLETTER

TO KNOW, ENJOY AND PRESERVE NATURE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Sally Soanes

Hello Everyone

We've pulled through the winter together with fun and so many accomplishments. I've happily discovered this club, due to our wonderful, knowledgeable organized members, practically runs itself (keep that in mind when the nominations come up!). This is also due to your superb board of directors and Sue, who keeps me on track and almost under control at the meetings. Sandra Gray needs to be once again singled out for organizing (an onerous task at best), running and tabulating the result of the Christmas Bird count and then leaping right into the Brant count to do the exact same thing. No rest there! Thanks to Toni for organizing the pot luck held after the CBC. Everyone else's food always tastes so good. Lynne Brookes ran (she'll say she didn't) the Brant festival with such calmness and always with a smile. I'm not sure she went to bed this winter. Frank M. organized such wonderful trips. There was an abundance and a great variety to choose from. Thanks Frank and to all those wonderful trip leaders who stepped forward to share their knowledge. Ronda, thanks for all the great speakers and programs you've organized for us. Enjoyed by all. I hope you've figured out that this wonderful club is so great because of the membership's involvement and willingness to share their knowledge, skills and time not only for the betterment of the club but the community. From Dave Hutchings cutting out the bad guys at the estuary (he needs help by the way!) to Toni keeping the members paid up, Doug Elias making a ton of nesting boxes and Derrick following the money, folks make this community a better place. Thanks for giving me the gavel for a while. It's a joy.



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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, 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

BC Nature Rep: Al Kirkley

E-mail Correspondence: Elaine Lefebvre

Conservation/Environment: Gary & Ronda Murdock

Broom Bashing: Dave Hutchings When: 9:30am - 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month: Where: Bottom of Shelley Road, Parksville. Weather permitting.

Newsletter Editor: Maggie Green

Promotion: Maggie Little

Refreshments: Ron Wyckoff; Dave Erickson

Speaker Program: Ronda Murdoch

Stewardship: Dave Hutchings

Oceanside NatureKids:

Archivist: Pam Helem

Facebook: Kat Derksen; Tom Constable

Web Site: David Helm

Field Trips:

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

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS SPEAKERS PROGRAM LIST June-October 2018

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

September 24-Dr Ken Marr Curator of Botany Royal BC Museum Topic: New plant discoveries from northern BC Alpine.

October 22-John MacFarlane Go on a Naturalist Field Trip Without Leaving the Room: Exploring Nature with a Microscope.

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS OUTINGS SCHEDULE
June -December 2018

Saturday, June 16–Trent River, Courtaney Come see wildflowers, fossils & birds. Bring Lunch. Meet QBT for a 9:30am start. Leader: Tom Constable

Wednesday, August 1-Hornby Island Fossil Search with Graham Beard Must be able to walk over rocky beaches. Wellies/waterproof footwear. Bring own geology hammer/safety glasses if you have. Some extra hammers will be available. Participate or simply watch and learn. Pack lunch-all day event. Meet QBT: 8:00am for the 9:00am Buckley Bay ferry. Leaders: Terry & Rosemary Taylor

Saturday, September 8-Fossli Park, Port Alberni Hike the old Ford property woodlands on Sproat Lake and view the falls on St. Andrew Creek trail. Moderate walk-suspension bridge and short hill. Bring lunch. Meet: C&J 9:30am Leader: TBD

Wednesday, September 19–Gabriola Island Explore Malaspina Galleries, shorelines and parks. Meet: C&J 8:00am to catch the 9:30am Nanaimo ferry. Bring Lunch. Leader: Jim Goodwin

Saturday, September 29–Cable Bay, Dodd's Narrows, Cedar Outing will try to witness the current change. Walk is about 2 km each way. Bring lunch. Meet: 9:30am C&J or 10am N&P. Leader: TBD

Wednesday October 10–Thames Creek–Mushroom Hike Join Terry Taylor on the great mushroom hunt. Pack lunch. All day hike-medium difficulty. Meet: QBT 9:30am. Leaders: Terry Taylor

