



David Denning photo

# Oystercatcher

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club  
Newsletter  
Winter 2015



*This golden eagle was a star attraction at the October 27 walk to the Pacific North West Raptor Centre. The walkers were entertained with a show of these magnificent working birds. Photo by Lorrie Storr.*

## Index

President's Corner	1
Calendar of Events	2
The Travelling Birder	3
Trail Coordinator Report	4
Christmas Bird Count 2015	5
Citizen Science Shoreline Project	6
Hawaii, The Big Island, Part 4	6
Alvin Indridson Nature Resere	8

## President's Corner

*Nieke Visser*

Fall brought welcome rain after a hard time with water shortages but inclement weather forced us to cancel the November 14 outings.

Our 2015-16 season opened with the Blackberry festival on September 15. According to those who were there, it was rather poorly attended in spite of the fact that it was moved to a sunnier spot in Ruckle Park. Some of the executive members suggested a different focus (other than blackberries) as the season's opening event. If you have an idea, let us know.

Kees and I missed the blackberry fest since we were away for 3½ weeks in September touring and visiting naturalists clubs in northern BC. Each of us gave seven presentations and we were shown projects that kept the various naturalists clubs busy. Nature seems exuberant in that part of BC: many salmon runs and dip-netting fishermen in the Chilcotin and other rivers. Bears everywhere took advantage of the salmon bounty, except where the tourist offices claimed they would be. We enjoyed glaciers stretching in front of us as far as the eye could see, hundreds of sandhill cranes migrating, lava beds covered in lichen and moss, rushing waterfalls, eagles squabbling over salmon carcasses and western toads everywhere. Nor can we forget the stunning totem poles of the Nass Valley and the Hazeltons.

One of the highlights of our tour was an invitation to the Nechako White Sturgeon Hatchery. The white sturgeon (genetically different from its Fraser River cousin) was teetering on the brink of extinction. Since the construction of the Kenney Dam in the Nechako River (about 100 km south of Vanderhoof) in the 1950's, the spring flush floods ceased and the sturgeon's spawning gravel beds were covered with silt. The eggs were

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](mailto:gafrad@shaw.ca))

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

washed away by the moving water without being held down by the gravel. The hatchery opened about 2 years ago and they have now released the first young sturgeons. If you like to know more about this unique hatchery, go to [www.nechakowhitesturgeon.com](http://www.nechakowhitesturgeon.com). In the last BC Nature magazine, June Woods published an article about the first release of young sturgeons born at this hatchery.

One project our SSTNC Executive initiated is to expand the purple martin population on Salt Spring Island. The largest of the swallows, they are making a grand come-back on the other Gulf Islands and at three locations here on Salt Spring. I received extensive documentation from Charlene Lee, Director of the Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society on expanding the purple martin population here. She briefed me on existing locations and provided tips and a nest box construction manual. Interest in this project has been expressed by David Denning, Sheryl Taylor-Munro, and myself on the executive and, Peter McAllister, Tony McLeod, Ren Ferguson, and Ken Sutherland who put up the boxes on Hamilton Beach along Isabella Point Road/ Fulford Harbour. Peter is offering the services of his boat to install the boxes one they are built. Next action is to get together and draw up a plan. If you like to join this team, please contact Peter (250-537 9225) or myself (250-537-5443).

On November 18, I attended a conference call for BC Nature's Vancouver Island Region clubs. We discussed the lack of the liability insurance for those who use boats, kayaks or canoes to carry out projects such as bird counts and eelgrass surveys. This issue has been brought to the attention of BC Nature's Executive and hopefully a solution will be found. The next Conference and AGM will be in Comox/ Courtney from May 12 to 15, 2016.

On Dec 8 the SSTNC is organizing the annual Christmas lunch. Since Calvin's has ceased to exist we decided to move to the Lion's Hall and have Penny serve us one of her wonderful meals. It will be buffet style and all is included. As you well know, the cost of food has gone up over the past few years and we have to charge \$30 per person. Penny catered to us during the BCN Conference and everyone was very happy with what she offered at that time. There will be a short outing before lunch. The hall opens at 11:30 am and we are asking some of you who do not plan to go out with one of the groups to come down and help set up. Food will be ready at 12:30 pm, so there will be time to socialize. Wine, beer and juice, as well as coffee and tea are served as well and perhaps I can convince someone to make a punch. Lynn Thompson agreed to enliven the Christmas lunch with a slide show: Hiking Salt Spring's Mountains. We hope to see you then.

On Thursday January 28, 2016, we will hold our AGM in the Lion's Hall, as last year. The club will offer a free lunch with coffee and tea. Details will be posted on the website and in the Driftwood.

