

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS NEWSLETTER

TO KNOW, ENJOY AND PRESERVE NATURE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Sally Soanes



Hello Everyone

I really never thought I'd be so happy to see rain. Grateful for rain. I'll try to remember that this winter but I'm sure all the dead and dying tree will be a sad reminder.

I'd like to talk about volunteering. I find it interesting that the more people who move to the island the fewer the number of volunteers are available. All volunteer dependent organizations are finding it very difficult to carry on the programs they used to offer. We are so fortunate in our wonderful group in that we have so many core volunteers who put their hands up whenever asked.

There are many hands up all the time! It would be so nice to see a few (or more!) new hands go up. For instance , we need a new field trip coordinator to replace the excellent Frank VanManen. You don't need a lot of expertise (there's tons available!). Just be able to organize them. We'd also love to have a few more trip leaders step forward. Exploring our fabulous island with all its flora and fauna can be a real joy.

Ronda has a terrific line up of speakers for our fall meetings. The mushroom festival committee has been hard at work and I hope we see you at our world famous festival at NIWRA on Sunday October 14th. Volunteers here are always welcome or just come out to enjoy, learn and buy. Big thanks go out to John and Cathy McFarlane for stepping up and offering new areas to explore, learn and grow. A big shout out to Jen DeHaan for continuing to run and grow our Facebook and internet pages full of information for the public and for our own members. I would also like to urge you all to go and visit the Faye Smith Rosenblatt Pavilion in Qualicum Beach. Lynne Brookes has worked so hard to create a beautiful space full of information. With the help of other members it has become a marvellous place to take visitors and anyone seeking something unique, gorgeous and restful. Lynne I will tell you it's just fabulous.

Guy Monty is taking over the CBC from the fabulous Sandy Gray who has laboured on this much valued task for 22 years. It is a huge and complicated task and we are so grateful to have Sandy's leadership, humour and knowledge for all those years. We are so fortunate to have Guy step forward to take it on when it is increasingly difficult to get volunteers. Thank you Guy! Also we have a new meeting space and time that Derrick has worked so hard for. Starting in January we will meet on the 4th Thursday of the month in St. Edmunds church hall. I hope to see you all at our meetings. Hands up please!!

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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.

Starting in January: Meeting Location: St Edmund Church Hall and Meeting Dates: 4th Thursday of January to June and September to November.

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

Newsletter Editor: Maggie Green

Vice President: Doug Elias

Promotion: Maggie Little

Past President: Lynne Brookes

Refreshments: Ron Wyckoff; Dave Erickson

Executive Secretary: Claire Summers

Speaker Program: Ronda Murdoch

General Meeting Secretary: Sue Wilson

Stewardship: Dave Hutchings

Treasurer: Derrick Grimmer

Sunshine Contact: Pam Helem

Membership: Toni Wyckoff

Archivist: Pam Helem

BC Nature Rep: Al Kirkley

Facebook: Kat Derksen; Tom Constable

E-mail Correspondence: Elaine Lefebvre

Web Site: David Helem

Conservation/Environment: Gary & Ronda Murdock

Field Trips:

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

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

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS SPEAKERS PROGRAM LIST

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

November 26 – Richard Boyce Documentary filmmaker Island Bound Media, produces short documentaries about local social issues and the environment. Presentation TBA.

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS OUTINGS SCHEDULE October - December

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

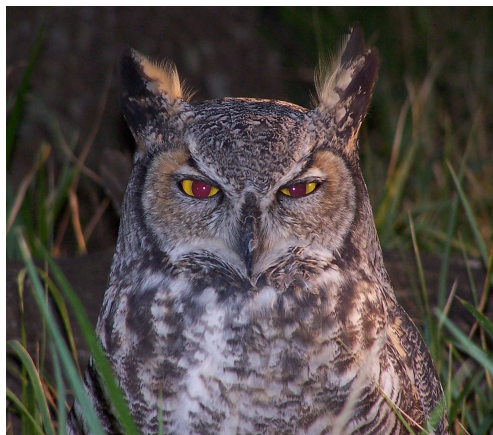
Wednesday, November 21-Pacific Biological Station, Nanaimo About 10:30am This outing to be confirmed with PBS prior to Nov. 1st. Leaders: Teri Hitch

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

Sunday, December 16-Parksville-Qualicum Christmas Bird Count – Organizer-Guy Monty

Sunday, December 16-Christmas Bird Count Potluck-St. Edmund Church Hall-5 pm. Set up 4pm.



