



photo by dfaulder on Flickr

Oystercatcher

Newsletter of the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club
Spring, 2011

The Magellanic Oystercatcher (*Haematopus leucopodus*) is a species found in Argentina, Chile and the Falkland Islands along sandy shores and near inland lakes during the breeding season. It has been listed as threatened.



This picture was taken Nov. 16th, 2010 at the top of Mt. Finlayson. Bryan Adderley led the group. Lucille wrote "I feel so proud that the walkers managed to make it to the top. It was cold and windy, but the view was amazing. Well worth the effort." The walkers were: Laura Moore, Nancy Holcroft, Lucile Adderley, Teresa Hitch, Margaret Spencer, and Anne Beaumont. Bryan took the picture.

President's Point of View

Kees Visser

It is February as I write this, and as every year, it looks as if somebody switched on the lights and the darker days are over. Of course March will bring rain again, but still, very soon the first trees will start to blossom.

February also means that we have had our Annual General Meeting. This year's attendance of 57 members was a vast improvement over the previous AGM when only 35 members showed up but it is still a far cry from the 100 plus members we had in 2003 and 2004, when we still had potluck lunches at the Legion! I believe that we have now a winning

Index

President's Point of View	1	In Memorium, Honour Roll, & New Members	3
Salt Spring Trail & Nature Club AGM 2011 Report	2	Calendar of Events	5
The 2010 Blue Ribbon Fall Fair Collection of Forage Plants (for Humans)	3	PARC and Trails on Salt Spring Island	5
		Birds In My Backyard and More...	7

This newsletter is published by the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club, PO Box 203, Ganges PO, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9. Editor: Gary Adams (gafrad@shaw.ca)

For information on the Board of Directors and weekly outings, please see our website: <http://www.saltspringnc.ca/>

format, with light lunch (very good and crunchy buns), followed by the meeting, and finishing with an interesting speaker. It helped of course, that the lunch was free and the meeting lasted only 30 minutes. Thanks to Niels Gerbitz for the organization.

Our Secretary, Richard Shead, has written elsewhere in this issue, an excellent summary of the meeting.

In my President's report I talked about spring and fall trips and the lack of volunteers to organize them. These trips usually fill up very fast, so there is a great demand for them. There are many interesting areas where we could go, such as Sooke, Hope, Gold River, Wells Grey Provincial Park, to name a few, but we need somebody to take the bull by the horns.

On that front I like to mention a few incentives:

- The club will reimburse you for accommodation, meals and transportation for 1 day if you go on a scouting trip. Of course these costs should remain reasonable.
- The fees for the outing will be set in such a way that costs for the organizer will be subsidized fully or partially by the participants. An extra small amount of \$10 to \$20 will accomplish this. Other organizations apply similar policies. Knowing firsthand how much work is involved, it seems only fair to me.
- The club also compiled a binder showing step by step what needs to be done by the organizer. This binder is available from the Secretary. I really hope that all the above will encourage you to get involved.

Coming May, there will be a spring trip. Unfortunately, we can only accommodate 26 members, so feel free to organize another spring trip and of course the fall trip is still open.

On the Speakers' front, we have decided to cancel the February speaker, but we have lined up some excellent speakers for March 31 (Fran and Gil Schultz on Jerusalem), April 29 (Judy and Al Grass on Woodpeckers), and on May 26, we have rescheduled the previously canceled talk about Lighthouses in the Pacific NW. The Woodpecker talk will be followed by a short field trip on the morning of April 30. In 2010 we co-organized 3 presentations with the Salt Spring Island Conservancy. The woodpecker talk in April will likely be co-sponsored as well.

As you may know the SS Conservancy was

instrumental in the identification of two parcels of land in the south, Hope Hills West. Because of our association with BC Nature, our club can now assist at the start of this acquisition with a sizeable donation through a bequest. Some work still has to be done, but some trails will be accessible for hiking.

With brighter weather coming our way we can enjoy our hikes, walks, and rambles even more!