This is my last contribution to the Oystercatcher as president. In January at the AGM I will step down as I will have surgery next year. Linda Quiring has come forward to take over from me for

## Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, December 8, 2015**

### **Christmas Luncheon**

Christmas Luncheon at the Lions Club. Hall opens at 11:30 for set-up. Pre-lunch social at 11:45 with cash bar (wine, beer, and juice). Lunch will be served at 12:30. Enjoy a delicious lunch by Penny's Pantry (chicken amerato, potatoes, veggies, salad, buns, dessert, tea/coffee). Slide show by Lynn Thompson. Tickets \$30 (cash or cheque only) at Salt Spring Soapworks

**Thursday January 28, 2016**

### **Where Have All The Sea Stars Gone?**

SSTNC AGM Meeting at Lions' Hall at 12pm (Doors open at 11:30 am). Lunch will be provided and David Denning, coordinator for our Shoreline Survey Project, will make a presentation immediately after the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club AGM) at 1:30 pm

Over the last two years, sea stars (or starfish) have almost disappeared from local beaches. The rapid decline in these colourful and symbolic intertidal species raises many questions: What caused it? How widespread is the problem? Will they recover? Many shore-walkers have asked: "I've seen sea stars in some locations – does this mean they are coming back?" BC is the 'sea star capital of the world'! With colourful and intriguing photographs, this talk will illustrate the fascinating biology of sea stars. In addition to looking at the causes and consequences of sea star decline, David will talk about new aspects of the Shoreline Survey Project that will involve volunteer citizen science monitoring recovery sea star populations (hopefully they will recover!) and water character in Ganges Harbour.

which I am very grateful. I like to thank John Heddle for tenaciously searching out a replacement. I will still be around, as long as I can, but in a very low key fashion. Thanks to everyone who supported my projects over the past two years, in particular the BCN Conference last May. I could not have done it without your commitments.

Happy trails!

## The Travelling Birder - Iguazu Falls, Argentina

### *Murray Coates*

In spring of 2011, my Habitat build was in Asuncion, Paraguay. This was a first trip to South America for me and some team members, so three of us went early and visited other locations in Argentina and Uruguay. Birding wasn't a priority for my fellow travellers, but I did manage a bit of time looking for birds.

After a few days on the coast near Montevideo and Buenos Aires, we flew across the continent to Iguazu Falls. From the plane, we readily observed the widespread rain forest devastation. These areas are being replanted with fast growing pine species "forests" from the southern USA that some describe as green deserts.

Iguazu Falls, the Niagara of South America, is located where Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay come together. Getting a visa for Brazil is not easy or cheap for Canadians, so we opted to stay in Argentina. After Iguazu, we had to get to Paraguay without going through Brazil - more about this later.

There were lots of accommodation options but we chose the Secret Garden B and B because of numerous positive ratings on Trip Advisor. After staying there, we all agreed the high ratings were well deserved. This place is also famous for its daily complimentary Caipirihina happy hour.



*Iguazu Falls photograph by Martin St-Amant.*

Our gracious host, John Fernandes, was a great tour arranger. Through him, two of us arranged to go on an early morning bird walk with Daniel Somay who is a local bird guide. We arrived at 0530 at the National Park site just as a small flock of toco toucans flew into the trees. Other than the scarlet macaws, these are the most impressive and unique of all South American birds. In flight, the beak is startling and prominent.

Our birding tour lasted most of the morning. Daniel was an excellent guide helping us identify 33 birds. Our list for the morning included:

white tailed kite	yellow headed caracara
limpkin	southern lapwing
picui ground dove	ruddy ground dove
scaly headed parrot	blue winged parrotlet
ashy tailed swift	blond crested woodpecker
yellow fronted woodpecker	rufous henero
spot backed antshrike	olivaceous wood creeper
tropical kingbird	great kiskadee
social flycatcher	boat billed flycatcher
blue manakin	plush crested jay
grey breasted martin	green headed tanager
red rumped cacique	saffron yellowfinch
chopi blackbird	yellow bellied elaena



*Toco Toucan - from Wikipedia.*



*Southern Lapwing - from Wikipedia.*

chalk browed mockingbird    white bearded mankin  
 bananaquit                    shiny cowbird  
 eared dove                    red crested finch  
 golden crowned warbler

After we finished the bird walk, our guide took us back to the front gate of the park so we could catch the trolley bus to view the falls. This is one of the world's most impressive waterfalls. It is 80 meters high and 2700 meters in diameter. As opposed to Niagara Falls, it comprises many cascades which produce vast sprays of water. Through a series of stairs and boardwalks, people can get quite close to the falling water. The surrounding area is a sub-tropical rain forest with over 2000 species of plants as well as lots of birds and mammals. After a full day we returned to Iguazu and the beckoning happy hour.

