



# Oystercatcher

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club  
Newsletter  
Spring 2019



*Purple finch making the best of a bad day during the February snowstorm. My feeders were very busy for a few days. Photo by Gary Adams*

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## President's Point of View

*Sue Lehmann*

As I sit down to write this column, I can hear the wind roaring and the waves crashing on the shore. Another storm has hit our island. While not as devastating as the December storm, it has still knocked out power and internet for thousands. These storms really make us realize how important power is to our daily lives and how lost we are without it. Are you ready for the next big storm?

Our annual general meeting was held last week. It was great to see so many people come out to support the club. We also heard a very interesting talk by Linda Gilkeson about the disappearance of insects. I was struck by her comment about how we rarely see squashed bugs on windshields anymore. As kids, we had to clean the windshield every time our parents filled up with gas, something our kids have never experienced. Linda will be giving a similar presentation on behalf of SSI Conservancy and SSI Garden Club on April 11. See details on the [Conservancy Web Site](#).

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)

## Calendar of Events

**Thursday, March 7, 2019**

### **Protecting the Resident Whales in the the Salish Sea**

7-9 pm at the Lions Club Hall, 103 Bonnet Ave. Sarah Patton, a Research Biologist/Coordinator, at the Coastal Ocean Research Inst. Ocean Wise will speak on the developing "Whale Report Alert System" (citizen science) and other Resident Whale Research efforts.

**Tuesday March 12, 2019**

### **Addressing What We Don't Know About SSI's Water?**

7-9 pm at the Lions Club Hall, 103 Bonnet Ave, The presentation is brought to us by John Millson, from the Watershed Committee. John is "an explorer" by nature, with a lifelong passion for geology (exploration, regional geology, stratigraphy, field work, education), and natural history in general (including "water"). Technical Chair of the Subsurface Working Group (SSIWPA), a roving director on the SSI Water Preservation Society Board, he leads the FreshWater Catalogue initiative.

**Sunday March 24, 2019**

### **Butterfly Identification Course**

Linda Gilkeson, PhD, will lead a course on butterfly citizen science and identification at the Blackburn Lake Nature Reserve, 265 Blackburn Road, from 1:00pm to 4:00 pm. For full information, see the [Salt Spring Conservancy](#) website.

**Thursday March 26, 2019**

### **Fish and Invertebrates of Ancient First Nations' Clam Gardens**

7-9 pm at the SSI Library, 129 McPhillips Ave. This presentation is given by Morgan Black, a PhD candidate, and Hakai Scholar at the University of Victoria. Morgan is researching the Ecology and Biodiversity of Ancient First Nations' Clam Gardens. Habitats modified by humans are extensive the world over, and yet their effects on the local ecology are often poorly understood. Clam gardens provide a unique example of a long-standing human-caused habitat modification, and therefore an excellent opportunity to research the effects on the plants and animals that live there.

A new executive was elected at the meeting. Welcome to Leslie Gardiner who is our new secretary, taking over from the fine help provided by Kees. We say thank you and wave goodbye to Rob (walk coordinator) and Frauke (Ramblers coordinator). Frauke has been filling that role for many years. The walk coordinator position, following the pattern set by the hikers, will be managed by Andrea Rankin and Betty Ann Kruger. Ann King has volunteered to be walk coordinator. The remainder of the board are returning members, although for several it will be their last year. It is time for others to come forward and take a role. It's your club so it will best meet your interests if you get more involved.

### **List of Executive Members**

President	Sue Lehmann
Treasurer	Sheryl Taylor-Munro
Secretary	Leslie Gardiner
Membership	Barry Spence
BC Nature	Kathleen Maser
Oystercatcher	Gary Adams
Presentations	Sharon Sullivan
Trails Coord.	Gary Quiring
Webmaster	vacant
Hike Coord.	Susan Fussell
	Jan McIntyre
Walker Coord.	Andrea Rankin
	Betty Ann Kruger
Rambler Coord.	Ann King

## **Oystercatcher Changes**

### ***Gary Adams, editor***

We announced last issue that there would be no more paper delivery of the newsletter. The demand had dropped to three copies, too few to bother taking it to press. Sadly, with the recent loss of Betty Ball, that number is even smaller. However, the change to an on-line version alone means that several changes should be made to the newsletter and other changes are possible. Most importantly for the editor, I no longer need to plan in four-page increments. The Oystercatcher can be as long or short as we like. In the past I have deferred, dropped, or significantly shortened some articles due to their length. This need not be a problem anymore. I also have to completely revise my image handling techniques but that is more of a technical issue than a substantive one. We will also make better use of links to other resources.

