



# Oystercatcher

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club  
Newsletter  
Spring 2015

Colourful fungus found on trail on Mount Maxwell, February 2015. Photo by Lorrie Storr.



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## President's Point of View

*Nieke Visser*

Attendance at the AGM on January 29, 2015, was good. Fifty-one members enjoyed their annual lunch and then went on to vote in the Board of Directors for 2015. New to the Board are Sheryl Taylor-Munro (Secretary/Treasurer), Jean Attorp, (Hiking Coordinator) and Lorie Storr (Walking Coordinator). John Heddle moved from Treasurer to the Past President position; an unusual transition due to the fact that last year John stepped down as President to take the Treasurer's position. The incumbents stayed where they were last year: Barry Spence as Membership Director, Frauke Prystawik at Ramblers Coordinator, David Denning as BC Nature Director, Gary Adams as Newsletter editor, Sue Lehmann as guardian of the Website, and I as President. The position of Vice President is still vacant, but David has generously taken on the task of looking after the monthly presentations as well.

On February 14, we lost an honorary member and one of the founders the SS Trail & Nature Club: that Saturday Loes Holland passed away in a car accident close to Ganges. She was 92 years old. Physically not so active anymore but mentally still very sharp, she pressed yours truly to write up and preserve the early history

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For information on the Board of Directors and weekly outings, please see our website: [www.saltspringtnc.ca](http://www.saltspringtnc.ca)

## Calendar of Events

### Friday, March 6, 2015 Amphibians

7:00 pm Lion's Hall. Conservancy Talk presented by BC Provincial biologist, Purnima Govindarajulu. Learn About Frogs, Toads, Salamanders, and Turtles

### Sunday, March 22, 2015 Conservancy Forum with J.B. McKinnon

7:00 pm. ArtSpring. The SaltSpring Island Conservancy and Salt Spring Forum present J.B. McKinnon, best-selling author of *The Once and Future World: Nature As It Was, As It Is, As It Could Be* and co-author of the renowned 100-Mile Diet

### Thursday, April 16, 2015 Rocks, Time and More

7:30 pm Lion's Hall. (Note change from regular time). Kees Visser will endeavour to introduce the audience to rocks, timescales, and more, time permitting. This talk will be an geological education, some hands on, to show what geology is, and how geologists think. He hopes you will get a basic understanding and how this all fits in the overall picture of the earth. There are many experts on the geology of Salt Spring Island, so he will stay away from that topic.

### May 8 - May 10, 2015

BC Nature's Annual General Meeting and Spring Conference to be held on Salt Spring Island. Event includes presentations, field trips and both pre and post conference excursions. Details on our web site.

of the club. She also expressed her wish to see the flowers at Honeymoon Bay once more, so I took her there last April, while we sang Dutch songs all the way there and back. She had files full of handwritten data about where the early pioneers went hiking and walking and which exciting spot they went birding. Many will miss Loes, specially the older generation.

We are two months away from the big event: the 2015 BC Nature Conference and AGM on Salt Spring Island (May 7 to 10). Since early January, registrations have been pouring in adding up to 106 as of the day of writing and from the number of phone calls I get, more are on the way. If you want to be part of this event, check out our website for details: [www.saltspringtnc.ca/BCNature.php](http://www.saltspringtnc.ca/BCNature.php); there are many speakers lined up to tell you all about nature in and around the Salish Sea, and there are still plenty of exciting trips and workshops available. I like to thank all volunteers who so far signed up to help at ArtSpring where the Conference will be held. Recruitment started at the AGM as far as I can judge from the sideline, we have quite a few people lined up. Andrea Rankin is in charge of matching people with jobs so give her call to find out if she needs more help.

The signage project for Mt Maxwell should be on the way by now. The design of the signs received the stamp of approval from BC Parks last week, so Herb and his crew are preparing themselves to put them in place. If you like to be part of this project, contact Herb Otto at [herbotto@shaw.ca](mailto:herbotto@shaw.ca). The annual broom pull will take place on Tuesday, May 12 in Burgoyne Bay, a project that also falls under Herb's leadership.