The next day we had to navigate our way to Asuncion in Paraguay without passing through Brazil. This requires a river crossing but the only bridge from Argentina goes to Brazil before entering Paraguay. The alternative is a ferry which goes up the river and lands directly in Paraguay. However there is not really anything on shore at the Paraguay ferry landing so the challenge is to get to the nearby town's bus depot. Our capable host came to the rescue and engaged an off duty policeman to drive us on to the ferry and take us to the bus depot. With no hitches we arrived in Asuncion later that afternoon.

If anyone is going to Iguazu, here is the link for the bed and breakfast. <http://secretgardeniguazu.com/>

## Trail Coordinator Report

### Herb Otto

If you have hiked Mt. Maxwell over the summer and the last few months, you will have seen signage that the club installed earlier this year in cooperation with BC Parks. This was the first phase of a project to provide trail signage in all the BC Parks on Salt Spring Island including Burgoyne Bay, Mt. Erskine and Ruckle Parks. Next on our agenda is to install signage on Mt. Erskine and work towards signage on the south side of Burgoyne Bay.

Mt. Erskine presents some challenges that we are working to resolve. We are working with the Salt Spring Conservancy on the Toynbee Road access and the Island Trust Fund on the Collins Road access to develop signage options. In addition, Mt. Erskine trails have a number of severely eroded sections, necessitating some scouting of alternative routes in cooperation with BC Parks. Once these are resolved and the trail relocations completed, we will be able to proceed with the signage.

The south side of Burgoyne Bay has some established trails, but to prepare signage that will have lasting utility, some trails will need improvement and some loops realigned to avoid private property. These have been investigated and flagged so that BC Parks can verify if this work can proceed.

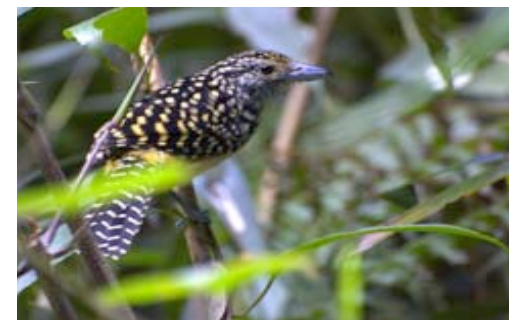
We have a grant of \$1,000 from BC Parks for signage on Mt. Erskine and our costs on Burgoyne Bay will also be covered by BC Parks.



*Boat Billed Flycatcher (Dario Sanches derivative work). Flycatchers are common birds throughout Central and South America. However I haven't seen a lot of the boat billed version. The southern lapwing is another species we found on the grounds near the park gate. Although considered to be a wader, we saw several on the park lawns.*



*Birds in South America are generally much more colourful with lots of blues and reds. The blue manakin (Dario Sanches derivative work) was a great find for even the non birders in our group.*



*Our guide used his ipod and a belt speaker to call in birds by playing an owl call. It was quite effective and the spot backed antshrike (Dario Sanches derivative work) was one bird that made itself visible after the call.*

We very much appreciated all their support and help. There will be a great need for volunteers once we have the green light on the trail work and when the signage needs to be prepared and installed – so stay tuned.

## Christmas Bird Count 2015

*Nieke Visser*

The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is one of the most longstanding citizen science projects that we can participate in. The CBC started in 1900 by Frank Chapman, an ornithologist with the American Museum of Natural History. Concerned with declining bird populations, he organized the “Christmas Bird Census”. He hoped to help shift the tide from a hunting competition called “Side Hunt” where people competed to kill the most birds and other animals, to a conservation-oriented activity instead. The event in each surveyed location was called a ‘count’ and the challenge was to note as many birds as they could find on Christmas Day. What started with 25 counts by 27 people, from Ontario to California has grown to more than 2,200 counts with over 63,000 counters all the way from the Arctic in North America to the tip of South America!



*Nigel Denyer and Charles Kahn checking out trail possibilities in Burgoyne Bay Park*