If we are going to consider this to be a web-based document, it is no longer necessary to have page breaks or print it as a pdf document but I will retain both of these for now. I think that a number of Club members print the newsletter to read. We could also consider more or fewer issues a year. For instance, we could simply publish articles whenever they come in. There are a number of other changes that could be made if I were a better web page author but I never got very good at that.

This leads to my other bit of news. I have offered to continue the newsletter for this year but it will be my last. Every time I have threatened this in the past, a number of you have kindly stepped forward to tell me what a good job I am doing. You have no idea how much I appreciate the votes of confidence but I do see the hidden agenda there as well. I have been at this for a decade now and either it is someone else's turn or we need to look at the viability of having a newsletter at all. In many ways, it is a very outmoded medium that can be replaced by other information outlets. In other ways, it can provide an invaluable source of information about the Club and its interests.

If members have any questions, opinions or ideas about the newsletter, please write them up for me. I would very much like to continue a conversation about this over the next few issues to provide some inspiration to the enthusiastic soul who is contemplating replacing me. Likewise, if any of you see the newsletter editorship as an opportunity, please let me know.

*Usha Rautenbach, Secretary on the Board of the SSI WPS (Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society) kindly pointed out an error in the last Newsletter.*

*On page 2, the "SSI Protection Society" needs to be changed to "SSI Preservation Society" The Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society was founded under that name in 1982.*

*We apologize for the innacuracy in the newsletter.*



*Sue Lehmann presenting Herb Otto with the Trailblazer Award. Photo by Charles Kahn.*

## **Trailblazer Award: Herb Otto** *Sue Lehmann, President*

The Trailblazer award is given periodically in recognition of long service and contribution to the Club. Our recipient this year may not be known to all of you as he often worked out of the public eye, but his work has touched everyone who hikes the trails on SSI.

Herb Otto was the Trails Coordinator from 2011 to 2018, during which time he was instrumental

in re-invigorating the trails system on the island.

Herb supervised a valiant group of club members in marking and clearing trails. He was the driving force for the development of the Jack Foster trail, initiated a call-in system to report trail damage, served on the PARC Trails Advisory Committee and shepherded the annual club Broom Pull.

His crowning achievement must be his success in getting trail signage installed in Erskine, Maxwell and Burgoyne Provincial Parks. Under his direction, club volunteers laid out, constructed, and mapped the trails and created and installed signage. He showed amazing patience and persistence in dealing with the approval process required by BC Parks. Herb designed and made the sign posts in his own workshop, and



*A typical photo of Herb fulfilling his trail coordinator duties. Photo by Lynn Thompson.*

directed his team as they installed them at trail intersections in the parks. Everyone who hikes the island will benefit from Herb's hard work. Thank you, Herb.

## History of Bird Checklists on Salt Spring Island.

*Ken Mugridge*

The very first bird checklist on Salt Spring Island was conceived by David Fraser of Thimble Farms in April 1989 (see Figure 1). The western bluebird was still labelled a rare summer visitor while barred owls and Annas hummingbirds were labelled as rare vagrants. This 1989 checklist probably influenced and motivated Salt Springers to conduct their own organized Christmas Bird Count as computer count records started from that year.

In 2004 John & Donna de Haan mentioned that the Conservancy wanted to update this 1989 checklist. The revision was needed, as fifteen years had now passed and many updates were required.

Together with John Sprague, five of us met in Bob Weeden's house armed with clipboards, pencils, and guides. Essentially, we used Bob's vast knowledge and local experience to go through every conceivable bird that could have managed to fly here. We all added our two-bits worth and after two or three meetings managed to come up with a pretty accurate current bird list.

Bob then posed the question of how this was going to be put in print. The Conservancy had generously offered to fund the printing. I had a spreadsheet program on my home computer, QuattroPro - actually a freebie that was enclosed with a Quiktax program I had ordered on line back in 1995. Having some experience with spreadsheets and formulas from my working days, I thought this program could do the job. Gathering up the sheets of paper, I volunteered to give it a try.

Going through my several bird checklists collected over the years, a plan evolved as to how the layout should look, ensuring provisions were made for tick-boxes and local breeding info. It took a lot of trial and error arranging the individual bird list columns so they could fit neatly on two sides of foldable paper. Any illustrations had to be black & white etchings. Photos would not be clear enough. On-line permission was given to use the loon image (always ask permission). Later, Roger Hall also OK'd his eagle image for the newer 2007 checklist.