Last but not least, some news you may want to pay attention to. Since the Cobbler store closed its doors our communication box has moved across the street to the Visitor's Centre that is open everyday throughout the year. At the same time, I wish to thank Theo and Frauke Prystawik as well as Tim Marchant for their hospitality using their store through all these years. I will likely keep on calling it the Cobbler's Box (old customs tend to stick), but I am open to suggestions for a new name. Email your ideas to me: [nieke.visser46@gmail.com](mailto:nieke.visser46@gmail.com) or to the newsletter editor, Gary Adams: [gafrad@shaw.ca](mailto:gafrad@shaw.ca).

A short report this time, but I made up by starting a series on Hawaii Island's beautiful nature. It appears in this same issue.

### *A Cuban Adventure Opportunity*

My name is Mary Hof, and I was a member of the club for a few years, but living in Cowichan Bay made it difficult to get to hikes, but I love the hikes on SaltSpring.

November of 2014 I led a hiking tour to Western Cuba, which proved very successful, February 2016 I am leading another to Eastern Cuba, this will be 15 days with everything included. There will be two levels of hiking. If interested you can email me for cost and the itinerary. I do this because I love the country and going as a group saves in cost. My email is [mhof126@gmail.com](mailto:mhof126@gmail.com)

Mary Hof

# What Happens When You Call 911?

*Sue Lehmann*

The Hikers learned a bit about what happens in an emergency last January, when one of our members slipped on a moss-covered rock and hurt her leg. She was unable to walk, so we knew we needed help. Luckily, one of the Search and Rescue Volunteers was on the hike and could take charge of the situation.

First thing that happens is ... no cell service. Thankfully, we found a weak signal only 30m away. To our surprise, all lines at the Emergency Services Centre were busy so it took a couple of minutes to answer our call.

We knew that an ambulance was needed but I didn't know that we also needed Search and Rescue. Paramedics cannot go far from the ambulance, so unless you can see the road then Search and Rescue must be called to carry the victim. The 911 Operator will forward information to the SAR Coordination Centre, but it is helpful if a second phone number can be given to 911 so SAR can contact the group directly.

Before calling 911, we needed to know where we were and the closest access to our location. Being a technical group, several members were carrying smart phones or hand-held GPS units so we knew our location. Interestingly, different devices gave slightly different GPS coordinates which means that the location will get help close to but maybe not to your exact location. Of course, knowing the coordinates doesn't indicate the best route to the location. We directed the ambulance to a trailhead along the road that was a bit further away but the trail wasn't as steep.

Unless the trail is well marked like the Channel Ridge Trails, someone needs to meet the ambulance and lead SAR to the site. Four of us walked the trail back to the road. None of the SAR volunteers who responded had been on the particular trail we were on. We tried to mark forks in the trail with piles of brush, but it would have been better to hang long flags on trails followed or across trails not taken. You want them not to look like the myriad other pieces of flagging tape along the way and should be picked up afterwards.

The 911 operator advised us not give the patient anything to eat or drink, as a precaution in case the injury requires surgery. A full bladder is also not recommended when being carried on a stretcher! Most of us don't like being the centre of attention or cause inconvenience to others, so it's a good idea to move the rest of the group away from the patient.

It's not like the old MASH episodes, with two people running along the trail carrying the stretcher. It takes 6 people to carry a stretcher. Since SAR volunteers came from all over the island and would take time to arrive some of our members helped with the carry. As each volunteer arrived, the SAR members relieved those carrying.

It was surprisingly hard to carry someone on uneven terrain, especially since so many of our trails are not much more than deer paths. We had nine people to rotate carrying our light victim, and everyone was tired when we finally reached the waiting ambulance on the road. What took 15 minutes to quickly walk, took 75 minutes to carry.