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.

REPORT ON OUR G-MAIL ACCOUNT

by Elaine Lefebvre, Gmail Coordinator

Our Gmail account is a pretty busy place, so for those of you who may be interested in what the Coordinator of our Gmail account does, here are some details from the past year and a half: Typically, I send out e-mails that remind members of field trips or upcoming general meetings. But, there are other areas that are of interest to our Executive and members, and we want to make sure members are aware of these. For example, the Executive asks me to send out documents to our members on nature-affiliated projects, or to e-mail advocacy letters to relevant BC politicians or political leaders on issues that are near and dear to our hearts, like logging in old-growth forests, or saving Wildwood Ecoforest. And I send out notices to members asking them to consider responding to government-sponsored environmental surveys or questionnaires related to wildlife (for example, grizzly bear protection).

We have e-mails coming in from other organizations, mainly environmental or nature-related, but not all, asking that we send out notices about their upcoming meetings or events. I try to keep up with these, and send out to our members all information that is relevant to our nature-oriented mandate.

Also, we get queries about specific environmental matters, and I send these e-mails on to executive members who have expertise in the area; for example, we get questions about the Brant Geese (which I send on to Sandy Grey), wildlife/old-growth forests (Ronda Murdock), the Estuary (David Hutchings), or mushrooms (Terry Taylor).

We get queries from people who have just moved here and would like to know more about Arrowsmith Naturalists; for these queries, I send out a general reply that covers the basics of what we stand for and what we do.

And, we get junk mail; this is not as bad now as it used to be, but these offensive marketers are always looking for an angle, a way to get someone to read their e-mails, so it is an ongoing issue.

Lastly, G-Mail includes updating our Contacts List: this involves additions and updates to membership, like changes to address, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses. Sometimes members are good enough to send us an e-mail to let us know that they have moved away and should be removed from the membership list, but often, members don't inform us, so I get e-mails bouncing back. Also, we get e-mails bouncing back from members who apparently have not checked their account for a while, and their Inboxes are full.

I hope this report gives insight into some of the work that Arrowsmith Naturalists is involved with, so that members know we are happily busy on their behalf!

FEUILLETON

By Larry Williams

We are not all of one mind
 About the issues we see
 On this rafted island...
 Some even say--and I strongly disagree--
 Even our bloods are socially different.
 But no one can deny that here we
 Are all of one water. When that is spent,
 Shall we drink the sea?
 Do we dare ask how much?
 Do we dare ask how many?
 Are we selling our future
 For yesterday's penny?

WIND IN THE WILLOWS WITH A DIFFERENCE!

By Rosemary Taylor

When I was a child growing up in England, it was taken for granted in my part of the country that willows were often pollarded on a regular basis. Why? To encourage new long, strong ‘withies’ (tough flexible branches of an osier or other willow, used for tying, binding, or basketry) to grow until they could be harvested for making shopping baskets and other woven items. I would go to watch the basket-maker in his workshop, as he turned these young branches into something useful and beautiful.

We all know that trees absorb and transport an enormous amount of water from their roots to their canopies, and we are probably familiar with the fact that the Blue Mountains in Australia are so called because the gum tree forests there give off a fine mist of eucalyptus oil from their leaves which, in the sunshine, creates a blue haze. This is a visible result of transpiration and evaporation of water, if we stop to think about it.