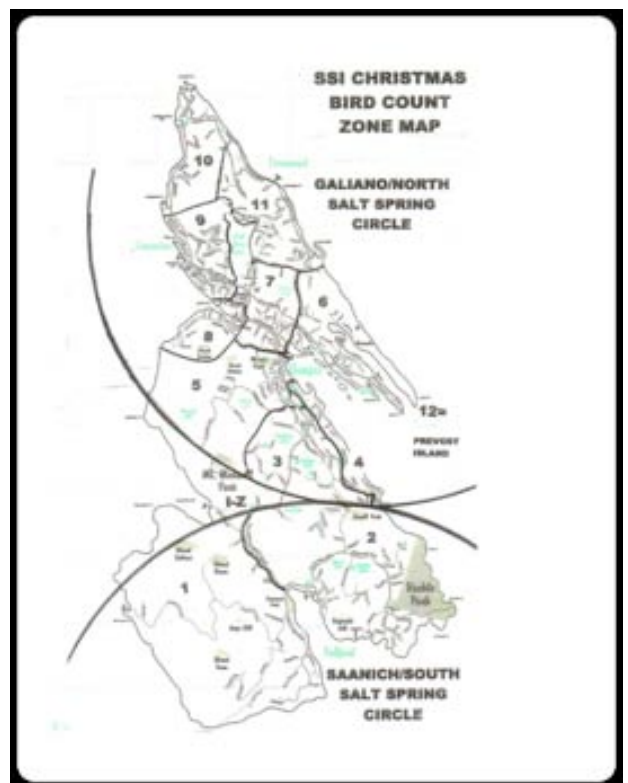


*Fox sparrow photo by David Denning.*

The CBC has far-reaching benefits. Participants enjoy getting outdoors and watching our winter birds with like-minded people and their information is used in many important ways. The data on their own, as well as merged with other surveys, help researchers monitor the status of bird populations and patterns. This in turn leads to understanding how factors like weather, and diseases influence bird migration and survival. Additionally, reports using this information have helped identify threats to both birds and their habitat. This has led to adding birds to the Species at Risk Act lists. Conservation efforts for many bird species owe thanks to these Citizen Scientist activities.

Presently counts are performed on one day at Christmas time and are typically organized by local groups such as field naturalist clubs where the area in question (a 24 km diameter circle) is divided up, although individual efforts are also welcome. At the end of the day, lists are given to local organizers to submit for analysis.

Salt Spring Island is divided into two circles (see map): the north end is reporting to an area organizer on Galiano while the south end is reporting to the area organizer in Saanich. Salt Spring is subdivided into 12 zones, each with a count coordinator (see map). Zone 12 is Prevost Island which also reports to Galiano circle and the little area between the two circles marked I-Z (Burgoyne Bay area and part of Maxwell) report to the organizer of the circle west of SSI. We also keep track of our island counts as well. To date, we have a 25 year history and we like to keep adding to existing data. Our coordinator is Tim Marchant. If you are willing to participate this year and you do not know who your zone coordinator is, please contact Tim ([tim@timmarchant.com](mailto:tim@timmarchant.com)) who will point you in the right direction. No matter what your age, expertise or abilities are,



*Barrows golden-eye photo by David Denning*



everyone is welcome! If you are a novice who would like to give it a try you can be assigned to a more experienced birder.

Recently Tim let me know that a zone coordinator is needed for zone 7 to replace Gil and Fran Schultz who are moving off island. They dili-



*Varied thrush photo by David Denning.*

gently took care of zone 7 for several years as well as of the whole island before that. We like to thank them for all their efforts and contributions and wish them good luck in their new environment.

## **Citizen Science Shoreline Project Update**

*David Denning, SSTNC Shoreline Survey Project Coordinator*

The SSTNC Shoreline Survey Project has been on a bit of a hold in recent months — it's taken second fiddle to: first, the highly demanding organizational tasks of the BC Nature Conference in May; then to the need to recover from that Conference; and finally to the normal summer hiatus for nature, recreation, and gardening.

The good news for aspiring volunteer citizen scientists – we're starting to roll again. We look forward to some interesting and fun science, shore walking, and education. In fact, this coming spring season promises to provide plenty of all three, and I hope plenty of volunteers get involved.

In our starting year, 2014, we began studies of sea star populations as indicators of ecological health along the shores of Ganges Harbour. And then, an epidemic pulled the rug right out from under our shore-walking feet. Sea star wasting disease decimated both intertidal and below the tideline populations. So this coming year, in coordination with University research projects, our shoreline survey work will involve monitoring sea star recovery (we hope) along our shores. Stay tune in the early spring for news on training and shoreline walking sessions.

Another exciting new project will involve starting water-quality studies in Ganges Harbour. Using instruments that we are about to acquire, volunteers will take frequent readings of dissolved oxygen, salinity, and temperature at different depths of the water off the Coast Guard dock. This data will be combined with other measurements and plankton studies to prepare a better picture of the harbour's ecological health and a baseline to consider in development or cleanup projects. We plan, if our testing phase goes well, to kick off the volunteer training and regular data collecting with announcements at the SSTNC AGM on January. See you there.



Once again this winter we will be doing some winter forage fish egg laying studies on a couple of island beaches. If you would like to help with these beach surveys (it involves taking systematic sand samples on the beach to be examined for fish eggs and developing embryos) please send me an email at [ddenning@telus.net](mailto:ddenning@telus.net).