Thanks to the efforts of the Search and Rescue Volunteers, BC Ambulance Service and members of our club, our friend was able to get to the hospital quickly. She was whisked away in the ambulance to Lady Minto where she was treated for a broken fibula and is now resting at home. Those of us who participated learned a few things to consider should we ever be in a similar situation. We wish her a speedy recovery and hope to see her on the trails again in the future.

## Web Spots

John Neville recently passed on a copy of the Nature Canada electronic newsletter. It was particularly interesting because notices on two topics of immediate relevance to this issue of the Oystercatcher.

### Standing up for Nature in the Salish Sea

Nature Canada and BC Nature are standing up for nature as the National Energy Board (NEB) hearings on the TransMountain pipeline and tanker project draw nearer.

<http://naturecanada.ca/news/blog/standing-up-for-nature-in-the-salish-sea/>

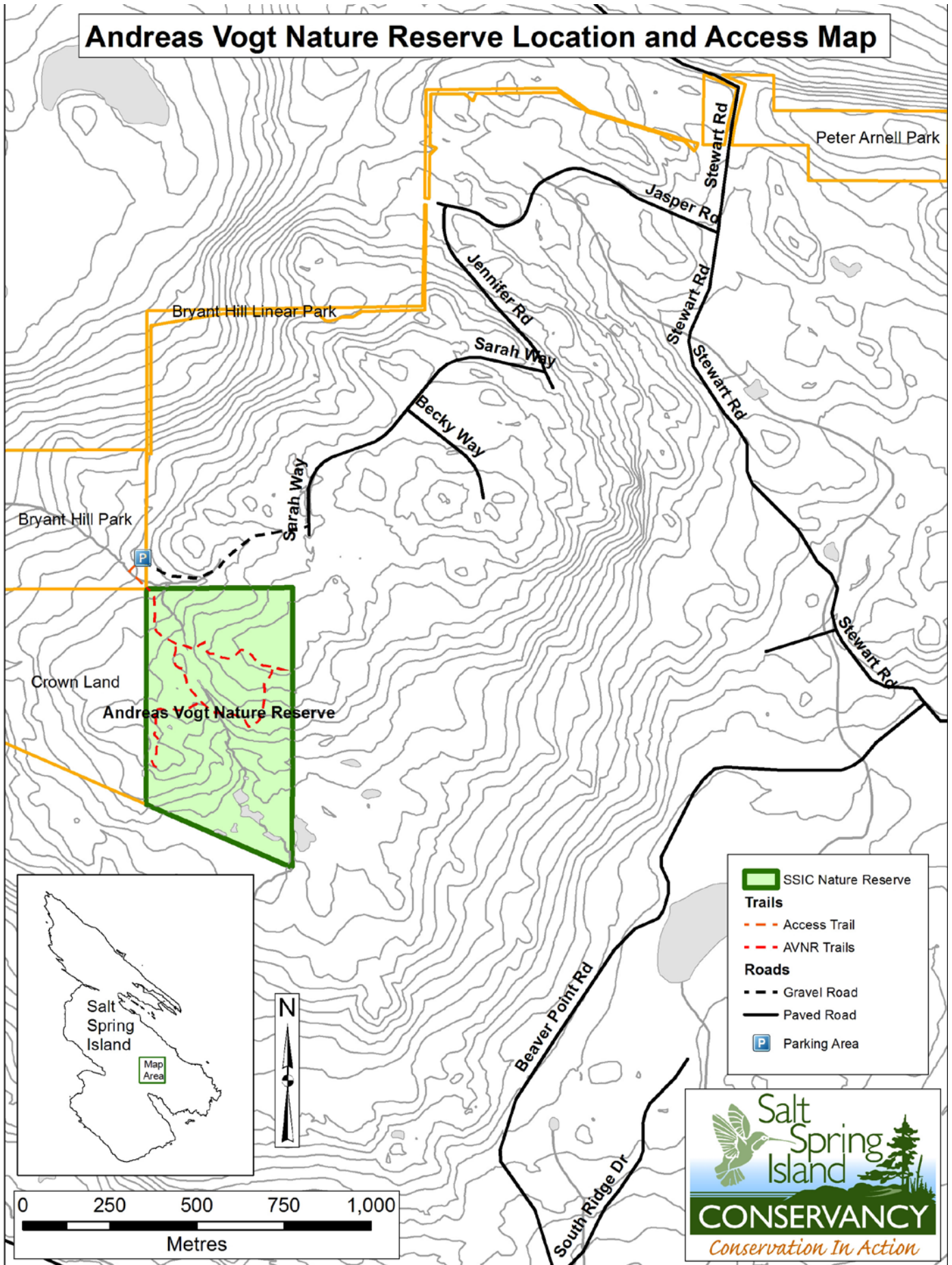
### Myotis Bat Emergency Listing

White-nose syndrome has killed up to 90% of some regions' bat populations throughout northeastern North America.

<http://naturecanada.ca/news/blog/myotis-bat-emergency-listing/>



# Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve Location and Access Map



# Salt Spring Nature Reserves Part 3

## Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve

Ashley Hilliard

This is the third in an occasional column describing the nature reserves that the Salt Spring Island Conservancy has acquired and established for the benefit of the island over the last 20 years. These reserves are a tremendous achievement and a testament to the hard work of the Conservancy's volunteers and staff as well as the generosity of the landowners and many donors who contributed to each and every reserve.

In this article, I'd like to take you on a walk through the Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve, one of my favourite places on the island. It is a gem. I know many others feel the same way about the "AVNR". However, I am sometimes surprised that the reserve is not better known. Perhaps this is because it takes a little hunting to find, and is accessed by a single trail in and out.

