



Oystercatcher

Newsletter of the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club
Summer, 2012

@Paul Davey: www.wikipedia.org

The South Island Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus finschi*) is a New Zealand resident, breeding on the South Island, then migrating to the estuaries and harbours on the North Island. This large wader has striking black and white plumage, long red-orange bill and red legs, similar to other pied species.



When a man can't take it anymore. Bob Rush

President's Point of View

Kees Visser

Last December I did not think that I would have to write this report in 2012. But since nobody stepped forward for the function of President (or Vice-President) at the last AGM I decided to do one term

Index

President's Point of View
Hike the Olympic Peninsula
Healthy Trails, Healthy People
SSHNC Annual Broom Pull

1	King of the 'Shrooms	4
2	Bear 71 - A Review	5
3	Ode to The Hike Leader	6
4	About an AGM, a Nature Conference, and Birding	7

more, under the provision that I will step down after only one year of that term, in January 2013.

I may sound like a broken record, but after seven years in the Executive this will be my last year. We have more than 200 members and one or two of you should be able to do these jobs, which only require 4 to 5 hours per month, and not even in the sum-

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For information on the Board of Directors and weekly outings, please see our website: www.saltspringtnc.ca

mer or over Christmas time. In June I will e-mail the (shortened) job descriptions of both jobs and I expect some resolution at a General Meeting, directly after the Strawberry Festival on June 19. To make it perhaps easier you could have the option to volunteer for one year in stead of two years.

Having this off my chest, I like to mention that in May we had a very successful outing to Prevost Island, where Sheila Wowchuk- de Burgh proudly showed us their beautiful bucolic island. We are invited again for next year.

On May 8 we had a geology outing with Jack Gunn, who showed us a spectacular outcrop of a thick Devonian volcanic ash outcrop (pyroclastics), overlain by Cretaceous sandstone. The contact between the two (a major unconformity) was hidden in a ditch, but still observable. Thanks to Nieke, who organized both the geology and Prevost Island.

In May we also had a major broom pull in Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, led by Herb Otto. I trust that we had a good turnout.

Talking about organizing, when you receive this Oystercatcher, 24 BC Nature members from the mainland and Vancouver Island are visiting our island. They will participate in many nature outings, whale watching and listening to evening presentations by local experts. They are also sampling some of our restaurants. A thank you to the organizing committee; Zeke Blazecka, Richard Shead, Nieke and to the many volunteer event leaders and speakers, and a special thanks to the Salt Spring Island Conservancy members, who helped out.

As I mentioned at the AGM, we decided to take on and improve the Jack Forster Trail in the north end, as it still falls between different management organizations. From BC Nature we applied for and received \$500 to construct a boardwalk over the swampy area in the middle of the trail. In addition we applied for a grant from the Salt Spring Island Foundation to construct stairs, so we have a safer beach access. If we receive that grant, Herb Otto will approach some of you to start construction in the summer. Many thanks to BC Nature and hopefully the SSI Foundation.

The last few months we lost Joan Lott, a founding member of our club, after a long illness. Also, Edna Gatt passed away prematurely, due to a very tragic accident. Our condolences were extended to both of their families.

In April we donated \$250 to the “Stewards in Training” program of the SSI Conservancy. They are doing a great job in nature education for school children and will hopefully reduce some of their NDD (Nature Deficit Disorder, as David Denning calls it). We trust that most of our membership is in support of this.

See you on June 19, at the Strawberry Festival!

There will be a General Meeting, immediately following the Strawberry Festival on June 19 in Ruckle Park.

Hike the Olympic Peninsula

Barry & Sheila Spence

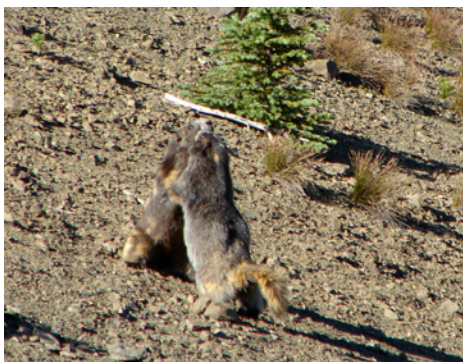
Forget cross-border shopping. Instead, try some great cross-border hiking on the Olympic Peninsula. There are easy rambles, pleasant day walks, and vigorous hikes in Olympic National Park. Start your adventure on the ferry from Victoria to Port Angeles. The crossing is picturesque and customs seem to be easy when you travel on the Coho. If you are on the 10:30 am boat, you will be in Port Angeles in time to enjoy lunch, check into your accommodation, and get in an easy afternoon hike.