Saturday, October 20–Nymph Falls Provincial Park Nymph Falls Nature Park-61 ha of second-growth forest on Puntledge River. The river/falls rage over exposed bedrock ledges fall to spring. Mushrooms should still be present. Pack Lunch. Meet: QBT 9:30am. Leaders: Toni & Ron Wyckoff

Wednesday, October 31–Heritage Forest & Grandon Creek Explore the unique flora/fauna of Heritage Forest. After lunch we can go to Grandon Creek (some steep areas) and follow the trail to the new viewing platform at the new Sea Side Nature Park. Proper footwear required. Long walk especially after lunch. Meet: QBT 9:30am. Leaders: Lynne Brookes

Saturday, November 10–Westwood Lake One small hill and a 6 km walk round this attractive lake created about 1906. Lunch at the Jingle Pot Pub. Meet: C&J 9:30am or 10:00am N&P. Leaders: Sue Wilson

Wednesday, November 21-Pacific Biological Station, Nanaimo About 10:30am This outing to be confirmed with PBS prior to Nov. 1st. Leaders: Teri Hitch

Saturday, December 1-Pheasant Glen GC/Landfill Trail Extensive easy hiking forested trail network at the south end of Qualicum Road. Meet: QBT 9:30am. Leaders: TBD

Wednesday, December 12-Hemer Park A forest walk to round out a great year. In the Cedar District, south of Nanaimo with good trails around by Holden Lake. Some waterfowl will probably be seen. Meet: C&J 9:30am, N&P 10:00am. Bring lunch. Leaders TBD

THE PLAINFIN MIDSHIPMAN FISH

By Sue Wilson

During the May 2016 meeting of the Arrowsmith Naturalists, Sandy Gray, our bird expert, alerted us to a spring phenomenon happening at low tide at the foot of Doehle Avenue in Parksville. There was a great gathering of bald eagles, at least 60, including many juveniles. The attraction was the emergence of the plainfin midshipman fish, a favourite prey.

Never having heard of this fish, I went to Google and YouTube. This fish, *Porichthys notatus*, also known as a toad fish, is remarkably ugly, but very fascinating. It usually lives in the deep ocean, about 300 to 400 metres below the surface. Its underside sports rows of luminescent photophores, which aid in finding mates. These dots are reminiscent of the buttons on a midshipman's uniform and are the origin of the common name.

In spring and early summer, the midshipman fish swims up to the intertidal zone to lay eggs. Ed and I descended the 114 steps from Doehle Avenue in hopes of finding some of these fish. The beach is composed of large round rocks and boulders and is not great for walking. I did not want to go to the edge of the water.

Resigned to disappointment, I happened to look down and saw a stranded fish. It looked dead, but perhaps not, as the midshipman fish can exist out of the water for some time. I turned it over to look at the photophores. Next I noticed a swish of a tail underneath a nearby rock. I lifted the rock and Voila! A toad fish and a clutch of bright yellow eggs! It is the male which guards the eggs and keeps them moist. The other fish could have been the female, ready to go back to sea.

I was very excited about our discovery. Apparently it is not rare, as a couple of weeks later, Gary Murdock found a plainfin midshipman "nest" at Wall Beach Point in Nanoose during an Arrowsmith Naturalist outing. Their mating hum can be quite a racket at night, especially when several fish "harmonize" their vibrations.

While climbing the steps to street level, I excitedly shared the curiosity I had witnessed with another couple. "Oh, those 'bull fish'." said the gentleman. "An eagle dropped one on our roof."



ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS MEMBER GARDEN TOUR

By Judy Mazurski

The most beautiful gardens are not sterile or manicured—they are dynamic and alive with wildlife and brimming with vitality. SUPPORT our fellow Naturalists that are doing their very best to protect our wildlife, birds, butterflies, bees, bats, beneficial insects, the environment with rainwater encatchment/ and or drip systems, native shrubs, plants, trees, safe habitats, nest boxes, natural air filters, water features, the list is endless.