I took the rough draft (see Figure 2) back to the group. We made further error corrections (Bewicks wren is not Berwicks wren etc. - thanks John Sprague) and added taxonomic sub groups. The list was now ready for printing. Apple Photo on McPhillips Ave processed the initial 500 copies.

That first printing in 2005 (see Figure 3) was followed shortly by a second. A couple of years later a third modified printing appeared with a much-improved layout - including the eagle. The loon is also looking a lot more resplendent (see Figure 4).

Eventually the Conservancy wisely decided to use a professional graphics company to do any further editions. This presented no easy task as the graphics company, also not familiar with QuattroPro, requested that all files be sent to them, converted to Excel or PDF format. My spreadsheet program was so old that this was not possible (in 1995 PDF files had only just been invented!). In essence they had to redo the whole checklist by manually copying the 2007 printing line by line. The staff were obviously not birders as some of the copied bird names were hilarious. Bewicks was back to Berwicks. Anna's hummingbird became Andy's hummingbird. After many emails, phone calls and paper exchanges, a more visually impressive checklist was produced, including a title, header, and outline image of Salt Spring, replacing the blurry old photo. However, most of our 2005 design, is still incorporated in the current edition.

So now another fifteen years has passed. The current checklist looks considerably better but the contents are still based on our 2004 conclusions.

### HONOUR ROLLS

#### HONOURARY MEMBERS

Tony Pederson

#### TRAIL BLAZERS

Owen Benwell

Zeke Blazecka

Nancy Braithewaite

Ian Fraser

Ashley Hilliard

Bill Harrington

George Hignell

Nancy Holcroft

Charles Kahn

Ann King

Betty Kirk

Herb Otto

Fred Powell

Linda Quiring

Brian Radford

Marjie Radford

Beth Ranney

Alan & Rita Robertson

Simon Rook

Lynn Thompson

Kees Visser

Nieke Visser

Western Bluebird-raS,\*  
Mountain Bluebird-vag[2]  
Townsend's Solitaire-uT,raR  
Swainson's Thrush-cS,\*  
Hermit Thrush-lcT,raW  
American Robin-cR,\*  
Varied Thrush-uS,cW,(\*)

Northern Mockingbird-acc[1]  
Water Pipit-cT,raW  
Cedar Waxwing-cS,raW,\*  
Northern Shrike-raW  
European Starling-cR,\*

Solitary Vireo-uS,(\*) FL  
Hutton's Vireo-fcR,(\*) FORB ND 263  
Warbling Vireo-cS,\* FL  
Red-eyed Vireo-(raS)

Orange-crowned Warbler-cS,\*  
Yellow Warbler-cS,\* FL  
Yellow-rumped Warbler-cS,raW,\* FORB  
Audubon's form-cS,raW,\*  
Myrtle form-fcT  
Black-throated Gray Warbler-cS,(\*) FL  
Townsend's Warbler-cS,raW,\* FORB  
MacGillivray's Warbler-fcS,\* FL  
Common Yellowthroat-cS,\* FORB  
Wilson's Warbler-cS,\*

Western Tanager-uS,(\*) NH 10 263  
Black-headed Grosbeak-(raS,\*) FORB 03  
Rufous-sided Towhee-cR,\*  
Chipping Sparrow-fcS,\* FORB  
Vesper Sparrow-vagT[1]  
Savannah Sparrow-fcS,cT,raW,\*  
Fox Sparrow-raS,cW  
Song Sparrow-cR,\*  
Lincoln's Sparrow-uT,raW  
Golden-crowned Sparrow-cW  
White-crowned Sparrow-cS,uW,\*  
Dark-eyed Junco-fcS,cW,\*  
Snow Bunting-vag[1](raW)

Red-winged Blackbird-cR,\*  
Western Meadowlark-raW  
Yellow-headed Blackbird-vag[1]

Brewer's Blackbird-cS,fcW,\* GOLF CLUB 03  
Brown-headed Cowbird-fcS,(raW),\* 1000 10 00

Rosy Finch-vag[1]  
Pine Grosbeak-vag[2]  
Purple Finch-cR,(\*)  
House Finch-cR,\*  
Red Crossbill-cR,(\*) FORB  
Pine Siskin-cR,(\*)  
American Goldfinch-cS,raW,\*  
Evening Grosbeak-uR,(\*)

House Sparrow-cR,\*

**Hypothetical Species** - reported, but not with sufficient details.

Smew[2]  
Snowy Egret[1]  
White-faced Ibis[1]  
Great Grey Owl[1]

**Recently Introduced Species** - which may form viable wild populations. Please report further observations.

Chukar  
Common Peafowl\*  
Wild Turkey  
Northern Bobwhite


Additional or corrections to this checklist are welcome, and will be used to update future editions of this checklist. Please report sightings with accompanying field notes or photographs to:  
David F. Fraser, Thimble Farms, 175 Arbutus Rd., Ganges, B.C. V0S 1E0.