For your afternoon hike, head out of Port Angeles toward Hurricane Ridge. Stop at the office and buy a park pass, seven days for only \$15 for your car



The Hurricane Ridge trail. Barry & Sheila Spence

and all the bodies you can pack into it. Then drive up to Hurricane Ridge and park 1.6 miles beyond the visitor center. It is easy walking along the paths to the top of Hurricane Hill lookout toward Victoria. Watch for marmots beside the trail. Their shift change seems to occur late in the afternoon. Many paths are paved and easily accessible even by wheelchair. Elevation gain: 700 ft. Round trip: 3.2 miles



Marmots changing the guard (left). Manymere Falls (right). Barry and Sheila Spence.

Several longer hikes branch off Hurricane Ridge. If you have two vehicles, park one at the bottom of an 8 - 12 km trail and spend your day hiking down hill. Masochists can hike bottom to top.

For an easy day, check out various waterfalls on short trails, and soak in the hot springs. At Crescent Lake, Marymere Falls is 90 feet high in old growth forest accessed on a level trail with some stairs at the falls. After the falls walk stroll along the lakeshore for some bird watching. Next stop is Sole Duc Hot Springs where a 6 mile up & down loop trail along the Sol Duc River leads from the hot springs area to the falls and back again. Spawning Chinook and Coho salmon can be seen in fall.

The magnificent Pacific coast is accessible from several locations. Lake Ozette triangle trail beginning at the Ozette Ranger Station is 9 miles long: roughly 3 miles on each side through forest and the remains of pasture lands to Cape Alava, south along

the shore on sand and rock beaches to Sandpoint, and then back through the forest. Both forest sections have extensive boardwalk that can be very slippery. If the tides are low, you will not need to climb over any of the headlands. However, the mats of seaweed on the northern portion can slow you down. Enjoy the rocks, the surf, the birds and remember to look for Wedding Rocks petroglyphs at a rocky headland about one mile south of Cape Alava. We forgot until we were well past that point.

Ruby Beach north of Kalaloch - camping and beach trails abound.

Try this trip in the summer or the fall. After October, park roads may be closed due to snow.

For those who want a more strenuous and longer day hike, there are several longer trails. Information, permits (and the mandatory Bear Canisters) for overnight hikes are available at Park Headquarters, Ozette Ranger Station, and other locations.

Olympic National Forest website <http://www.nps.gov/olym/index.htm> for up-to-date information and to download brochures and trail maps.