The reserve is located right in the middle of Salt Spring on Bryant Hill. To visit, take Stewart Road and turn onto Jasper Way. As you climb, on a clear day, you will enjoy fine views towards Mt Baker. Jasper turns into Jennifer, which turns into Sarah Way, passing Becky Way on your left (all named after the daughters of the subdivision's developer, I believe). At the end of Sarah Way, where the pavement ends, turn right onto a gravel drive, indicated by a sign for Bryant Hill Park and AVNR, and park at the end. The trailhead is on the south side of the turnaround. There is a helpful sign erected by our Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) for Bryant Hill Park, as this is the access point for trails in both the park and the nature reserve.

The map accompanying this article shows the location of the reserve. This map and a more detailed trail map are available on the Conservancy's website: <http://saltspringconservancy.ca/wp/what-we-do/managing-nature-reserves/andreas-vogt/>.

If you want a longer hike, you can access AVNR and Bryant Hill Park on foot from Peter Arnell Park (which straddles Stewart Road) via a connecting trail. Here's a link to maps on the CRD's website: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trails/find-park-trail/bryant-hill>. Nevertheless, be warned that the Peter Arnell connecting trail is steep in places and suitable for strong hikers only.

On the other hand, the AVNR trails are moderate and suitable for almost everyone, including families. The main loop trail is approximately 1.5 km in length and takes about one hour to complete. However, the reserve invites you to tarry and perhaps enjoy a picnic while admiring the views to the south and west. It is a great place to take visitors to the island. Even Fido is welcome – on a leash please, so as not to disturb the wildlife.

The reserve encompasses 29.7 hectares (73.5 acres), generously donated to the Conservancy in May 2003 by Oda Nowrath and Cordula Vogt. It is managed by the Conservancy and protected by a conservation covenant held by Islands Trust Fund and the Land Conservancy of BC. The land was last logged in the 1980s and has a colourful history. It was originally known as "Bryant's Mountain" and later as "Goat Hill", the home of Colonel Jasper Bryant and his wife Dr. Meta Elliot. Their thriving cheese making endeavour had a ready market in Victoria – pioneers of our current fine Salt Spring cheesemakers.