Rare, vagrant, accidental or out-of-season species are reported on the Victoria Natural History Society's Victoria Rare Bird Alert 1-592-3381.

Thanks to those birders that reported sightings and reviewed earlier drafts of this checklist.

Prepared by David F. Fraser, Arenaria Research & Interpretation for: Thimble Farms, Arbutus Rd. Salt Spring Island.

**SALT SPRING SIGHTINGS ONLY**



**Checklist to the Birds of Salt Spring Island**  
(compiled April 1989)

**Explanation of Species Codes**

c-common, seen in large numbers every time out.  
fc-fairly common, often seen, but not every time out.  
u-uncommon, usually occurs in small numbers, species is often local or irregular.  
ra-rare, occurs most years but usually only a few records per year.  
vag-vagrant, few records, not occurring in most years, but may occur again.  
acc-accidental, 1-3 records in the last 50 years, unlikely to occur again.  
R-resident, present all year.  
S-summer  
W-winter  
T-transient spring and fall  
TSp-transient spring  
TF-transient fall  
\*-breeds  
ext-extirpated, formerly present, no recent records.  
()-codes modified by brackets indicates suspected status based on nearby areas (Victoria, San Juan Islands) but no records exist. Please report sightings.  
[1]-indicates the number of records for vagrant and accidental species.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Area: \_\_\_\_\_  
Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 1.


Victoria Rare Bird Alert  
www.vicnhs.bc.ca  
250-592-3381

Vancouver Rare Bird Alert  
www.naturalhistory.bc.ca/VNHS  
604-737-3074

Additional or corrections to this checklist are welcome and will be used to update future editions. Please report sightings with accompanying field notes or photos to:  
Dr John Sprague, 474 Old Scott Rd,  
Salt Spring Island BC, V8K 2L7

Thanks to those birders that reported sightings and reviewed earlier drafts of this checklist.

Prepared (1989) by David E Fraser  
Revised (2005) by  
Donna & John deHaan  
Ken Mugridge  
Bob Nation  
John Sprague  
Bob Weeden



**Salt Spring Island**

**Checklist of the Birds**

**Area Covered -**  
Salt Spring Island BC  
193 sq.km pop. 10,000

**Explanation of symbols**

**Relative abundance -**

c common, large numbers  
25-100 per day  
fc fairly common, often seen  
or heard. 5-25 per day  
u uncommon, small numbers  
1-5 per day  
ra rare 1-10 records per year  
vag vagrant, few records  
usually 1-3 records per year  
acc accidental. Total of 1-2 records.  
unlikely to occur again  
\* known to breed locally  
(1) indicates number of records for  
vagrant & accidental species

**Seasonal Status:**  
R- Resident, present all year  
S- Summer  
W- Winter  
T- Transient spring & fall  
TSp- Transient spring  
TF- Transient fall

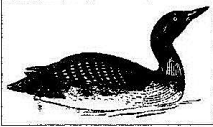


Figure 2.

Bird names & taxonomic order follow -  
**'Sibley Guide to Birds' 2000**


**Victoria Rare Bird Alert**  
[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)  
 250-592-3381

Additions or corrections to this checklist are welcome and will be used to update future editions. Please report sightings with accompanying field notes or photos to -

Salt Spring Island Conservancy  
 PO Box 722, SSI, BC V8K 2W3  
 250-538-0318  
[ssiconservancy@saltspring.com](mailto:ssiconservancy@saltspring.com)

Thanks to those birders that reported sightings and reviewed earlier drafts of this checklist.