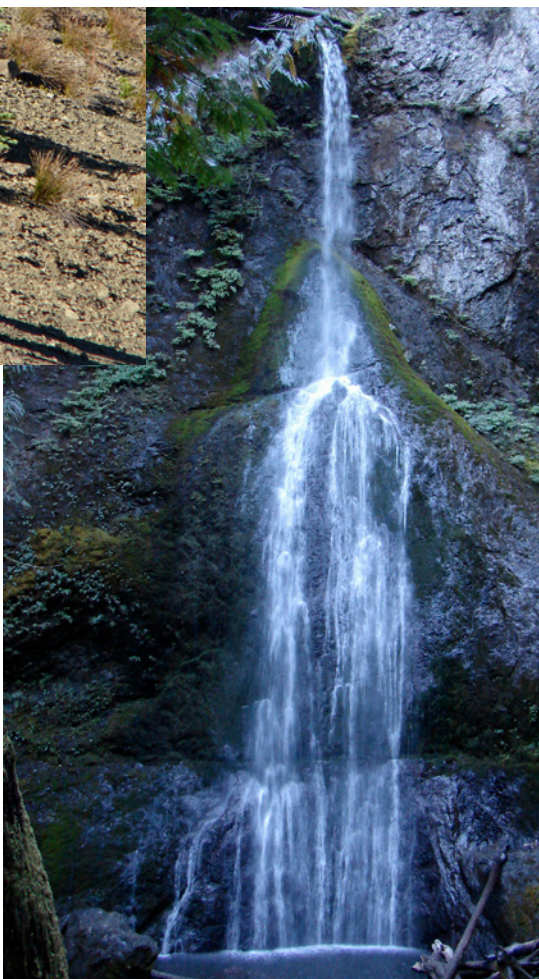
Healthy Trails, Healthy People

Lorraine Brewster, PARC

Hiking trails is fun and healthy! This summer experience the number of trails that have been developed on Salt Spring Island. Hiking is the perfect way to enjoy nature and the beautiful scenery that Salt Spring

Island has to offer. Our trails offer a variety of routes from easy to challenging hikes. Recently, the Trails Crew completed a new trail from Trincomali Heights to Trincomali Place. This well constructed trail provides an invigorating hike through woods connecting these two roads. It is a great addition to our trail system!

This summer our feature hike is Quarry Drive to Baker Beach. This fabulous loop is a must on a beautiful summer day and at low tide. Begin at the end of Quarry Drive and hike over Baker Ridge. The hike will bring you out at Baker Road where you turn right. From the road, you will have a short hike down the stairs turning right as you wander along the beach.



This will take you to Quarry beach access, which begins a climb up and over the hill and down to Quarry drive.

Explore Channel Ridge Trails! Channel Ridge trails pass through a series of rare habitats that have virtually all been recognized as sensitive ecosystems with significant biological value. These ecosystems include Garry oak meadows and open Garry oak, arbutus, and Douglas fir woodland. They also provide habitat for a significant number of rare or threatened animal and plant species. In addition to the rarities they contain, the designation of these ecosystems as sensitive reflects their fragility, limited extent, and the significance of their biodiversity from a provincial perspective. For these reasons, it is important that hikers keep their pets on a leash and stay on the trails that have been marked by PARC. Absolutely no motorized vehicles of any kind are allowed on Channel Ridge trails or lands.

Keeping our trails in top condition starts with our dedicated trail crew. They have performed winter maintenance removing fallen and dangerous trees and raking up any debris. Currently the crew is working on spring maintenance with the removal of weeds and maintaining our existing trails. Please let us know if you notice any maintenance issues on the trails. We can be reached at 250-537-4448.

SSHNC Annual Broom Pull

Herb Otto, Trails Coordinator

This year's Broom Pull event took place in BC Park's Burgoyne Bay on May 15. Usually the event is held in Ruckle Park, but after many years of pulling broom there, the infestation has been significantly reduced.

Lack of broom was not a problem at Burgoyne Bay where the broom has been growing unimpeded for some time.

Twelve members of the Club turned out to participate on a warm sunny day for what was a tough but rewarding task. With no shortage of broom in bloom, mounds of the pulled and cut plant were deposited along the parking area and the northern trail. All manner of tools were brought to bear to remove small to enormous plants. Tree sized specimens needed tree saws for removal. Blackberry canes, which had infiltrated the broom, inflicted numerous non-life threatening wounds on the valiant crew. A few hardy souls even attacked some gorse.



Crew members deeply buried in broom. Herb Otto.

Any concern that insufficient broom was left for next year can easily be dismissed. BC Park staff, who again gave their thanks for the Club's assistance, will remove the large piles of broom left behind. My sincere thanks for all those who came out and contributed their time and effort.

King of the 'Shrooms

Linda Quiring

The king bolete, or *Boletus edulis*, is a pretty big guy, larger usually than the Prince and one of 100 or more *Boletus* species, though I have rarely found it on Salt Spring. It is normally found with conifers.

Last year, after it had been raining forever, the sun came out and Bill and I decided to spend that Sunday driving to Port Renfrew to visit the Avatar Grove and have lunch on the beach. Almost there... a nice easy drive of under an hour now that the Pacific Circle Route has taken the place of the twisty, old, rough,



Boletus edulis found near Rambouillet, France. Photo by Strobilomyces on Wikimedia.com. See Editor's Note.