The reserve features several ecosystems. The trail starts up a moist north-facing gully with ferns and cedars. Near the trailhead is an interpretive kiosk. As you climb, you notice a definite drying of the landscape, with Douglas firs and Garry oaks appearing. The reserve features some fine



Interpretive kiosk at Andreas-Vogt Nature Reserve. Photo by Ashley Hilliard.





*Protected enclosure in Nature Preserve. Photo by Ashley Hilliard.*



*Close up of sign on enclosure. Photo by Ashley Hilliard.*

Garry oak specimens and is one of the best places on Salt Spring to see these unusual trees.

At the first fork, I suggest you keep left and continue to the top of the ridge. When the Conservancy first acquired the reserve, this area was covered in broom. We have put a lot of effort into removing broom and other invasive species. The Douglas firs have certainly grown in and are taking away some of the views (but you get great vistas further along the trail).

In this area, you will notice cages to protect young Garry oaks from browsing deer and rabbits. We have also erected a larger enclosure that you pass on the trail, with the aim of encouraging the regrowth of wildflowers. The AVNR is a featured reserve for our scientific and educational work, and is a favourite destination for our Stewards-in-Training schools program: <http://saltspringconservancy.ca/wp/what-we-do/stewards-in-training/>.

After the views and the Garry oaks, the trail bends west. At a marked junction, a spur trail leads west to another viewpoint. From this spur trail, you can also access the adjoining Crown land, which itself abuts Bryant Hill Park. As with many of our reserves, part of the value of the AVNR lies in its connectivity with other protected areas. The south part of the reserve features some wetlands, but is not accessible by trail. We ask that visitors stay on the marked trails, so that the rest of the reserve can fulfill its function as a nature sanctuary.

While the AVNR is easily explored on your own, I suggest that, unless you are an adventurous hiker, the best way to experience the surrounding Crown land and Bryant Hill trails is

on one of the scheduled Trail and Nature Club hikes in this area.

The AVNR is an excellent example of the generosity of landowners who wish to protect land on Salt Spring. It demonstrates how important it is for the island to have a local land Conservancy to help. I invite you to join the Conservancy, if you are not already a member. Happy hiking!

## **Bat Watch: The Salt Spring Community Bat Program**

*Peter Ommundsen*

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy is surveying local bat populations, sampling DNA from bat droppings, protecting bat habitat, and encouraging bat-friendly exclusions from buildings if eviction is necessary. Conservancy staff would love to hear from anyone who encounters an active bat roost -- a location where bats rest and sleep. Roosts are commonly found in hollow trees, snags, attics, barns, outbuildings, rock crevices, and caves. Some bat roosts may contain hundreds of bats. The Salt Spring Community Bat Program is part of a province-wide initiative to monitor bat populations, encourage stewardship, and enhance habitat. Several Salt Spring species are considered rare or threatened.

### **Natural History of Salt Spring Bats**

Valuable components of the environment, bats eat insects, including mosquitoes and agricultural pests. A single bat may consume 1000 or more small insects per hour, and bats have been shown to reduce crop damage. The best place to watch Salt Spring bats is at one of the lakes just after dark, as lakes are very productive of insects. Many hundreds of bats frequently pass by per night. Bats fly using the webbing between their large fingers and capture insects in the webbing that extends between the tail, legs, and hands. Bats rest during the

day but bat roosts can be identified in daylight by the sound of bats chattering and by the presence of droppings.

Bats are mammals, and they can generate body heat, but they are tiny, many weighing less than a loonie, and thus are prone to heat loss and dehydration. Consequently, they require an abundance of food energy, access to clean water, and roosts of an acceptable temperature and humidity. Large groups of females may congregate in summer maternity roosts to give birth and nurse their young, and the clustering of bats provides insulation against heat loss. Many bats have a low reproductive rate compared to other small mammals, so bat populations may struggle to recover from disease and disturbance.

