

SALT SPRING TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB

NEWSLETTER #1

This Newsletter is intended to communicate with Club members about walks and hikes and to report nature observations on Salt Spring Island. The information will be based on the notes of members. We propose to develop an on-going list of wildlife and plant species which are specific to this island.

Ken Campbell editor

ZONE CO-ORDINATORS APPOINTED

Marguerite Pearce and Dorothy Robertson of the Nature Branch have organized the island into eleven zones and named a Club member to serve as co-ordinator in each zone. The co-ordinators have agreed to receive nature reports and to assist in the distribution of this Newsletter.

<u>zone</u>	<u>co-ordinator</u>	<u>phone</u>
North End/St. Mary Lake	Margaret Pragnell	
Southey Point	Jack Foster	
Vesuvius	Bob MacLeod	
Booth Bay	Nancy Braithwaite	
Ganges	Rosemary Thomas	
Long Harbour	Mardie Banks	
Hundred Hills	Joan Lott	
Beddis Road	Chris Pattinson	
Cusheon Lake	Toni Luton	
Beaver Point	Ken Campbell	
Fulford/Burgoyne	Jean King	

Members are urged to make a note of their nature observations with the date, location, remarks and species (bird, insect, plant, etc.) and give these notes to the co-ordinator for their area. All reports will be organized to form the basis of the next Newsletter. Co-ordinators are prepared to help with your questions on nature or to put you in touch with an expert on the island. We also can seek assistance from the staff of the Provincial Museum in Victoria.

BIRDS AND MORE BIRDS

Your editor's personal notes list some 85 species of birds sighted on the island since January. In addition to the year around residents (blue grouse) there are also birds which only winter here (old squaw duck) passing migrants (Canda geese) and those which come to nest (nighthawk). Some highlights were the pair of ring-necked ducks on Unger's pond in March; western tanagers that were

(more)

in the garden all summer; the explosion of young rufous humming-birds that crowded our feeders from mid-June to well into July; and the gang of red crossbills who moved into the yard in early August. I'm sure there are many more birds here than my list records and each day there is the excitement of maybe adding a new species to my notes.

#### BALD EAGLE NESTING SUCCESS

Marguerite Pearce reports that bald eagles have again successfully nested in the Long Harbour area. She kept a day-to-day record and noted that the single young flew from the nest in mid-July. The survival of the youngster was confirmed by several sightings made following its maiden flight.

Nesting records such as this are very important in developing a knowledge of breeding birds for this island. All members are requested to note the date, species, location and the results of nesting of all birds, even the most common species. With consistent reporting it will be practical to define the year to year status of our bird population.

#### BULLFROGS AT WESTON LAKE

Ray Fraser reported the singing of bullfrogs at Weston Lake and on August 7th a group of us joined him to listen. It was a rather limited chorus, but there was no doubt that the singers were indeed bullfrogs. Alice Andress of North End Road has not heard this frog at St. Mary's Lake although she reports it is an ideal place for frogs if one can judge by the spring chorus of treefrogs and the larger red-legged frogs which are common here.

June Stevens of Beaver Point Road recalls that in the early 1960's brother-in-law Mitchell Silick collected adult and tadpole bullfrogs from near Steveston as a gift for young Dimitri Stevens. They were placed in a pond at the family residence on Beaver Point Road. Florence Hepburn reported that a dozen or more bullfrogs were given to her family as well and placed in their pond above Fulford.

There are no longer any bullfrogs at either the Stevens or the Hepburn residences. It is thought that the bullfrogs were transplanted into Weston Lake or perhaps escaped there to initiate the present population. It is possible that other importations were made directly into the lake. It is also possible that these large frogs may be living in other lakes or large ponds on the island. Members reports about these amphibians will be interesting.

We have a lot of Pacific treefrogs in our garden and a single red-legged frog spends his time between our doorstep and the lily pond. These native frogs are a welcome gang of insect-eaters.