Editor's Note: While searching for a royalty free image for this article, I discovered that there is some controversy over whether or not this particular species is found in North America. For more information, I direct readers to the following web site http://www.mushroomexpert.com/boletus_edulis.html.

Bear 71 - A Review

Gary Adams

Although the Oystercatcher has not been a review medium, I found Bear 71, a documentary film by the National Film Board, to be irresistible. Apparently, I am not alone, as it has received strongly favourable reviews at the Sundance Film Festival¹ and MacLeans Magazine².

This interactive documentary, freely available on the National Film Board web site (bear71.nfb.ca/), was created and directed by Leanne Allison and Jeremy Mendes. It tells the life story of a Banff National Park grizzly bear. Park rangers collared the bear as a three year old and set the stage to follow its every movement for the remainder of its life. The collar data could also be correlated with the numerous trail monitoring cameras located throughout the park.

logging road that took twice as long. However the old road was far more scenic, I think!

On a lonely stretch of road, we spotted a somewhat Germanic-looking older guy walking down the road with a white plastic shopping bag. "Stop the Car!" I shouted and jumped out to accost the stranger. "So," I demanded, "What's in the Bag?"

He smiled. He knew that I knew! He held it open, and of course, there they were! More big, large, fresh, edible king boletes than I have seen in my lifetime. He had gathered them along the roadside and apparently had been coming there for years, knowing they would be there after the rains. We chatted awhile then Bill and I went foraging, but found only huge waterlogged specimens that Fred had rejected. Not even enough for a good meal... So, what's all the fuss about?

David Arora, the fungi guru says in our fungi bible Mushrooms Demystified, that 'Boletus boasts some of the finest and most flavorful of all the fleshy fungi. First and foremost,' he says, "is that fabulous fungus cherished by the Europeans above all others - the king bolete."

Arora notes there are more names for the king bolete in Europe than there are languages, and goes on: "If any mushroom deserves the dubious title of "king," this is the one. It is a consummate creation, the peerless epitome of earthbound substance, a bald bulbous pillar of thick white flesh - the one aristocrat the peasantry can eat! "The entire fruiting body," he says is EXCEPTIONALLY DELICIOUS."

I rest my case.

Calendar of Events

June 7, 2012

Salt Spring Island Conservancy AGM.

Inviting all Conservancy members to attend our brief AGM for a report about our work and budget and election of board members, followed by a presentation from Christine Torgrimson, Executive Director: "Conservation Connections: Yellowstone to Yukon and Isabella to Erskine." 7 p.m., Lions' Hall, 103 Bonnet Ave.

June 19, 2012

Strawberry Festival

The 2011-2012 hiking season ends with the Strawberry Festival at Ruckle Park (organized by the Walkers). Meet at noon in the lower picnic area of Ruckle Park to enjoy a scrumptious dish of strawberries and ice cream. Remember to bring a dish and spoon! There will be a General Meeting, immediately following the Strawberry festival.

Allison received permission to use material from these cameras and spent months sorting through thousands of hours of low-resolution footage. The authors then attached a 20-minute story written by J.B. MacKinnon, co-author of the 100 Mile Diet³.

The story is poignant and captivating as it reveals the life and adventures of the young grizzly. The background music is a bit overwhelming but the exciting aspect of this film for me was the visual presentation.

To provide some background, in my last years of work at Parks Canada, researchers were beginning to take Geographic Information Systems (GIS) out of the initial experimental stages to find ways to make use of its powerful potential. GIS, at its simplest, is a mappable database. It contains information with at least two coordinates so that it can be plotted. These plots, commonly applied to geography, can also be used in any other similar context, from mapping galaxies to a DNA sequence. While some researchers saw its value as a method to organize and analyze research data, others were taken by how easily it could display layer upon layer of information in useful and intuitive ways. I always thought that we were just scratching the surface of the potential of this tool and this documentary demonstrates that. It explores a whole new dimension of presenting mapping information in three dimensions, including time.