In winter, bats migrate to hibernation sites and lower their body temperatures to conserve energy, although some Salt Spring bats forage during warm winter evenings. If a hibernating colony is disturbed, the bats must raise their body temperatures to relocate, and will starve due to lack of winter food. The body temperature of a hibernating bat in very cold weather can fall below zero degrees Celsius, with a heart rate of ten or less per minute.

Bats navigate in the dark using echoes from their high-pitched voices and use their large ears to detect the sounds of insects. The bat brain contains “delay-tuned” cells that sense the interval between voice and echo. Salt Spring Conservancy personnel use electronic bat detectors to monitor local bats and to identify prime bat habitat.



*Townsend's big-eared bat. Photo by Craig Stihler.*

## Bat Protection

There are ten species of bats on Salt Spring, two of which are designated “of special concern” -- Keen’s myotis and the Townsend’s big-eared bat. The little brown myotis is listed as “endangered” by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Protection of bats involves conservation of roost sites and insect habitat.

Bat roosts should not be disturbed, and conservation of large old trees and snags can enhance bat habitat. If bats must be removed from a building, the eviction should occur after the young are mobile. Commercially available plastic cones allow exit but not entry. Preferably, the building should be sealed only when the bats have left for the winter. A bat house should be provided for returning bats. The local pest control company is knowledgeable regarding bat exclusion.

### **Got Bats**

Contact us at: Salt Spring Island Conservancy  
(250) 538-0318  
[info@saltspringconservancy.ca](mailto:info@saltspringconservancy.ca)

Bat house plans are available on the Internet but should conform to the latest guidelines of Bat Conservation International (BCI). Bat houses are most likely to be occupied if they are large, multi-chambered, well-caulked to retain heat, painted black, and placed where they receive maximum sun exposure, preferably at least ten hours per day. An adequately sized BCI

multi-chamber maternity bat house measures about 60 x 60 x 12 cm. Bat houses should be placed high (at least 3.65 m) on buildings or on poles or trees without obstructing branches. Predator guards may enhance bat survival. The conservancy may be able to assist in acquiring bat houses.

Protection of lakes, streams, forests, and un-mowed meadows will conserve insect habitat and provide foraging areas for bats, and gardeners can plant flowers that attract night insects. Insecticides and free-roaming cats are a threat to bats.

Bats are currently also under threat from a fungus that causes “white-nose syndrome” causing excessive



energy use, chronic acidosis, and elevated potassium levels. This disease is migrating west, having killed millions of eastern bats. People who explore caves should adhere to the National White Nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol. Dead bats should be reported to the conservancy but not handled.

## Hawaii the Big Island, Birds, Botany and Volcanoes

*Nieke Visser*

### Introduction

This series of articles relates our experiences of three, month-long trips to the Big Island. Each year we stayed in a different area, but we managed to cover most if not the entire island and learned to appreciate its diverse plant and bird life as well as its volcanic activity. We explored on our own, set our own pace and conducted much research. This article deals with some of the indigenous birds, the second on indigenous plants, the third on the volcanoes, and in the fourth I would like to say a few things about the species that were introduced when humankind set foot on the island.

First a few words on its climate. This island is the most southern of the archipelago, and lies within the tropics. Still, the surrounding Pacific Ocean, and its mountainous terrain provide a cooling effect in most places. Hawaii Island has several volcanoes. Mauna Loa (still active) and Mauna Kea (dormant) are both over 4000 m high and dominate the climate and the island's different habitats. Winds are mainly from the east and bring rain to the Hamakua and Puna coast. The leeward (west) side is dry, and the two high volcanoes create their own climate. The valley between these two giants is called the Saddle, recently made accessible by an upgraded asphalt road. The Saddle Road connects the capital city of Hilo with the Kona/Kohala Coast by climbing a 2000 m pass that provides access to excellent birding spots and spectacular hiking trails.