(more)

### SHARP-TAILED SNAKE ANYONE?

There seems very limited information on island reptiles, possibly because there are no poisonous species and because they are very shy. Many gardeners have glimpsed the little alligator lizard and most have seen the handsome garter snakes with their brown and tan stripes and checks. There is another snake we would like reports on...the sharp-tailed snake. This little fellow is about a foot long (30cm) with a brownish back and black and cream coloured bars on its belly. It feeds exclusively on slugs and certainly is welcome in island gardens. The Provincial Museum is very interested in any observations of this little snake for their "Wildlife Atlas" project.

### ORCHIDS AND OTHER SPECIAL THINGS

In this part of Canada a succession of delightful wild flowers decorates our woods and roadsides. Of great help to long-time residents and newcomers is the new flower guide authored by I.C. Shank assisted by a group of Club members. Excellent illustrations by Douglas Penhale help to make this book "Wildflowers of Salt Spring Island" a handy and charming reference.

"Trees, Shrubs and Flowers to Know in British Columbia" by C.P. Lyons is a more comprehensive reference of the province's flora which deals with our local plants. A small book of colour photographs called "Roadside Wildflowers of the Northwest" by Ted Underhill provides another useful guide to our island flowers.

### WALKS, HIKES AND TRAILS

This first issue is perhaps a good place to remind all of our members, especially those newly joined, that although the Club uses many trails throughout the island, the majority are on private land or the access to them is over private property.

Some owners adamantly refuse access to anyone wishing to cross their land. Fortunately, many others are willing to permit access to our organized body, having set rules concerning the conduction of hikes and walks and who carry the necessary liability insurance. This was an important incentive for the formation of the Trail and Nature Club and early executives put a very large effort into securing the necessary permissions. Some are written, some are verbal, some give blanket approval and others require prior notification each time the property is crossed. Over the next few months we will be examining all of these permits and reviewing and updating them as necessary. Any thoughts you may have or any knowledge of anyone willing to allow access to the Club for organized walks would be gratefully received by the executive.

Thus new members should remember that because they have walked a certain trail with the Club does not give them automatic permission to use this trail for private walks. For these you should use

(more)

existing parks or Crown land or public rights of way. Any member of the executive will be willing to help if you have any doubts concerning a given locale.

*It does take time!*

The Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission has asked us to help in delineating some trails on the island and we will be working with them on this topic during the coming fall. If any of you have any thoughts or questions regarding walks or hikes, please send them along. In addition we are always on the look-out for leaders for both walks and hikes. We hope that interested people will get in touch with us: Trail Committee; Bob Robertson, Bob Hall, Jack Foster.

NEWSLETTER STARTED

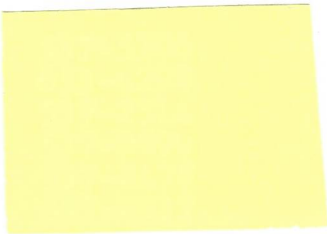
At a meeting of the Club executive held 19 August 1982, it was agreed to undertake publication of this Newsletter on a trial basis for the completion of this year. The concept will be open for discussion and decision at the general meeting in January, 1983.

It was agreed that:

- 1) The Club would underwrite publication expenses, estimated at about \$30.00 per issue. The publication of two issues before the end of the year is envisioned.
- 2) The Newsletter will be issued to all Club members.
- 3) A committee of three will assist editor Ken Campbell.

SALT SPRING TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB

President	Bob Robertson
Vice-President	Jean King
Secretary-Treasurer	Caroline Moore
Program Co-ordinator	Peggy Jacobs
Assistant Co-ordinator	Marg Beggs
Nature Co-ordinator	Joan Lott



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Regular membership (age 18 and over)	\$4.00
Family membership (husband, wife and children to age 18)	\$6.00

\$2.00 of the fee goes to the Federation of B.C. Naturalists and each Club member is also a member of the Federation and is entitled to a copy of the "B.C. Naturalist" which is published four times a year.

Newsletter #1 September 1982  
Editorial Committee: Mort Stratton  
Anna Marie Dahlke