The basic structure of the film is a very sketchy map of the bear's habitat in Banff National Park, represented by topographic lines and symbols for vegetation and non-natural features. Bear 71 is represented by a series of dots that track across the landscape, isolating her movement in a time sensitive manner. Closely spaced dots mean slow movement and widely spaced dots show fast movement. As other collared animals, wardens, cars, or trains pass near her, the documentary displays their trails as well.

The documentary reader follows the movement of Bear 71 by moving their computer mouse over the landscape, creating their own personal, interactive trail. At any time, the video map offers at least one place where the reader can click to see the actual animals as they move in and out of trail cameras.

The mapped video can be a bit confusing at first but if the reader gets too far away from Bear 71, a guide symbols shows how to get back so the best way to follow the story is to just explore whatever seems

interesting. The documentary is fun, dramatic, and educational. I highly recommend that people give it a try.

¹ *Huffington Post*. www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/23/bear-71-interactive-film-sundance_n_1225040.html

² *Macleans Magazine*. www2.macleans.ca/2012/01/18/a-documentary-like-no-other-documentary/

³ *Wikipedia*. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bear_71

The following toast, written and presented by Gerry Hof at the 70th anniversary of the Outdoor Club of Victoria on March 2, 2012, was brought to our attention by Betty Ball. The Hofs and the Balls were all members of the Outdoor Club before joining the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club.

Ode to the Hike Leader

Gerry Hof

The Leader of the hike is a special breed
Always there, in front of the pack; to lead.

Willing to offer, to scout, reccie and plan,
Taking calls and e-mails from woman and man.

Setting up car pools, what time to leave?

Takes so much time, who would believe?

Get to the trail head, no problem here,

Everyone showed up, the weather is clear.

What a hike, 3 hours, straight up.

And lunch at a viewpoint, a beautiful sight.

Only two hours down, easy and fast,

All down safely, a formidable task.

Thank you dear leader, all the hikers do say,

For the fine way you lead, for a really great day.

For being there for us, for a perfect hike,

For enabling us to spend the day as we like.

We honour our leaders, they are the best,

Always out front, not taking a rest.

Let us raise a glass to these great leaders...

BUT WAIT!

What would the leaders be, if not for

Those who call and say they agree

To fill up the car pools and ride to, say, Sooke

Who sign on the lines, and lace up their boots.

Who form a circle, and try to remember,

What is my name and what is my number?

Who form up in a line, and head up the trail

And pray to their God, the leader won't fail.

Who are willing to go on without rest

As the leader assures them; "My plan is best!"

Who hold their tongue, as they hear the leader say.

"Just follow me, I THINK this is the way."

Let's hear it for this faithful crew

For those who make the leader look GOOD.

Lets hear it for the FOLLOWER.

Never the first in line

But always willing to tow the line.

And always so important,

Would we need leader

If there were no followers?

I propose at the end of the year

That the club presents an award here.

To the BEST FOLLOWER.

And I also propose that the rest of us here

Raise a glass to all the dedicated FOLLOWERS.

TO THE FOLLOWERS.

About an AGM, a Nature Conference and Birding in the Okanagan.

Nieke Visser

I'll start with business: the BC Nature Conference in Kelowna. Kees and I were the only SSTNC representatives, but that did not dampen our enthusiasm. I can be very brief about the Directors' Meeting that I attended. Here is an excerpt:

1. The Young Naturalists Club of BC is now officially recognized and supported as part of the BC Nature organization with an Executive member.
2. BC Nature's website is in the process of being redesigned with more opportunities for member clubs to post news or events. We have to see how it turns out once the new site is in place.
3. I had a short discussion with directors of Vancouver Island clubs. The main concern is the planning of major coal mining projects near Cumberland.
4. The next conference and General Meeting will be held in Parksville hosted by the Arrowsmith and Nanoose Naturalists, 27-30 September 2012.
5. At the AGM, all five resolutions that I circulated among our members earlier this year were accepted.

