

Comox Valley Naturalists Society

February, 2011

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another year has started, and the Society is very busy – as usual. It seems that one of the main aspects of my 'job' as President is always asking for volunteers. The flip side of this is that if CVNS were not involved in so many things, we would not need so many volunteers.

The volunteers are the people who make this Society work! I thank all of you. I will mention some of our functions that you fill, both as a "Thank You", and as information about these functions. I will not refer to anyone by name, the thanks is extended to all of you whom have ever volunteered for CVNS.

The Executive (President, Vice President, former President, Treasurer, Secretary, BC Nature Rep.) are all volunteers, and with one exception, are able to volunteer for next year. They do a lot of the nuts 'n bolts (leaves 'n branches?) work. Working with the Executive are our Birding, Botany, and Conservation groups, each with their own volunteer leaders, and several individuals such as our membership secretary, webmaster, newsletter editor, and representatives with other green groups etc. Our members also show up for such things as broom bashes, swan counts, re-vegetation plantings, and/or seasonal bird counts. There are also some specialized individual volunteer efforts such as 'card lady', field trip list preparer, annual CVNS, and birding Potluck organizers, coffee and free trade chocolate sales, door greeter, bursary examiner etc. There is also considerable volunteer work for our Wetland Restoration Project, as well as for our NHFS project *Sharing our Natural History*. Detailed work such as preparing (or repairing) nature signs or making display panels, and by being expert guides on nature walks, or birding walks are also excellently handled by volunteers. We are also often asked to send a representative to other events such as Earth Day, Shoreline Clean Up, Strathcona Wilderness Institute or Parks events etc. Finally, CVNS, as a 45 year old organization with 150 members, many of whom are

retired or current environmental experts, is a repository of much natural history information and thus handles many specific requests from the public. With this many volunteer functions, it is no wonder I always seem to be asking for volunteers! Thank you again.

Having said the above, we still need a volunteer for Vice President. Please consider it. I'm asking...

Dave.Lacelle

PS, one of the problems with 'thanking' people is that someone always gets left out. I sincerely hope this did not happen here. Again, YOU the volunteer are the core of our Society. Thank you and have a good Spring,

Birds Visiting Our Region



Oyster Bay Shoreline Park October 10th
Charles Brandt photo

The two Dowitchers, Long-billed and Short-billed are sometimes difficult to distinguish especially in their non-breeding plumage, and especially if they are juveniles. They are seen along our beaches in September and October as they migrate through to points further south. Dowitchers probe the mud flats like a sewing machine. If one is close enough one can hear the constant soft chatter of the Long-billed as they feed. The short-billed flock is quiet.

You can find us on our web site: www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca

Comox Valley Naturalists Society, Box 3222 Courtenay, B.C.

V9N 5N4

COMOX VALLEY NATURALISTS SOCIETY**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

(note prefix 250 needed to dial local numbers)

President:	Dave Lacelle	lacelle1@telus.net
Vice-President:	vacant	
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Treasurer:	Al Schut	331-0156 alschut@shaw.ca
Past President:	Robin Harrison	339-4754 robinjen@shaw.ca
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	Norma Morton	339-7336

Wetland Restoration Project

Frank Hovenden 338-9962

Liaison, CV Environmental Council

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CVNS rep, CV Conservation Strategy Steering Committee

Murray Little

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Membership	Steph Nathan	334-7701

Newsletter

Advertising Krista Kaptein 338-9962

Editor Sharon Niscak 339-4606

Email: newsletter@comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca

Speakers	Dave Lacelle	
"Card Lady"	Jennifer Harrison	339-4754
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Website: www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca**MEMBERSHIP****Single \$30, Family \$40 (Life \$300)****Junior 12-18 \$10, Student 18-22 \$15**

Mail cheques to Steph Nathan, 1785 Urquhart Ave, Courtenay, BC, V9N 6W5.

Receipts at meeting or send SASE**Membership due January 1st.**

If not paid by February 28th, names are struck off the CVNS and BC Nature lists.

New members joining after September will have their membership extended to the following calendar year: January to December.

Change of address, phone number or e-mail:

Please advise Steph Nathan, 334-7701

NEWSLETTER:Deadline May newsletter: **May 1, 2011**

Newsletters are published: February, May and October. The newsletter is e-mailed to members.