Due to its isolated position in the Pacific, the Hawaii islands could have been as special as the Galapagos: an archipelago of evolution. Unfortunately, with the arrival of humans its fate turned to an archipelago of extinction. Because of its isolated position in the Pacific, birds were the ones to colonize the islands initially;

the only mammal that made to Hawaii was the bat. The arrival of humans about 1000 years ago changed the conditions that fostered the original diversity of life. The first Hawaiians brought with them birds, animals, and seeds that they used for food production on the Pacific islands where they came from. Land was cleared to plant crops and build communities. First, the lowland habitat changed as some imported plants and animals thrived in their new environment. Introduced pigs destroyed the understory of fern trees and ohia trees. The muddy wallows became breeding grounds for mosquitoes that transmitted avian



Map of the Big Island, Hawaii.



Kahili Ginger



Apapane, male Size 13 cm





malaria and avian pox to the native birds. Later, the arrival of western colonialists aggravated this process. For example, mongoose (introduced to catch rats, unfortunately rats are nocturnal animals and mongoose not), cats, and rats eat native birds and their eggs, The Myrica faya (introduced by the Portuguese who used the fruit to make wine) and kahili ginger (introduced from India as a ornamental plant) displaced vast areas of native Hawaiian forests. Armies of naturalists work each year to try to get upper hand in the fight against these and other invaders. Each year we noticed another stretch of mountain slope being stripped of the ginger in the National Park. However, birds feed on its seed and thus disperse the invaders further and further. Not only loss of habitat contributed to the

extinction of many plants and birds. Introduction of foreign species pushed most of the indigenous species over the brink. In addition, many species were hunted to extinction for ornamental feathers, food, or both. The only land mammal to ever reach Hawaii, the Hawaiian bat, is also red-listed.

### Indigenous Birds

The first year we stayed in the Puna District south of Hilo, right in the rain belt and heavy tropical vegetation. And rain it did! The showers were short, sometimes only a couple of minutes, but produced a lot of precipitation. This location was by far the best to gain easy access to all but the far north of the island. The book we consulted to find the best birding location proved invaluable<sup>1</sup>. Curious to see the indigenous birds of Hawaii (or what is left of them), we visited most recommended spots and were not disappointed. The birding location closest to where we were staying was the National Park. Remarkably, we found abundant apapane and amakihi near very busy tourist destinations such as near the Lava Tubes. Both are honeycreepers. The apapane feeds almost exclusively on the flowers of the ohia tree. The amakihi is less fussy and feeds on a variety of flowers and sometimes on bark. The one in the picture on the right is considering the fruits of the mamane tree. The i'iwi is another honeycreeper, but this one is not as easily spotted as the other two. One birding spot mentioned by Rick Soehren<sup>1</sup> is Kipuka 21 along the Saddle Road. Located near mile 21, it offers an excellent birding spot because you can look down on the canopy rather than looking up as is the case at most locations. We often sat on a rock for a while to watch apapane, amakihi, and i'iwi feed on the ohia flowers. By the way, a Kipuka is an "island" of vegetation (usually native) spared by a lava flow. Because of the high concentration of native plants and trees, it attracts birds that traditionally feed on this kind of vegetation. Kipukas primarily exist at higher elevations, although some can be found at lower elevations in the Ka'u district, such as Manuka and Kipahoe Natural Area Reserves. The former has a three mile trail allowing for bird watching, but the latter is not accessible.



Another native bird that we were lucky to spot is the elepaio. This is a small flycatcher of the understory in Kipuka Puauulu or "Bird Park" for those who cannot wrap their tongue around the Hawaiian names. It is a hard bird to photograph because it is always in the shade, flitting from branch to branch. Luckily, he is quite vocal and easy to spot. There is a wide variety of subspecies. The one in the picture is the Volcano variety.