Salt Spring Trail & Nature Club AGM 2011 Report

Richard Sheard

The Club's AGM was held at the Community Gospel Chapel on Thursday, January 27th.

The meeting was preceded by a complimentary lunch, coffee, tea and juices.

Ashley Hilliard, President of Salt Spring Island Conservancy, thanked Club members who supported the recent Musgrove land acquisition fund raising campaign.

Fifty-seven members participated at the AGM. Highlights of the AGM follow.

1. The Treasurer reported that the Club had a members' equity of \$7,837 at year end. He also reported that the Club had purchased its own projector and was planning to purchase a Club Banner to be used at both indoor and outdoor events.

2. The Membership Director reported that Club membership remains strong at 218 as at year end.

3. The President reported on another successful and active year that included:

- a. A Spring BC Nature camp attended by 24 off-island BC residents,
- b. Donations of \$500 to the Tsawout Band long house, and \$625 towards a summer Park Interpreter for Ruckle Park (which donation was matched by a Club member).
- c. A successful overnight trip to Quadra Island attended by 35 members.
- d. Active social calendar with 7 events throughout the year.

4. The members nominated Janet Anderson to receive the Club's Trail Blazer Award.

5. Election of the following directors for the upcoming 2 years:

Treasurer-Secretary – John Heddle

TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB IN MEMORIUM

In loving memory of all our companions who have taken their last hike and people who have been good friends to the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club.

Pat Byrne
Tilly Crawley
Laura Faulkner-Pearce
Jack Fisher
Ann Gosse
Barbara Ann Harvey
Judy Heddle
Lotus Ruckle
Maggie Schubart
Mort Stratton
Bill Wowchuck
Tom Wright

A donation of \$150 will be sent to the Trans Canada Trail Association on their behalf.

HONOUR ROLLS

I forgot to include the lists of Honourary Members and Pathfinders with the last Issue's list of new members. Oops.

HONORARY MEMBERS

Bob Ball
Loes Holland
Tony Pederson
Jean King
Joan Lott
Eleanor Lloyd
Jean Holmes

PAST TRAIL BLAZERS

Lynn Thompson
Bill Harrington
Paul & Beth Ranney
Owen Benwell &
George Hignell
John Myers
Ian Fraser
Bob & Betty Ball
Dick & Chris Pattinson
Betty Kirk
Brian Radford
Charles Kahn
Simon Rook
Jim Barber
Alan & Rita Robertson
Janet Anderson

NEW MEMBERS

Ulrieke Benner
Shirley-Ann Bertz
Dietrich Bertz
Robert Bosman
Anke Bosman
Chien Yu (Edward) Chen
Judith A. Cooke
Audrey Denton
Susan Good
Helen Gunn
Jack Gunn
Kim Laidlaw
Karen Laidlaw
Nora Layard
Fang (Julia) Liao
Judy Loukras
Wendy Mcclean
Bill McMahon
Reinhold Neff
Ben Neufeld
John Neville
Heather Neville
Melissa Nibley
Marion Pape
Manfred Pape
Brenda Scotvold
Gillian Watson
Joni White

Crawly, Anne Gosse, Lotus Ruckle, Judy Heddle, Jack Fisher, and Ann Harvey. The Club thanked Betty Kirk for maintaining the book. A donation of \$150 will be made to the Trans Canada Trail in their memory. The members acknowledged the many volunteers who help regularly at meetings, social events, and other club activities. Thanks were expressed to the caterer and staff of the Gospel Community Chapel for the wonderful lunch served at the AGM.

7. The President urged members to consider volunteering as weekly leaders in each of the Hikers, Walkers and Rambler groups. He reminded members that those who plan Club trips may have some of their out-of-pocket scouting expenses reimbursed by the Club as well as all, or a portion, of their trip accommodation, transport and meal costs paid for by the participants

Following the business meeting, a very informative talk on bird life in Churchill, Manitoba was presented by John and Heather Neville that spotlighted the Churchill, Manitoba segment of his most recent tape, *Bird Songs of the Central Boreal Forest*.