## **Hawaii, the Big Island; Birds, Botany and Geology**

*Nieke Visser*

### **Plants and Their Uses, Part 2**

I promised you volcanic activity in the episode, but I found more interesting plants in my photo collection so I decided to do another botany issue.

The first selection (Fig. 1) is the 'ie'ie, (*Freycinetia arborea*), that we found in the Manuka Nature Reserve<sup>1</sup>. The 'ie'ie is a densely branched, brittle, woody climber that is endemic to Pacific Islands such as the Marquesas, the Society, Austral, and Cook Islands. The vine in the picture was not flowering at the time unfortunately. However, the flowers are scarlet red (see inset) and so are the fruits. It can grow way up into the forest canopy, using aerial roots to attach itself to a host tree. It may also grow as a sprawling tangle on the forest floor. The shiny green leaves have pointed ends and are spiny on the lower side of the midrib and along the edges. The bracts and fruit of the 'ie'ie were a favourite food of the 'ō'ū (*Psittirostra psittacea*), a Hawaiian honeycreeper that is believed to be extinct<sup>2</sup>. The 'ō'ū was formerly a principal seed dispersal vector for plants with small seeded, fleshy fruits in low elevation forests. It is also a favoured food of the 'alalā, the Hawaiian crow, (*Corvus hawaiiensis*), which is currently extinct in the wild but has been bred in captivity<sup>3</sup>. Native Hawaiians used 'ie'ie leaves to make fish baskets, fish traps and helmets<sup>4</sup>.



Figure 1. 'ie'ie plant with flower inset top and 'ō'ū bottom. Photos from Nieke and Wikipedia.



Figure 2. Papale kepau tree

Walking through the “bird park” in Hawaiian Volcanoes National Park, we came across another interesting indigenous plant. The Papale kepau tree (*Pisonia brunoniana*) (Fig.2) is a truly fascinating plant with a sad, but interesting, cultural history. It grows up to 6 metres tall and spreads up to 3 metres. Hawaiians used the sticky seedpods to trap birds for their feathers that would decorate the capes of the Royal Family (Ali'i) (Fig,3), The captured victims provided feathers for the strikingly colourful cloaks, helmets, leis, images and kahili. Birds such as 'ō'ō and mamo (both extinct) were plucked of their few moulting yellow feathers and set free to grow more for the next season. However, the 'i'iwi and 'apapane which are covered with red-colored feathers, would not have survived the plucking. They were captured, plucked and eaten. Both survived this practice fortunately and are still thriving at higher elevations (see the first article on Hawaii: indigenous birds, in the 2015 spring issue of the Oystercatcher).



Figure 3. Royal Family cape

The pāpala kēpau (*Pisonia brunoniana*), a fascinating tree with a unique feature not appreciated by everyone (Fig. 4). It belongs to the Bougainvillea family and is native to New Zealand, Norfolk Island, Lord Howe Island and Hawai'i. It is a common understory tree in the bird park, but rare anywhere else in the National Park. The fruits of pāpala kēpau are sticky and will ensnare small creatures such as birds, lizards and insects. Its common name in New Zealand is “bird catcher” tree. If the immobilized victims cannot free themselves they will eventually succumb to a slow death. The sticky fruits collected under our shoes and the dead leaves on the trail stuck to our soles so that we were walking on an extra cushion of dead leaves. As you can imagine, the seeds were difficult to remove.



Figure 4. Pāpala kēpau tree

The Naupaka kahakai (*Scaevola taccada*), also known as beach cabbage, sea lettuce, beach naupaka, is found in both coastal and mountainous locations in Indo-Pacific tropical areas (Figure 5). Some beaches are literally covered with this plant. The unusual half shape of the flowers and its binomial habitat (seaside and mountain) was the subject of many legends. One of them has it that one half is down by the sea, and the other half is up in the mountain. Another legend talks about two lovers who were prevented by their parents from getting married. They were turned into flowers that appeared to be cut in half. The woman became the Naupaka Kahakai (or beach naupaka) and the man became Naupaka Kuahiwi (or the mountain naupaka). The half shaped flowers

symbolize the love for each other and their eternal separation<sup>5</sup>. Yet another legend tells the story of Pele's beautiful sister who fell in love with a commoner, and Pele (the goddess of the volcanoes), in her anger, chased the commoner to the sea (in her lava form) and her sister ran to the mountains, where she thought Pele could not find her. Pele did find her, and killed her as she had killed her sister's lover. At the beach and in the mountains, the half flowers grew where the lovers died. Some say if you put the flowers together, the lovers will be reunited<sup>6</sup>.



Figure 5. Naupaka kahakai.

Hawaiian nature is lush and diverse and I could write many more stories about its beautiful plants. Here I only dealt with native plants and their uses on Hawaii, the Big Island, but there are many more interesting plants and trees, both native (i.e., not thought to be introduced by humans) and introduced in the post-human era.