Available at monthly meetings.

(\$5.00 per year if mailed).

Articles are welcomed: natural history, trips, unusual sightings, etc.

MEETINGS:**Regular monthly meetings** are held 3rd Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Florence Filberg Centre, 411 Anderton Avenue, Courtenay.**June meeting:** potluck at member's house**No meeting July, August and December****Bird meetings** are held the first Thursday of the month 7:00 pm at the Filberg Soroptimist Lounge. For info: Art Martell 334-2979**Botany Meetings****Botany meetings** are scheduled on the first Monday of every month and held at a member's home, 12:30 noon. Bring your lunch. For info: Jackie Gray 250-331-0313 and Dulcie Hamilton 250-334-4507**CVNS Trips: Please dress for the weather, car pooling is encouraged and costs shared.**www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca**Suggestions for trips** welcomed: fconstab@shaw.ca

OUR MOST NEGLECTED ANIMAL

by Chris Pielou

First a few clues: The animal I'm about to describe is a crustacean, like crabs, lobsters, and shrimps, but it lives all its life on land. Also, it is a detritivore, whose diet consists largely of wood fragments, fallen leaves, and other debris that would otherwise accumulate on the ground. They chew it up and excrete much of it as miniscule pellets which soon disintegrate into ready-made compost. In so doing, they clean up the natural world and are a blessing to gardeners. In short, the animal is a terrestrial crustacean of great zoological interest; and also a benefactor to the rest of us. It doesn't bite or sting, and it makes no noise. So what is it? Can you answer before going on?

Here is the answer: a woodlouse, otherwise known as a sowbug. It isn't an insect, as it is easy to see. All insects have three pairs of legs and one pair of antennae, whereas woodlice have seven pairs of legs and two pairs of antennae. It belongs to the Order Isopoda in the Class Crustacea.

Woodlice are so common they're apt to be ignored, but biologically they're exceedingly interesting, because they live on land. They are believed to have descended



from marine ancestors and are much, much rarer (in terms of number of species) than marine crustaceans. Their most recent ancestors were, presumably, beach fleas. Only one species of woodlouse is common in the Comox Valley, namely, *Oniscus asellus*.

(1) HOW THEY BREATHE. The way they breathe is one of their surprises. They have two respiratory systems. One system acts like gills in absorbing oxygen from flowing water. The other system acts like lungs in absorbing it from the air. Having both methods of breathing available to them suggests, perhaps, that they are only part way through their switch from life in the sea to life on land.

The organs that function as gills are inside *pleopods*. These are short, fat, "extra legs" on the underside of a

woodlouse behind the ordinary, clawed legs, and are easy to see with a magnifier. They are filled with circulating water and tissues that extract dissolved oxygen from the water. The organs that function as lungs are called "lungs" (in quotes because they are *not* true lungs). They are absorbing patches on the outside of the pleopods that take up oxygen directly from the air. Therefore woodlice are to be envied: they can, and do, run busily over the ground, and if they find themselves in water in their generally moist habitat, they come to no harm.

In the course of their evolution, they have changed from being aquatic animals to air-breathing ones. This evolution may still be in progress, but how does their respiration function now? IN THEIR LEGS.

(2) BIPHASIC ECDYSIS

Another way in which isopods in general are unique is in the way they moult. All crustaceans moult, that is, they shed their *exoskeletons* (their rigid, brittle "skins") at intervals as they grow bigger. Woodlice, like most members of the super-phylum Ecdysozoa undergo *ecdysis* as they grow. Other moulters shed their exoskeletons in one piece, but isopods do it in two steps. First the rear half is shed and then, some hours later, the front half. When a woodlouse's exoskeleton ("skin" for short) becomes too tight for its growing body, it splits the out-grown skin and sheds it, revealing a new, larger, softer skin ready to protect it as soon as it has hardened. The whole performance is called *biphasic moulting*.

Many animals moult: moulting is not restricted to invertebrates- think of snakes. But isopods are special: in that their moulting happens in two steps.

So woodlice are virtuous and have no faults. They deserve admiration and respect from naturalists, not the indifference and neglect they are usually subject to, poor little things.

The next time a woodlouse crosses your path (or you, it's) take the chance to examine it closely, and admire.