John Neville's Birdsong tapes can be obtained from his web site.

<http://www.nevillerecording.com/>



Congratulations to Bob and Betty Ball, long time members of our club. Bob's 90th birthday, and their 35th anniversary are in March. Here they stand on a bridge made by our club. Bob and his friend, who has passed away, made this Mt. Belcher trail (courtesy Teresa Hitch).

BC Nature – Nieke Visser

Nature Director – Teresa Hitch

Trail Coordinator- Herb Otto

6. The Club acknowledged all of the following members who had passed away during the past year: Mort Stratton, Bill Wowchuk, Tom Wright, Laurie Faulkner-Pearce, Pat Byrne, Maggie Schubart, Tilly

THE 2010 BLUE RIBBON FALL FAIR COLLECTION OF FOR-AGE PLANTS (FOR HUMANS)

Teresa Hitch

Thanks to many requests, I am pleased to share my list of wild edible plants. These plants were found in a small area of Ganges, and represent only a fraction of the wild edible plants on Salt Spring. I have chosen these because they are very common on Salt Spring, and want to encourage others to add these local foods to your diet. The benefits include great ecology, excellent nutrition, more diet diversity, and the fun of foraging.

If you have more to add, and/or favourite recipes using wild foods, please let us know.

Fireweed: all parts are edible: flowers (salad decoration), leaves (tea), stem (survival food).

Ocean spray (*Holodiscus*, spp; rose family): seeds were dried and flattened, then eaten raw or cooked, by several First Nations tribes.

Dandelion: young spring leaves (salads/steamed), root (coffee substitute), flowers (wine, syrup).

Stinging nettle: use like spinach as a vegetable, dry and dried leaves make a caffeine-free tea substitute. (Note: pregnant women should not use nettles.).

Oregon grape (*Mahonia* spp.; barberry family): Berries (wine, jelly).

Evergreen huckleberry: berries, leaves (tea), stem (survival food).

Japanese knotweed: (*Fallopia japonica*; buckwheat family). This potentially invasive plant has the potential to destroy watersheds so eating is highly encouraged! Young, spring stems may be cooked like asparagus. It must be cooked to eliminate toxins, as sap may be toxic to some individuals. Different knotweeds vary in palatability, so try a little first. Seeds may be eaten whole or pounded, and added to breads, etc. Knotweeds (Japanese, giant



Pineapple weed. Photo by Krzysztof Ziarnek of Free Software Foundation

and Bohemian are considered invasive in this area. Recommended alternatives include: false Solomon's seal, Joe Pye weed, bugbane/*Cimicifuga*.)

All Thistles: Highly nutritious, excellent survival foods. All members of this family are edible but prickles must be removed. It may be cooked in a variety of ways including roasting, which makes them sweet. It may also be eaten raw. Spines must be carefully removed, before consuming. Should be eaten in moderation because some contain potentially carcinogenic alkaloids.

Hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp, rose family): fruits are seedy and mealy, so are best used for teas, wines, jams and jellies (high in pectin), and in cooking. It was used in pemmican.

Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*; rose family): fruit, young stems, flowers (on salads); leaves may be used for tea, but should be fresh or dried. Delicious with cream and sugar. Berries are edible. Wilted leaves may be toxic and should be avoided. This is one of my favorite herbal teas, and a delicious substitute for black tea. It should only be taken in moderation, however.

Mountain ash (*Sorbus* spp; rose family): raw, berries are very bitter, and some consider it inedible (toxic until cooked). Taste is improved significantly by freezing. Birds wait until the berries have been frozen and thawed, before eating. Used for jams, jellies, pies, ale, flour, strong liquor (northern Europe).

Watercress: high in vitamin C. Delicious in soups, salads, sandwiches.

Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*): all roses are edible. Flower (salads, infusions, rose water, etc.), and hips (jelly), etc.

Pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea*): tea

Lamb's quarters: a pot vegetable used like other leafy greens. Seeds are high in protein.

Calendar of Events

(Saltspring Conservancy Event)

March 11

Native Bees of Salt Spring.

Community Gospel Hall. 7 pm

Thursday, March 31, 2011

A Year on the Mount of Olives, East Jerusalem

Lions Hall starting at 7:30 pm. Fran and Gil Shulz retired to Salt Spring Island in 2004 after spending 32 years in Calgary. In 2009-2010, they volunteered through Canadian Lutheran World Relief at Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. During their stay, they traveled over much of Israel and the West Bank. They actively watched birds, followed the changes in plants in the area and were exposed to the problems of water use and shortage in this arid region. They will touch on all these items in their presentation.

Thursday, April 29, 2011

Woodpeckers

Judy and Al Grass on Woodpeckers at the Lions Hall at 7:00 pm. This is jointly sponsored with the Saltspring Conservancy.

Friday, April 30, 2011

A short field trip in the morning as a follow up to the woodpecker talk.

May 3 to 6, 2011.

Spring trip to Tofino

The plans for a spring trip include 3 nights at the Tofino Botanical Gardens.

For more information visit the website

<http://saltspringnc.ca/>

To register, please contact Nieke Visser at

niekevisser@shaw.ca

(Saltspring Conservancy Event)

Friday, May 20, 21

Ethnobotany and Traditional Medicine from Indigenous Cultures.

Dr. Marilyn Walker, Mt. Allison University. Community Gospel Hall. 7 pm on Friday. Walk with Dr. Marilyn Walker on Saturday, May 21.

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Lighthouses in the Pacific Northwest

Jon Healey presents a history of lighthouses in our area and along the Pacific Northwest. Time: 7:30pm. Location: TBA

(Saltspring Conservancy Event)

Friday, June 3

Ocean's Day.

Presentation by David Denning. Community. Gospel Hall. 7 pm on Friday. Beach Walk with David Denning. 10 am- 12 pm. on Saturday

Date to be set

Strawberry Festival

Tuesday, September 6, 2011

Blackberry Festival

Thursday, September 29, 2011

Nature presentation

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Christmas Lunch

PARC and trails on Salt Spring Island

By Kees Ruurs (Manager, PARCs)

In 2009, PARC conducted a public opinion survey to find out what people wanted most in the way of improved and or new parks and recreation facilities. TRAILS topped that survey. As a result, the SSI Parks and Recreation Department has been putting much of its efforts in trail planning, development and upgrading over the last few years.

In 2010 for the first time in its history PARC hired a dedicated trail crew and it went to work on improving the existing trails. Most of the efforts concentrated on the Channel Ridge trail system. They improved existing trails, built new sections, and developed and installed a new sign system. Maps of the trail system were produced and are available at the PARC office in Portlock Park. In addition, they improved several of the shorter trails, such as Dunbabin, Baker-Harrison, Mouat and a new trail in Trincomali.


This year the trail crew is starting again in March and will be concentrating on trail improvements in Peter Arnell Park, Bryant Hill Park, the connecting trail between these two as well as Wel-

Channel Ridge Trails



Welcome

Trail difficulty:
moderate with difficult sections.

 Access Points

Multi-Use Trails:

Watershed Preservation Trails:



Please keep to the designated trails.

Please control your pets.

Please "pack out what you pack in".



SSI PARC: 250-537- 4448



Sample Trail Distances

1 → 2 → 3 → 1 1.5 km

33 → 34 → 38 → 33 1.6 km

1 → 2 → 3 → 25 2.1 km



0 220 440 660 880 m.

Editor's Note. The opposite map has kindly been provided by PARC. My thanks to them for the map and the article to keep us connected with their activities. Their contact in the club is the Trail Co-ordinator, Herb Otto.

bury Park trail, Quarry Drive – Baker Road trail, Fern Creek trail, and Reginald Hill trail to name a few.