*References*

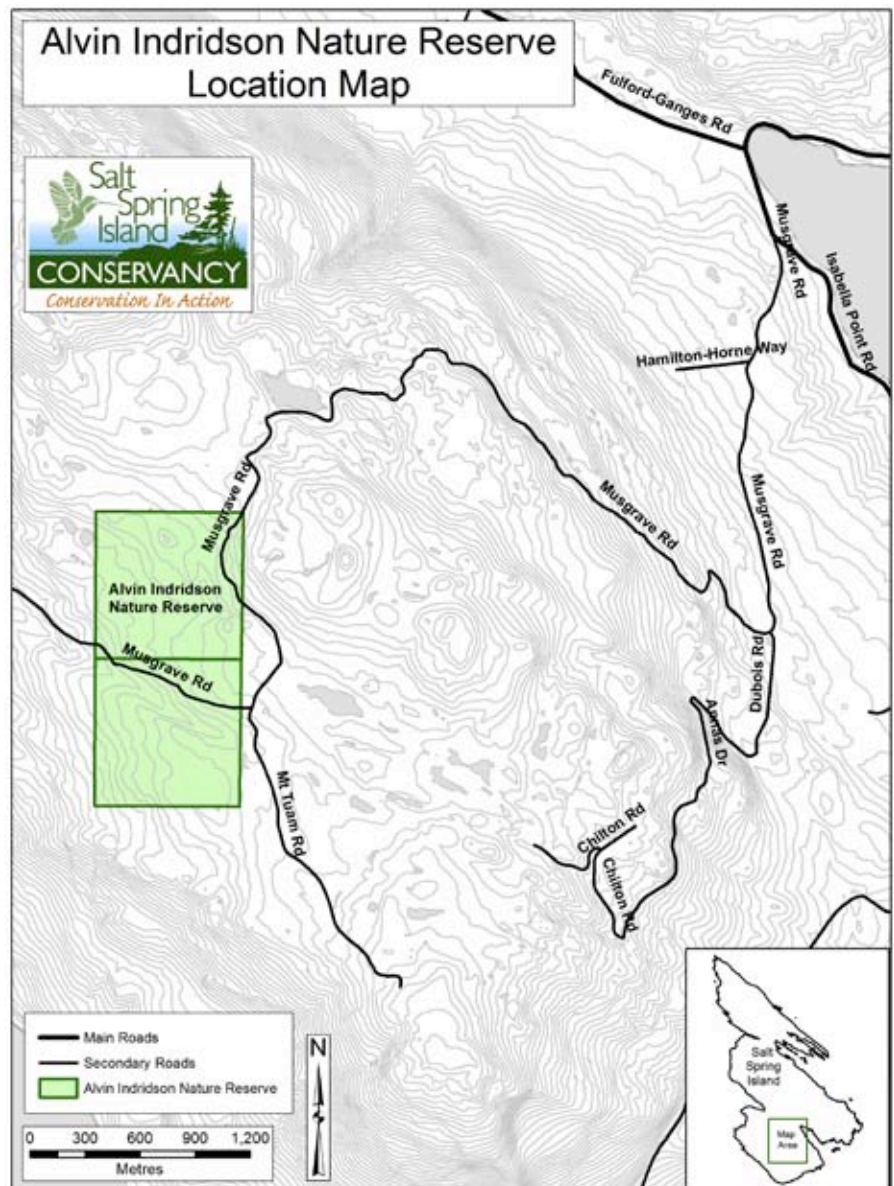
1. Dr. Bruce A. Bohm: *Hawaii's native plants*; Mutual Publishing, 2004
2. BirdLife International (2012). "Psittirostra psittacea". *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. Version 2013.2. International Union for Conservation of Nature. Drawing by Keulemans.
3. BirdLife International (2012). "Corvus hawaiiensis". *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. Version 2013.2. International Union for Conservation of Nature.
4. *Hawaiian Ethnobotany Online Database*. Bernice P. Bishop Museum.
5. [www.aloha-hawaii.com/hawaii/naupaka/](http://www.aloha-hawaii.com/hawaii/naupaka/)
6. [www.freshnaturalhawaiian.wordpress.com/the-legend-of-naupaka/](http://www.freshnaturalhawaiian.wordpress.com/the-legend-of-naupaka/)

## Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve

*Ashley Hilliard*

This is the fourth in a series of articles about the nature reserves that the Salt Spring Island Conservancy has established in its 20 year existence. This time, I'd like to acquaint you with the largest reserve, 320 acres, located in the middle of the hilly southwest part of the island. It was created in 2011 and named Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve (AINR for short) in honour of the man who had the vision to protect this land.