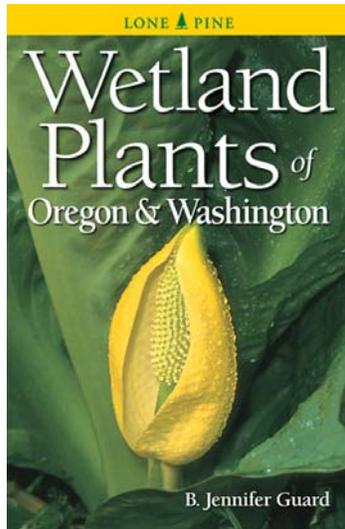


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Wetland Plants

Lone Pine Publishing's latest book *Wetland Plants of Oregon & Washington* explores the dwindling wetlands that share many of the plants and features of our BC Pacific Northwest coast wetlands. In this guide the 'habitat' icon for each chapter provides a convenient section to the general habitat types. The chapters are conveniently organized from the most aquatic to the most terrestrial of the wetland systems. Each chapter provides an overview of the featured plant community featured and a full page is dedicated to each species within the five habitat types.

Although not all of the wetland species are included in the guide the most dominant and common species are included. I searched for *Menyanthes trifoliata* and did not find it in the marshy shore or riparian communities where expected. A quick look at the index revealed that this plant is now restricted to montane or coastal peat lands because of loss of habitat.

For many years wetlands were not valued "unless they were used as refuse dumps, drained for agriculture or filled for building construction". When the first settlers arrived in the beautiful Willamette Valley *Menyanthes* was part of a rare community on cold organic soils covering 4000 acres. All but one per cent was cleared for cattle and onions. We are only slowly recognizing that a functioning wetland is essential for water filtration, flood control, groundwater recharge, fisheries, wildlife habitat and shoreline stabilization.

The author B. Jennifer Guard's passion for the wetlands is evident throughout the book. Along with the photographer Trygve Steen, professor of biology at Portland State University, she has created a timely and convenient guide that is carefully illustrated with photo details and line drawings for identification, maps, natural

history and indicator status. I especially liked the Conspectus of the Willows and keys to grasses, rushes and sedges. The illustrated glossary at the back of the book is handy reference to assist with species identification.

Although the focus is on Washington and Oregon, this book is a valuable tool for the amateur and professional who appreciate our Wetlands. Lone Pine has again published another concise guide to add to our working library and backpack at the affordable price of \$22.95. I look forward to the first blooms of our thermogenic Skunk cabbage and pulling on my gumboots to investigate our wetlands.

Ecosystems of British Columbia (Field Course) August 20 – August 31, 2011

British Columbia has an amazing diversity of ecosystems – from wet highly productive coastal forests to boreal woodland to semi arid grasslands. It also has a highly respected classification system – the Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system. This field course will examine a wide diversity of ecosystems across British Columbia in order to explore relationships between climate, site and soil conditions, disturbance, succession and the resulting ecosystems. Major themes of the course will be ecosystem classification using the BEC system, forest succession, disturbance dynamics, old forest attributes, plant autecology, and plant identification. The course will be offered as three 3.5 day modules. Each module is ***1 credit hour at \$350 for students and \$495 for non-students per each module.***

Instructors: Andy MacKinnon and Bruce Rogers – Ministry of Natural Resource Operations, Craig DeLong – retired Ecologist, plus other invited speakers.

Contact: UNBC Continuing Studies Tel (250) 960-5980
Registration deadline: June 30, 2011

Course Information: Craig Delong - sdelong@unbc.ca



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2011 Brant Wildlife Festival A Celebration of Nature

Wildlife Viewing at Goose Spit
Saturday, April 23, 2011 Noon to 3 p.m.
Goose Spit Park, Comox
Free

Join naturalists and birders from the Comox Valley Naturalists Society to celebrate spring migration at Goose Spit Park. Learn about the Black Brant's long journey and get a chance to observe Brant, seabirds and marine mammals up close through spotting scopes set up along the beach.

Brant geese that you may see have flown non-stop from Mexico to Vancouver Island. They arrive thin, tired and hungry. Most have only a few days to regain their weight and strength before making another non-stop flight to the Alaska Peninsula and then to their nesting grounds beyond. The Brant are joined by thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and bald eagles, all seeking to build up their condition prior to migrating and nesting. Together they provide a great opportunity for spectacular wildlife viewing.