Prepared (1989) by David E Fraser  
 Revised (2005) by  
 Donna & John deHaan,  
 Ken Mugridge, Bob Nation  
 John Sprague & Bob Weeden



## Bird Checklist of Salt Spring

**Area Covered -**  
 Salt Spring Island BC  
 193sq km, plus local waters

**Explanation of symbols**

**Relative abundance -**  
**c** common, large numbers  
 25-100 per day  
**fc** fairly common, often seen  
 or heard, 5-25 per day  
**u** uncommon, small numbers  
 1-5 per day  
**ra** rare, less than 10 times per year  
**ca** casual, less than one per year,  
 often outside normal range  
**\*** known to breed locally  
**(1)** indicates number of records for  
 rare & casual species

Habitat Preservation Trust  
**RED LIST**  
 Birds appearing in bold  
 capitals indicate Endangered  
 Species

**Seasonal Status:**  
**R-** Resident, present all year  
**S-** Summer  
**W-** Winter  
**T-** Transient spring & fall  
**Tsp-** Transient spring  
**Tf-** Transient fall

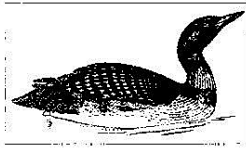



Figure 3.

Bird names & taxonomic order follow -  
**The Sibley Guide to Birds**  
 2000

Very rare, casual or out-of-season sightings  
 should be immediately reported to -  
**Victoria Rare Bird Alert**  
[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)  
 250-592-3381

Additions or corrections to this checklist are welcome and will be used to update future editions. Please report sightings with accompanying field notes or photos to -




## Salt Spring Island CONSERVANCY

[www.saltspringconservancy.ca](http://www.saltspringconservancy.ca)  
 PO Box 722, SSI, BC V8K 2W3  
 250-538-0318  
[ssiconservancy@saltspring.com](mailto:ssiconservancy@saltspring.com)

Thanks to those birders that reported sightings and reviewed earlier drafts of this checklist.

Prepared (1989) by David E Fraser  
 Revised (2007) by  
 Donna & John de Haan,  
 Ken Mugridge, Bob Nation,  
 John Sprague & Bob Weeden




## Bird Checklist of Salt Spring Island

**182 sq km, plus local waters**

**Explanation of symbols**

**Relative abundance -**  
 N.B. - many species are common but rarely seen  
**c** common-large numbers  
 25-100 per day  
**fc** fairly common-often seen  
 or heard, 5-25 per day  
**u** uncommon- small numbers  
 seen or heard 1-5 per day  
**ra** rare-less than 10 times per year  
**ca** casual-less than one per year,  
 often outside normal range  
**\*** known to breed locally  
**(1)** indicates number of records  
 for casual species

**Seasonal Status -**  
**R** Resident, present all year  
**S** Summer  
**W** Winter  
**T** Transient spring & fall  
**Tsp** Transient spring  
**Tf** Transient fall

  
(c) 2007 Roger Hall

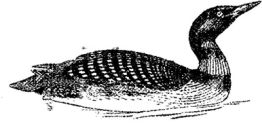


Figure 4.

## Lübeck: Another Way of Logging

Jean Gelwicks responded to the call for papers with this article by Guy Dauncey., first published in Valley Voice, February 2019. She indicated that she liked the article and suggested that we might like to reprint it. In this day of Internet, it is more appropriate to provide an introduction and point the membership to the original article.

This story was printed as a comparison to the current management of the North Cowichan Municipal Forest. It discusses the successful ecological benefits of forest management of the public forest at Lübeck, Germany.

An additional advantage to sending readers to the original site is that it will introduce some of us to the Yellow Point Ecological Society and their publication.

See the article at [Lübeck: Another Way of Logging](#)

*No trees stories, but the Ramblers, led by Kathy Darling, on a beautiful crisp sunny day, walked from the Country Grocer to the bridge on the Booth Canal Road. After we walked back, we had lunch at Uptown Pizza. Photo by Lucile Adderly.*



### ***Beach Access on Salt Spring Island***

A recent hike featured a discussion on beach access around the Island. While many beach access points are hidden or unmarked, it is possible to find some resources to help identify access points.

Barry Spence offered up the a page on the Salt Spring Marked site called [Beaches and Lakes of Salt Spring Island](#). The page includes write-ups of about 35 fresh and saltwater beaches on the Island and concludes with an interactive map where you can click on a location and see which beach it refers to.

A far more comprehensive map of beach access points, over 130 in total, has been assembled by [Salt Spring Island Greenwise](#). However, this site did not seem to work well interactively for me. It does have a [downloadable pdf document](#) that provides an excellent map of the island and the access points.

On a related topic, the Islands Trust has produced a web page on [Saltspring Island Shoreline](#) maps. A series of six maps, three for the north island and three for the south, map shoreline types, sediment moverment, and shoreline values and vulnerability. While not directly indicating access points, it provided some useful indications of what to expect when you get there.