As shown on the location map, the reserve straddles Musgrave Road. Musgrave Road is generally well maintained and most vehicles should have no trouble. Trails on the northern portion of the reserve are shown on the second map. The Conservancy laid them out and PARC's trail crew built them under contract. The reserve comprises two quarter



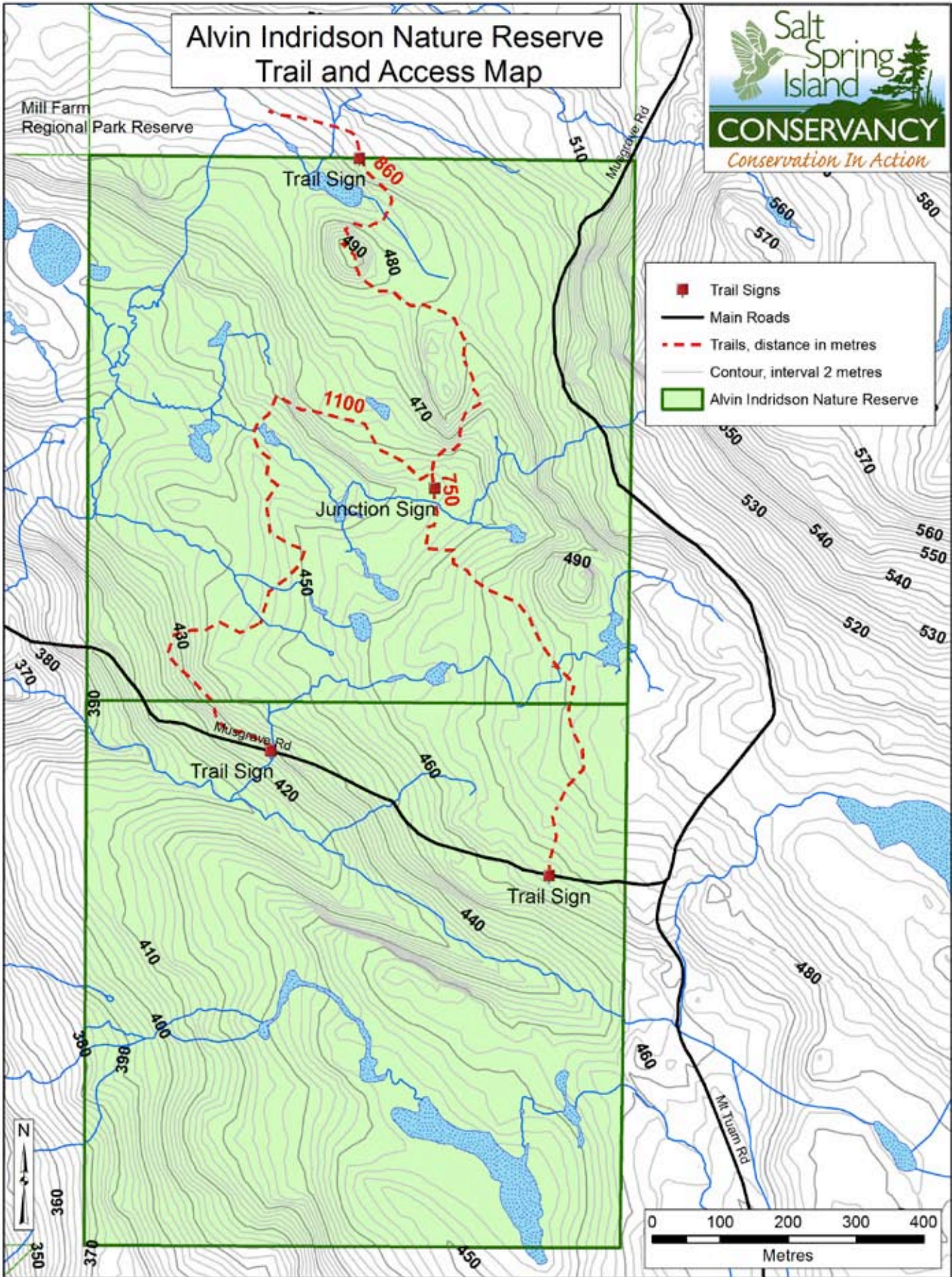


# Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve Trail and Access Map



Mill Farm  
Regional Park Reserve

- Trail Signs
- Main Roads
- Trails, distance in metres
- Contour, interval 2 metres
- Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve



sections. A section — a standard area into which surveyors divide land — measures 1 mile by 1 mile and is 640 acres in size. So a quarter section is ½ mile by ½ mile and is 160 acres (that’s about 64.75 hectares for those who prefer metric).