If time permits this year, a new trail from Blackburn Road to Frazier Road will be developed as well as a new trail through the western part of Moutat.

Last but not least more signs will be installed and maps prepared for hikers to take out with them.

PARC welcomes comments, suggestions and questions from you as hikers about trail conditions and issues. Please call us at 250 537 4448 or drop by at our office on 145 Vesuvius Bay Road at Portlock Park.

Birds in my back yard and more...

by Nieke Visser

On February 1, I heard the first song sparrow singing; well, it was more a careful tryout, a warm-up for the coming season. He is getting better as the days go by, so he probably will charm a female one day. In the mean time he stirred something in the other birds and now, mid February, I hear chickadees, one or two junco's, winter wrens, robins, and other song birds. The woodpeckers are louder, especially the northern flickers and the pileated woodpeckers and even the nuthatch found its little trumpet today. The eagles are busy preparing for their future young. They were so occupied that one day one of them landed in one of our cedar trees. It was not a comfortable perch (the

branch was sagging dangerously), so he (or she) took off again. We hear owls at night, one we identified as the barred owl, the other sound was perhaps the same bird but it sounded quite different. Maybe he had a disagreement with another owl.

The most spectacular courting happens right in my backyard: a male Anna's hummingbird is making a lot of noise, hopping from perch to perch in the cedar and every so often, doing its courtship dives, ending with a loud "metallic" peep. I can see him from my living room. We'll have little ones pretty soon!

Our Cooper's hawk has been around often this winter. He likes to come in the early morning and scare the hell out of the song birds at the feeder. But lately he seemed not all that happy. Watching him through the scope, he looked roughed up, his feathers in disarray, his tail feathers messily sticking out as if he has been in fight and got badly beaten up. I have not seen him in a week...

To round up my contribution for this issue, I like to reflect a little bit on the past Christmas bird count. On December 27, sixteen SSTNC members participated in the count. I received this year's results for Salt Spring from Tim Marchant, who was the island coordinator this year. I added these results to the spreadsheet I have for the last decade and eyeballed the results. What I found is in the table below.

It may look like a boring table, but this reflects what has been happening during the last decade in a concise way. Of course, counts fluctuate each year and depend on the number of counters, the weather, the

area covered, the expertise of the counters, etc. Still, over a long period of time, such fluctuations will even out, and errors will have less of an impact on the results. That is why it so important to keep a finger on the pulse. Such studies (we call them exploratory studies) tell scientists what is happening with our birds, and make it possible to extrapolate likely causes of their decline or increase in numbers.



2010 Christmas Bird Count Analysis

SPECIES	2010 COUNT	10-yr AVERAGE	COMMENTS
Greater white fronted goose	10	4	Not seen before in these numbers
Green-winged teal	2	30	Not unusual low count
Lesser scaup	36	12	Record numbers
Barrow's goldeneye	128	84	Highest count in 10 yrs
Black oystercatcher	5	16	Numbers seems to go down
Western sandpiper	20	-	Not counted in 10 yrs
Black turnstone	25	29	Highest number in 5 yrs
Long-billed dowitcher	6	-	Not recorded this decade
Pigeon guillemot	10	2	Highest count this decade
Northern flicker	106	74	Thriving
Chestnut backed chickadee	1234	856	Thriving too
American robin	454	1600	They were somewhere else, obviously.
Pine siskins	194	995	And these guys too
Anna's hummingbird	89	27	All time high, they were not counted before 2004.

Hiking the Gulf Islands

I'm currently revising my hiking book, *Hiking the Gulf Islands*, which will be published in March or early April. I will also be taking "pre-publication orders." I will sell the book for \$25.00 including tax (about \$5.00 less than the selling price) only to people who pre-order. Once the book is in the bookstores, I can't sell it any cheaper than they do. Thanks.

Charles Kahn
 302 Channel Ridge Drive
 Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1G6
 250-537-1899



Box 203, Ganges PO
 Salt Spring Island, BC
 V8K 2V9

Publications mail agreement
 No. 40049783