Also found below the high canopy is the oma'o, a native Hawaiian thrush, 18 cm in size, and also frequently seen and heard in the "Bird Park". It dwells normally in undisturbed forests at higher elevations. There is evidence that the oma'o has developed partial resistance to, or at least tolerance for, current strains of avian poxvirus and malaria. This may account for this species' continued persistence where other species have disappeared. Despite this suspected tolerance, the oma'o still fares best above 1500 m where disease-carrying mosquitoes are scarce.

Another bird that suffered from human induced loss of habitat is the palila. This finchlike honeycreeper teeters on the brink of extinction. Found only in mamane and mamane-naio forests, often in small flocks, it feeds primarily on green mamane pods. Its range is about half the circumference of Mauna Kea on the western leeward slope. Pu'u La'au Reserve offers the best chance to see this bird, but there is a catch.

The reserve is grassy woodland dominated by mamane trees located on the west slopes of Mauna Kea. Until recently this area was also home to large numbers of introduced mouflon sheep and feral goats that had proliferated by feeding on the mamane tree which destroys the palila's habitat. Environmentalists went to court to force the state to remove the animals from the area so that the palila would not starve to extinction. In response, the state allowed unrestricted hunting in the area. Since then, the grazers' populations have dropped to very low levels of game animals. Therefore, the court action resulted in hard feelings between some birders and some hunters.

Keeping this ongoing dispute in mind, we set out one fine day to visit this area hoping to find some Palilas. However, we did not realize it was American Thanksgiving Day. At the gate of Pu'u La'au a "hunters sign in" kiosk failed to sound alarm bells as well. We would not have been concerned anyway, because who would imagine that one goes hunting on such a family oriented holiday? Well, we soon woke up: hunters everywhere although we could not see anything worth shooting at. Driving further into the reserve, we parked the car at a hunting lodge. According to the book<sup>1</sup> we now were in palila territory and we started walking in the indicated direction. We noticed lots of birds, such as house finches, Japanese white eyes, and other "imports" but no palila. Mamane trees abundant, flowering and fruit bearing, all the conditions were right apart from the occasional rifle salvos. After some distance walking we noticed a large flock of amakihi: at least a bonus! However, the palila did not show itself. After an hour or so, a storm started brewing. Not wanting to risk a downpour, we returned to the car, dodging the hunters again.

The nene, or Hawaiian Goose, is another indigenous endangered bird that was hunted to brink of extinction by the 1950's. Its Hawaiian name reflects its soft, almost shy sounding, call. Although it does not even look remotely similar to the Canada goose, rumours have it that it descends from its North American cousins that were blown over to Hawaii when caught in a storm during their annual migration. However, no one can testify to that story since there were no people living on Hawaii at the time this allegedly happened. The nene has taken on a terrestrial lifestyle. It does not fly long distances as other geese do but mainly stays on the ground where it feeds on berries. The nene has lost most of its foot webbing because of its terrestrial lifestyle. A successful captivity propagation program has brought the nene back to reasonable proportions on the Big Island





as well as on some other islands. They can be found in many places in the national park and its surroundings.

The Hawaiian hawk or ‘Io once lived throughout the archipelago, but today it only resides on the Big Island. It is a small (46 cm) dimorphic raptor and can be seen soaring over pastures, lava flows and forests. Again, its Hawaiian name reflects its call: “eeeeoooo”. It feeds mostly on insects, rodents, and other birds. The one in the picture was our almost daily companion in 2013, when our house overlooked a vast pasture-like, former sugar cane plantation facing the ocean. He (or she) would sit on the branch watching for food parading below in the fields or flying by.



Next issue I will talk about the Hawaiian indigenous plants and trees and their uses.

*1 Rick Soehren: Birdwatcher's Guide to Hawai'i; University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996.*



*Hikers at Cape Keppie, Feb 2015. Photo by Lynn Thompson*



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