### **A Hike in the AINR**

The best trail to begin your exploration of AINR starts about 75m after the junction of Musgrave Road with Mt. Tuam Road. The junction is not signed but you may notice a small purple arrow pointing along Mt. Tuam Road. It indicates the way to the Salt Spring Buddhist monastery. Say “OM”. To actually visit the monastery you need an invitation. The trail starts on your right. The trailhead signs are set back 20m. They are a little hard to see from the road but the first, roadside set was used for target practice. You can park on the road on the left shoulder.

I suggest bringing a map and a compass or GPS on your first hike (actually a good idea on any hike). The trail is clear and marked with red blazes, but it does wind around. This is a great family hike, as the younger ones will enjoy honing their trail spotting skills. Take your time. Dogs are permitted but we kindly ask that you keep them on a leash. Unfortunately, loose dogs disturb ground nesting birds and other critters that call AINR home.

Maps of the AINR and all our reserves can be downloaded from the Conservancy’s website: <http://saltspringconservancy.ca/wp/>. Click on “What we do” and then “Managing Nature Reserves”. While you are there, why not explore the rest of the website? It is full of information on the many actions your Conservancy is undertaking to protect our beautiful island land, engage and educate youth, and promote good stewardship. There is a section entitled “What You Can Do”. Volunteering is a great option. As a long-time volunteer myself, I can testify that it is both fun (almost always) and rewarding (always).

Back to our hike. After about 750 m you will come to a trail junction with a sign (tucked around to the left). You can continue to the left on a loop trail that brings you back to Musgrave Road about 300 m west and downhill of where you started. Alternatively, the straight path exits the AINR along its northern boundary, linking to trails in the CRD Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve. This way offers several possible destinations: the summit of Mt Bruce, the highest peak on Salt Spring; the actual Mill Farm reserve with stands of old-growth Douglas fir, a ways down Musgrave Road (consider dropping a second car there); or even a tour around Mt Sullivan. For information on these hikes, please consult Charles Kahn’s indispensable guide, “Hiking the Gulf Islands of British Columbia,” 3rd edition, at pages 218-223. Or join one of the Tuesday hikes in this area organized by the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club (SSTNC).

### **History and Acquisition**

One of AINR’s key attributes is that it connects to other large protected parcels in this part of Salt Spring. Connectivity is one of the features the Conservancy looks at in evaluating potential nature reserves. AINR may not boast the scenic beauty of some other Salt Spring locales but it is important habitat, and its connectivity multiplies that feature. Half the reserve is in the rarest Coastal Douglas fir ecosystem in the province; the other more northerly half is in a



*Dave Polster explaining land reclamation.*

dry, maritime, Coastal Western Hemlock ecosystem. At least 6 species at risk have been found on the property. Waterfowl use the reserve's lake as a nesting site.

The reserve is named in honour of Alvin Indridson, a Lower Mainland businessman who had a fondness for Salt Spring. The property was last logged in the 1980s. He purchased it in 1988. His vision was to protect the land, and after his death, his family saw to it that his wishes were carried out. It was acquired by the Conservancy with major financial assistance from the Indridson family, the Federal Government (through the Nature Conservancy of Canada), Shaw Communications, several other organizations, and many generous individual donors.

The Conservancy received early support from a bequest to BC Nature made by Lillian May Hayden, a Victoria resident. SSTNC was instrumental bringing this project to the attention of BC Nature's Board of Directors who approved devoting part of her legacy to this project. As president of the Conservancy at the time, I publicly recognized the contribution of BC Nature and SSTNC at the time and am pleased to do so again here. I must also recognize the Conservancy's executive director at the time, Linda Gilkeson. Without her hard work, this project would not have happened. AINR is a prime example of how and why the skills, resources and reputation of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy benefit our island.

Funding grants raised for the AINR, as with other nature reserves, requires that the Conservancy manage the land to protect its natural features. After the acquisition, the Conservancy's biologists determined that the reserve would benefit from restoration of the natural hydrological flows on the land that had been blocked by the old logging road network. Accordingly, several tons of garbage, including at least 5 vehicle wrecks, were removed (by volunteers) and the roads decommissioned, under the supervision of Dave Polster, an expert in land restoration in BC. The photograph shows Dave explaining his "rough and loose" technique to BC Nature conference visitors to AINR in May 2015. So far, the restored areas are growing back well and helping prevent intrusion and damage by off-road vehicles. Keep an eye out as you hike the trails as you will cross several restored areas.

The Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve is not showy, but it is worth getting to know. See you on the trails.



*Nieke Visser sent these pictures of a mature and an immature bald eagle squabbling over a chum salmon carcass on the banks of the Salmon River just outside Stewart. The mature one was having his dinner but the young one made life so miserable for him he eventually stormed off in disgust.*



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

Publications mail agreement  
No. 40049783