I am very pleased to advise you that several of our wonderful Errington fellow Naturalists have generously offered their yards/gardens for our first Arrowsmith Naturalists tour next May, 2019. Parksville Centre Community Gardens is a highlight with a tour of one of our Member's heirloom seeded, chemical free & very productive, hummingbird, butterfly/bee haven garden. A no easy feat with the City encroaching with concrete paths, and to our chagrin having removed some of the garden plots to "pave paradise".

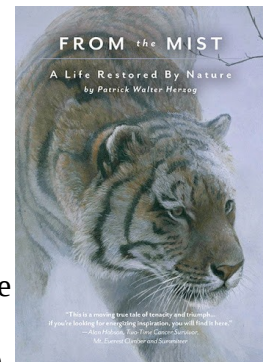
Many of you in Qualicum Beach, Nanoose Bay, Nanaimo, RDN, are also consistently working diligently with success in this worthwhile endeavour. I invite you to show your fellow Naturalists how gratifying your projects are. Share your vast knowledge with our new members that wish to get on board. Please, not only support our Errington/Parksville centre friends next year by setting time aside for the Tour but I invite you to take up the challenge yourselves. How wonderful it would be to offer 2 tours covering the areas. All in the interest and benefit of each and every one of us, our wildlife, your grandchildren, the next generation, those reading this wonderful newsletter on the world wide web and are inspired and wish to join us and make a difference also.

I recognize the complexities involved when residing in urban centres. Perhaps you have solved the problem of "How to Garden for Wildlife without upsetting your Neighbour". Utilizing limited space? Show us your earth boxes. Housing developments – single or multiple with neighbours that also want to show their involvement. Invite us! Your feedback is most welcome: julope33@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEWS

From The Mist—A Life restored by Nature by Patrick Walter Herzog Book Review by Maggie Little

This is the story of one mans journey, and recovery, through cancer. His life spent working internationally as a wildlife biologist connected and immersed in nature compels the reader to accompany him through his hardiness and determination to survive. Through his diagnosis of chronic leukaemia and subsequent life-threatening experimental treatment, his touchstone—nature and the power of healing are always present. A good read. Honestly and methodically recorded. Once started hard to put down. This book is available at the Gift Shop in Bowser, but not Mulberry Bush.



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.

FACTS ABOUT BEES

By Toni Wyckoff

All found in Victory Gardens for Bees by Lori Weidenhammer:



1. There are 20,000 species of bees in the world.
2. 4,000 are native to North America.
3. 57 species from west North America are red listed, 700 are in danger.
4. 1 out of every 3 mouthfuls you eat is pollinated.
5. It takes 110lb [50kg] of nectar to produce 44lb [20kg] of honey.
6. Hedgerows were planted around crops to keep the pollinators fed continuously and shelter from the rigorous cultivation. Monocultures are destructive to native pollinators.
7. Neonicotinoids cause death in the bee population. It impairs foraging skills and affects the ability to navigate.
8. Plant blooms that bloom in succession from these families: Allium, Aster, Borage, Mint, and Carrot.
9. Let some of your vegetables and herbs go to bloom, such as broccoli, onion, kale and radish.
10. Bees prefer herbs for their healing properties and strengthen them to fight diseases and mites. Borage, lavender, oregano, sage, rosemary, and thyme.
11. Lemony scented herbs help bees to send signals to one another and navigate.
12. Avoid double flowering plants. They are pretty but very difficult for bees to get at the nectar and pollen.
13. Colony Collapse Disorder is a catastrophe brought on by Varroa mites, malnutrition brought on by Monoculture, transportation stress, loss of diversity, pesticides, fungicides, loss of habitat, climate change, and compromised immunity.
14. 70% nest in the ground. Leave some areas not cultivated. Landscape cloth and heavy mulching can smother ground nesters.