Now the fun part:

The excursions the Kelowna Naturalists had thought up for the conference included some fabulous sites. In the Osoyoos area, we toured a substantial part of the proposed South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park. The area West of highway 97 is already set-aside as a protected area, although management leaves much to desire now. Adjacent are parcels of grassland, some privately owned although most owners are eager to sell and some part of the protected land. The op-

position to the proposal comes mainly from ranchers outside the park who have grazing rights in the area. The opponents show their opinion by hard to miss signs along the road. Lately, the N.P. proposal has been revised to include grazing rights in a controlled fashion because of the beneficial effect of grazing to the grassland as demonstrated on other (provincial) parks near Kamloops. For more information, visit their website: <http://www.sosnationalpark.ca/>.

We were very impressed with the area and went back there after the conference to explore a little more around Blue Lake. There was a hiking trail, but soon we were forced to go back when we met a bull among a herd of cows on our path who was not going to step aside for us. We also met songbirds, woodpeckers, ducks, waders, etc. Two Killdeer were busy nesting and claiming territory along the shore of the lake. There were spotted sandpipers, Barrows Goldeneye, Rufous Hummingbirds, Goldfinches, and a Hairy Woodpecker who occupied a nest cavity in an alder tree. He (or she) was very weary of us moving about. At one point he could not stand it anymore and flew from the nest, loudly expressing his dismay. Only then, we realized that he was nesting there.

Another excursion took us along the Mission River Valley in Kelowna through the geological history of the Okanagan Valley. Very knowledgeable leaders pointed out the features in the landscape and wildflowers along the way. A visit to the Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park taught us the amazing resilience of nature after the 2003 devastating forest fire. Numerous species, plants, birds, and animals, that were not there before quickly invaded the park. Efforts of reforestation by park management were immediately cut short by the voles that had occupied the land and were munching the young pine trees' roots. The park was then closed to the public for two years to let nature run its course. Raptors moved in to feast on the voles and other rodents. Quick growing bushes and trees replaced the original vegetation. Thus, one wonders if fires and storms are nature's way of renovating its house. Now, 9 years later a "new" park is sitting on the east banks of the Okanagan Lake. It will be interesting to follow its course of rebirth.

The last excursion took us to the South Okanagan Rehabilitation Centre for Owls (SORCO) near Oliver. The Okanagan is home to BC's only endangered owl, the Burrowing Owl, but 14 of the 15 owls found in BC can be seen in the Okanagan, Thompson,

and Similkameen Valley's at some point throughout the year. Because of the dwindling population of raptors, SORCO is dedicated to their preservation through upkeep of the clinic facilities for all kind of raptors as well as a breeding program for Burrowing Owls. Eggs are hatched and the young are brought up and prepared for release in the wild. The sick birds that are brought in are treated and if they are judged capable to fend for themselves, they will be released again in the area where they were found. If not, they are kept and well taken care of.

We spent some time in Osoyoos after the con-



ference, and discovered some neat birding spots with a few neat wineries in the neighbourhood too. Being unfamiliar with grassland birds we learn quickly. And of course, there are always the familiar ones. At the Haynes Spit in Osoyoos a 1.5 km boardwalk leads you through a wetland teeming with birdlife. And just north of Osoyoos where the (straightened) Osoyoos River meets the lake is another wetland formed by oxbows from the once meandering river. It was nice to observe birds that winter in our region displaying their breeding plumage: Wood Ducks and Blue Winged Teals were among the less common ducks we saw; also Western and Mountain Bluebirds, and a pair of Ospreys nesting on a pole erected in a field were desperate to ward off some other predators (likely crows or ravens), from their nests.

Most of us know the Central and Southern Okanagan as Sage country. Nothing is less true in May. So, just one last word about the Okanagan in bloom: the dominant flower is the Okanagan Sunflower or Arrow-leaved Balsamroot. But looking beyond these spectacular flowers, one could see Larkspur, Shooting Star, Saskatoon berry, Woodland star, Bitter Root, Spring beauty, etc. We found Striped Coral Root (an orchid), False Solomon Seal, Phacelia, Wax Current (a shrub), Old Man's Whiskers, and Clematis! Next time, I'll tell you about the birds in my back yard this summer!



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