Fast forward to the summer of 2018. I was on holiday in Holland, listening to a tour guide in the northern part of the country, where old-fashioned windmills still abound, but mainly as tourist attractions. The Low Countries are so called for obvious reasons-most of the land is near or below sea level, and therefore subject to a water table near the surface, which must constantly be kept at bay (no pun intended). Windmills did valiant service pumping up water from just below the surface and returning it to the canals or rivers by which most windmills stood. But they had helpers. Willow trees were planted along the dykes and pollarded, not for basket making, as were the willows of my childhood, but because the constant new growth demanded much more water than a regular tree would require, thus acting as a natural pump to help keep the countryside dry. This is a function of trees, and pollarded willows in particular, that I had never thought of-it was such a simple way to help draw up water from the always-damp soil and removing it through transpiration into the air. A simple sentence mentioning this fact tossed casually into a conversation with our guide hit me like a ton of bricks. Of course, what a brilliant use of a natural function not only to aid in drying the soil, but creating a treed landscape at the same time. Willows also had many other assets to offer, not least of which is that Dutch clogs were made from willow wood because it provided insulation and is water-resistant. Incidentally, latterly, the best cricket bats are also made of willow. Who knew!

SPECIES AT RISK ACT ON PRIVATE LAND

By Gloria Galloway, Parliamentary Reporter

Submitted by Al Kirkley

It is just a one-gram amphibian, but a judge’s decision to allow the federal government to protect the western chorus frog on private land could restrict development projects across Canada in cases where species face extinction. Justice René LeBlanc of the Federal Court said in a recent decision that Ottawa has the power to criminalize threats posed to the frog, and other species deemed to be at risk, anywhere in the country, and even when provinces disagree. It is the first time since Canada’s Species At Risk Act (SARA) was adopted in 2002 that it has been used to halt development on private property, and only the second protection order issued under the act. The first was to protect the sage grouse on Crown lands in the prairies.

In laying out the reasons for his decision, Justice LeBlanc said the courts have not hesitated to recognize that human responsibility for the protection of the environment is a “fundamental societal value,” and that criminal law must be able to adapt accordingly. That responsibility does not stop with the prevention of the release of toxic substances into lands and waters, he wrote. “It is also nowadays to counter—because it impoverishes the environment—the loss of biodiversity from human activity.” The developer that owns the site had taken the government to court, arguing the protection order amounted

to expropriation without compensation. Environmentalists rejoiced at the decision. “It’s crucial because it means that the government can keep on doing those emergency protection orders on private lands,” said Anne-Julie Asselin, a member of the board of the Centre québécois du droit de l’environnement (CQDE), an environmental advocacy group. In Canada, Ms. Asselin said, most of the lands where species are at risk are near human habitation and, as a result, are privately held. Alain Branchaud, executive director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society in Quebec, said the decision will be a “pillar” for the future interpretation of the act. The judgement is quite clear that the federal government has the authority to step in when there are gaps in species protection, Mr. Branchaud said. Alain Chevrier, a lawyer for the development company Candiac House Group, which owns the land, said his clients will appeal the decision.

A GUIDE TO RESPONSIBLE WHALE WATCHING

By Teri Hitch

In the 1960s and 1970s human fascination with whales decimated this population, but there are ways for us to admire this incredible species in a responsible way. For those who want to spot the Southern Residents but do not want to join what some have called the whale-watching “Wild West,” there is an alternative. The Whale Trail is a network of more than 50 sites up and down the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada where visitors are likely to observe whales-including the Southern Residents. In British Columbia, the project partners with the BC Cetacean Sightings Network. The network tracks cetacean and sea turtle sightings and uses the information “to aid in future recovery and management plans for species at risk.” “The single easiest thing we can do to help (the Southern Residents) recover is to turn down the volume in the Salish Sea,” Donna Sandstrom, founder and executive director of The Whale Trail program, said in a phone conversation. “Whale watching from shore is not only fun, it’s a strategic act of conservation.” While Sandstrom believes there is a place for “sustainable” whale watching from boats, she said that watching from land is the best way to ensure zero impact on the whales. She also shared a number of tips for where and how to spot Southern Residents in the Salish Sea:

Go here: There are a number of great whale watching sites in British Columbia, Sandstrom says, including on the Southern Gulf Islands in and around Active Pass, and even in West Vancouver. However, her number one recommendation is East Point on Saturna Island. “That’s a hard one to top,” she said.