Today, Brant numbers are decreasing. Many scientists attribute these declines to human-related disturbances, climate change and loss of crucial habitat, especially around migration stopovers. The Brant and other birds feed near the tide-line and therefore are especially vulnerable to disturbance by dogs and people. Because they need to rest and feed undisturbed at this critical time, please watch for and obey regulatory signs when you are walking your dog.

Bring the Whole Family

For more information please contact Art Martell at 250-334-2979 or Robin Rivers at 1-866-288-7878 ext. 226. E-mail rrivers@naturetrust.bc.ca or go to our website at www.brantfestival.bc.ca

Art Martell

BC Nature Summer Camp happening at Strathcona Park Lodge



CV Naturalists are sponsoring a BC Nature Summer Camp in Strathcona Park from July 15 - 19. Participants will be accommodated at Strathcona Park Lodge with all meals provided at the Lodge. We will be taking people out on various hikes around the areas including down the road to the Ralph River campground, on the way to Gold River, and some of the shorter trails right around the Lodge. Planning is underway for a full program of walking, hiking, birding, checking out various plants, swimming, and education about the park and the area. This is the 100th anniversary of Strathcona Park so fitting that we have a camp focused on the oldest park in the BC Parks System. Registration will be limited to 24 participants and opens on April 1. Cost for the full program will be \$600 shared occupancy. Watch for more information in the next issue of BC Nature for registration information.

We are looking for a couple of naturalists who are willing to volunteer some time on Saturday (July 16) or Sunday (July 17) to assist with birding and botany on the daily hikes. If you want to stay overnight accommodation would be provided. Contact Pam Munroe (250-338-0187 or dpmunroe@telus.net) if you are interested.

Coordinator BC Nature Summer Camp Strathcona Park Lodge July 15-19 2011:

Pam Munroe





Laurel-leaved Daphne

Having joined Krista Kaptein's group of naturalists interested in "Sharing Our Natural History" and exploring the Mack Laing Park/Brooklyn Creek area we discovered among a variety of fascinating plants a shrub which I will not forget. It reaches a height of 0.5 - 1.5 metres, has leaves in dense whorls at the shoot tips, which are oblanceolate, 2-13 cm long, dark green and glossy. Furthermore inconspicuous yellow-green axial flowers will appear in early spring, producing black berries, which are extremely poisonous. Watch your kids!

When checking a variety of floras covering BC in my library, I did not find a single hint referring to that species, not in Pojar and MacKinnon, Hitchcock and Cronquist or in my Western Garden Book. And yet, in my daughter's garden in Victoria it was a pest. In fields around Sooke it is most invasive and threatening. In our garden along the beach of Union Bay I thought it to be a rare northern-most sample. Our observation in Mack Laing Park taught me to regard it as an invasive shrub spreading dramatically.

Where did I find information to identify this shrub and learn about its native range in England, Europe, Algeria, and the Azores? The answer: on the internet. Check: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daphne.html> and identify *D.laureola* by comparing colour photos of various species. In other words, rather than leafing through a number of books, in 2011 and onwards, a search on the internet will assist us much better and faster. Thanks, Annette, for the introduction to this new pathway. Thank you!

Fred Constabel

Thanks from MIST



On behalf of the Mitlenatch Island Stewardship Team (MIST) I would like to thank the Comox Valley Naturalists for their generous donation of \$250.00. The funds provided by your members allowed for the construction and installation of several signs. These included five- No Entry, Birds Nesting, two-Gull Blind signs and a sign marking the volunteers' cabin.



The Mitlenatch Island Stewardship Team has established an agreement with B.C. Parks to manage the volunteer program. With Parks guidance they are also responsible for maintaining and replacing the Parks infrastructure including the bird blind, signs etc.. Next year we hope to have two new interpretive sign displays completed.

Peggy Sowden, Mitlenatch Island Stewardship Team (MIST)

Northern Pygmy Owl Study



Over the years Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (M.A.R.S.) have been involved in a variety of scientific studies related to local species including banding hummingbirds, West Nile Virus, poisoned eagles and Trumpeter swans.