PLEASE PLANT FLOWERS FOR THE BEES, BUTTERFLIES, HUMMERS AND ALL OUR POLLINATORS YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE

LINKS TO ARTICLES OF INTEREST

By Teri Hitch

Forget Ebola, Sars and Zika; ticks are the next global health threat:

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2018/jan/25>

Is Japanese knotwood driving you wild? Don't curse it-cook it.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/shortcuts/2018/may/30>

Electromagnetic radiation from powerlines and phone masts poses “credible” threat to wildlife, report finds. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2018/05/17>

Ramazzini Institute Comprehensive Study on the Effects of Cell Tower Radiation on Animals:

<https://www.ehtrust.org>

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 PODCAST DISCUSSION/LUNCHEON GROUP

By Cathy MacFarlane

Our new monthly Arrowsmith Naturalists Podcast Discussion & Lunch group will focus on positive and hopeful podcast stories from around the world that stimulate our interests and are making a difference to our wonderful natural world. For the most part, we will leave the heavy, albeit important, discussions on disappearing species, changing environments and climate, the impact of harmful human activity, etc. for another time. The purpose of the monthly podcast discussion group is to enjoy and engage in continual learning by sharing our experiences, thoughts, and feelings about the positive podcast topics showcasing ways of helping the natural world. We will not be an advocacy group although these podcasts from around the world will hopefully be food for thought, and inspire individuals at the very least to experience, appreciate and enjoy and support our great natural world, from our backyard bird feeders to our spectacular Provincial and National parks as well as our coastal land and marine reserves. Topics could also include astronomy and geology and paleontology. Relevant podcasts will be chosen from the numerous science sites online such as CBC, BBC, TED talks, Natural Sciences Podcast, etc. So how can I be part of this?

1. As a member of the Arrowsmith Naturalists simply sign-up at the monthly club meetings. The podcast topic and online site will be posted here and on our club website. All podcast discussion and luncheons will take place on the same date, time, and location: 3rd Thursday of the month, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at Thalassa Restaurant at the Qualicum Beach Memorial Golf Course.
2. Listen to the podcast prior to the meeting in the comfort of your home. To provide a bit of structure in our discussions, answer these four simple questions:
 - a) Identify and describe briefly a key point that caught your attention.
 - b) How might you relate this topic to our local scene?
 - c) Describe any personal experiences you have had on this topic.
 - d) If this podcast changed your thinking or awareness, describe how. It might be helpful to write down a few notes and bring them along to our luncheon discussion (max 3-5 minutes please).
3. We will begin at 11:30 am, so please arrive early and enjoy some friendship in a beautiful setting. Sit anywhere at one of our assigned tables.
4. Once lunch has been ordered, ensure that everyone introduces themselves around the table. Name tags are always helpful. Anyone can start the ball rolling. Everyone then has a chance to voice their thoughts, experiences, and feelings on the topic, about 3-5 minutes per person. Read your 4 answers if you prefer!
5. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, continue discussion by inviting questions and further comments. Friendly and supportive.
6. Allow all to have a chance to respond and speak (about 1 minute each) before speaking again. Please consider others and our limited time. Diversity can be a good thing. We do not have to agree with others. Therefore some helpful words to enable us to respond in a respectful way to each other might include: a) I hear what you are saying. However, I see it this way. b) My experiences are different. I see it from this point of view. c) I would like to add to the point that Charlie made earlier.
7. Once dessert and coffee arrive it might be a good sign to wrap-up the structured discussion (if it hasn't already) and just have fun and socialize. Interested? Please email me fiona3@shaw.ca

September Podcast topic: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/how-charity-workers-rid-an-tirne-antarctic-island-of-rats>. As this is a trial balloon, there will be seats for 8 people only in September. Hope you can join us to check out our new fun and friendly learning opportunity!

THE POPCORN FLOWER

By Terry Taylor

One of the joys of wildflower trips on southeastern Vancouver Island is Scouler's popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys scouleri*). It grows only along the coastal fringe, in Garry oak and arbutus habitats. This rain shadow, Coastal Douglas-fir zone is restricted to the east side of the island and the Gulf Islands. The popcorn flower is not only found in a rare habitat, it is only found in an even more rare habitat, in that rare habitat. It grows in moist parts of this dry zone. Ours is an area of winter rain and dry summers. In the spring in little hollows or seepage sites the seeds of this annual plant germinate. They grow rapidly, flower, and drop their seeds before the soil dries out, and these patiently wait until next spring's rain.