At this time: Sandstrom said the summer months are the best time to see Southern Residents in the Salish Sea-but be prepared to be patient. “Whales don’t sleep the same way that humans do. They’re conscious breathers. Their cycles of active and resting are much shorter so there’s no predictable time to say when they’re going to be doing something,” Sandstrom said. “All we can say is generally this is the time of year that they’re going to be there.”

Bring: Sandstrom recommends bringing a pair of waterproof binoculars, in case of rain, and a picnic. “Wherever you’re going, bring a book or a lunch and something to drink and be prepared to spend a little while. You might get lucky and see the whales when you first get out there, but in the worst case you’re going to have a wonderful afternoon in a beautiful place.”

Look for: “The best way to find the whales is to get some binoculars and what you’re going to want to do is scan the surface of the water and see if you see a spout or a disturbance in the water. Or a big splash! Sometimes you’ll see the end of a breach.”

Terri Hitch is planning on working on getting “Whale Tale” signage in Oceanside, and welcomes all who would like to join her.

HAMMOCK SPIDERS

By Terry Taylor

Spiders are another group of important animals and most naturalists take little interest in them. There are, however, some very interesting spiders, and they are very important members of terrestrial ecosystems. To identify most of them to species level is beyond the ability of those of us who are not arachnologists. There are not many arachnologists, so there is basically nobody to teach us.

All of us are aware of some of the common and larger members of spider families. We all see the webs of the orb weavers, the unusual movements of crab spiders and jumping spiders, and the big funnel web spiders that live in our houses. There is also a genus of spiders whose webs you have undoubtedly seen, but the actual spider you have probably never seen. This is *Pityohyphantes* in the sheetweb weaver family. Its common name is the hammock web spider, and it builds a web that is quite different from the familiar orb webs. These webs are not vertical, they are horizontal, and they catch insects in a different way.

Salal habitat is very common in our area, and these spiders are very common on salal bushes. They build dome shaped webs among the leaves of shrubs, especially salal, since this species has many leaves, close together, to which it can anchor the web. The webs show up very well on a morning when the sun is low and they are dew covered.

The hammock spider web is held in place not only by the edges of the dome web, but also by the threads above it. These are single threads like numerous guy wires, and these wires enable the spider to catch its prey. It sits either out of sight under a leaf on the edge of the web, or else under the web, not on top of the web. When an insect flies into one of the scaffolding lines, and falls onto the dome, *Pityohyphantes* attacks it from below.

There are many common organisms in our local woods, and next time you are hiking a trail through the salal, have a look for this spider. Most of the time it seems to be out of sight under a leaf, or else the web has been abandoned, but occasionally you will see one underneath its hammock.

Photo of the web in
Yellowpoint Park.



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

LINKS TO ARTICLES OF INTEREST

By Teri Hitch

[https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/21/trump-administration-poses-new-threat-to-birds-in-allowing-incidentals-killings?](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/21/trump-administration-poses-new-threat-to-birds-in-allowing-incidentals-killings?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=286166&subid=23141446&CMP=GT_US_collection)

[utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=286166&subid=23141446&CMP=GT_US_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/21/trump-administration-poses-new-threat-to-birds-in-allowing-incidentals-killings?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=286166&subid=23141446&CMP=GT_US_collection)

<https://truthout.org/articles/as-the-biosphere-dies-so-do-we-using-the-power-of-nature-to-heal-the-planet/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/the-sunday-edition-may-6-2018-1.4648293/lyme-disease-the-first-epidemic-of-climate-change-1.4648296>

<https://www.saferemr.com/2014/03/dept-of-interior-attacks-fcc-regarding.html>

<https://www.saferemr.com/2018/05/EMF-wildlife.html>

“Until we extend the circle of compassion to all living things, we will not ourselves find peace” -
Albert Schweitzer



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 January 31, 2019 for the February 2019 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.