Popcorn flower is closely related to forget-me-nots, and its white flowers, low on the ground look like white forget-me-nots, hence another common name, white forget-me-not. It is not entirely white, however, as the centre of the flower is yellow. Definitely worth a close look with a hand lens. The little linear leaves are very inconspicuous, and the plants are not easy to see when not in flower.

These little hollows where the popcorn flower grows sometimes harbour a number of very rare, red-listed species, species that are more common to the south in Washington and Oregon, but which just extend to the southern tip of Vancouver Island.

Our dry, Mediterranean type climate has quite a few annual flowers that bloom for a short time in the early spring and remain dormant as seeds for all of the rest of the year. Other examples are blue-eyed-Mary, gold star, and flaxflower. Such annual species which grow as actual plants for such a short time are sometimes referred to as ephemerals. Naturalists visit our open bluffs in the spring to see these flowers. Unfortunately, the soil in such sites is very thin and easily impacted. Many annual, introduced grasses are also adapted to such sites. These have been accidentally introduced from southern Europe, and are now dominant throughout our area. Eagle Heights near Cobble Hill was dominated by native ephemerals a couple of decades ago, but now is dominated by invasive grasses.

Scouler's popcorn flower is named after John Scouler, a nineteenth century Scottish naturalist, physician and geologist. He made numerous collections of plants in western North America, and a number of species are named after him. The best known is probably Scouler's willow. There is also *Scouleria*, a genus of aquatic mosses.

Next spring look closely in some wet spots for the popcorn flower. Harewood Plains and Neck Park are a couple of places where it occurs. The photo was taken at Neck Park.



BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS GENERAL MEETING JUNE 2017

By Roger Simms

June 8th 2017 I left home to drive to Tumbler Ridge BC to attend the BC Field Ornithologists Annual General Meeting June 9th to 11th inclusive. Driving through Whistler and Pemberton was a twisty, curvy journey difficult enough to not see many birds, a few but not many. I decided to drive to Williams Lake where I knew there was a good hotel. The next day I carried on to Fort St John to stay at a favorite Best Western Hotel, another long day's drive. The following morning was an easy drive via Dawson Creek to Tumbler Ridge. I managed to find a few birds new for the year for me including Blue-winged Teal, Wilson's Snipe and Eastern Kingbird. The people who arrived after me were caught in the monsoon which I missed, but it caught up with me at lunch time. The rest of the day was wet. However in the evening, we had a meet and greet in the Museum which was a paleontologist's delight. There were casts of dinosaur footprints in the main room and lots of other ancient relics, not counting me.

The next day was an early birding outing again very wet. After lunch, meetings and a banquet in the evening. The next day was Sunday and another series of outings were scheduled, but again too wet so most stayed in the hotel. Sunday around 1:00pm the event was finished but several of us were signed up for a post AGM tour of the area. It was still possible to bird but damp everywhere. We made Dawson Creek our base and visited many places where we had some good birds including many warblers, sparrows, and more Eastern birds. Hummingbirds were not seen as the spring had been long, cold and wet, but the day we left a Ruby-throated hummingbird turned up at our local guide's home. Some birds including several warblers fly up the eastern and central flyways to nest in the boreal forests, this means warblers and others seen in eastern Canada during the spring migration can nest as far away as Northern BC.

On the following day we were scheduled to go to Pink Mountain, but it was raining hard again so we all left perhaps only losing half a day of our tour. For me it rained all the way from Tumbler Ridge to Highway 97 at Chetwynd and then dry all the way home. I did pick up 5 more species in Williams Lake going home, including a Grey Catbird and Cinnamon Teal. Total species for 7 days and a few of those very wet was 116, with no lifers. A good trip seeing more of our beautiful province, but more sunshine would have made it perfect.

MEMBERS PHOTOS



Submitted by Teri Hitch



Submitted by Nancy Whelan



Submitted by Maggie Green



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 September 30, 2018 for the October 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.