In February, the Ministry of Environment, together with Pacific Northwest Raptors in Duncan, and M.A.R.S. launched a new pilot project on the release of juvenile pygmy owls into the wild after time spent in rehabilitation, and the feasibility of radio tracking the owls on Vancouver Island. The pygmy owl is Canada's smallest owl standing a mere fifteen centimetres tall. There are four sub-species of pygmy owls and the local one is the "Swarthi" species

These little owls are ferocious daytime hunters, which makes them a perfect species to track. Perfectly camouflaged to fit in with their habitat that includes mixed forestland with nearby open fields or farmlands, they also have a unique feather pattern on the back of the head that resembles a pair of eyes, much like some butterflies and fish. Although there have been previous studies conducted on adult pygmy owls none have been on juvenile birds. There is very sparse knowledge of their general biology including nesting success, longevity, survival, and range. Why is this study important? It is hoped the information collected will provide a greater understanding of the pygmy owls' habitat requirements, as well as feeding and reproduction habits. In order to make this study work it was necessary to use telemetry to track the health, activity and movement of the owls.

Four owls were used for this study- all were juveniles, two males and two females, that had been separated from their parents. The two owls in the Courtenay area had been in the wild hunting on their own; the Duncan pair were rescued as owlets and had not been exposed to the wild. Three different options were explored to

attach the transmitters to the body. The one that was chosen was a specially designed "back pack" which fitted around the body under the wings holding the transmitter in place along the owl's back. The apparatus could only weigh 3 per cent of the total body weight and be the least invasive and efficient design.

Trials were conducted at M.A.R.S. and in Duncan to help the owls get used to flight with the "back-packs" during which time they were closely monitored; unfortunately one of our little owls it did not make it to the field study after escaping through a tiny hole in pursuit of a mouse, and ending up with three recovering eagles.

In mid September the Duncan owls were released at an elevation of approximately four hundred meters, but they promptly headed for lower ground, unfortunately both were predated upon within the first week. They were collected and will provide feathers for blood and DNA samples. The Courtenay Owl was released in the Trent River area of Royston and was successfully tracked for 3 weeks. For more information and details visit M.A.R.S. website.

Maj Birch

Campbell River Bald Eagle Festival

Plans are underway for the 6th Annual Bald Eagle Festival to be held at the Maritime Heritage Center in Campbell River by Discovery Pier on Saturday February 26th from 10 am to 4 pm. The theme this year is the "LEGACY OF PHOENIX" based upon the young eaglet on Hornby Island WebCam that died suddenly last summer. Doug Carrick from Hornby Island will be at the Eagle Fest again this year.

There are several guest speakers during this years' lectures. We welcome Mike McIntosh of the Burrowing Owl Recovery project who plans to bring their ambassador "Beaker". Mike will be able to explain the program goals to bring these small owls back from near extinction.

Art Martell is a well-known birder in the Comox Valley who is a regional coordinator for Bird Studies Canada and the BC Breeding Bird Atlas. Art will be addressing the recent notable Bird Trends in this region with some very interesting results obtained over the years during Christmas Counts and Coastal Waterbird studies.

Photo Tech fotosource Eagle Fest Photo Contest is back by popular demand. For more information or if you are interesting in sponsoring, contact

info@wingtips.org

Maj Birch

Our Native Pollinating Bees



The regular monthly meeting of the Comox Valley Naturalists Society will be held February 20, 2011 at 7:00 pm at the Florence Filberg Centre, 411 Anderton Avenue, Courtenay. The speaker will be Victoria bee expert Gordon Hutchings, and will consist of detailed information on native bee pollinators and their habitat requirements. The annual AGM will follow an abbreviated meeting.

Gordon has been studying native bees for 22 years in B.C., the Yukon and Saskatchewan. He has been a contract field biologist for the Royal B.C. Museum, B.C. Ministry of Environment (Conservation Data Centre), the Yukon Territory Government, and Canada Wildlife Service. He also has a book on dragonflies of western boreal forests which will be coming out soon.

There are over 450 species of bees in B.C. Some species are adapted to very specific types of flowers. The biggest threats to native bee species are habitat loss/degradation, habitat fragmentation, and pesticides. Native bees (especially Mason bees) are becoming increasingly important as pollinators since honey-bee populations have been drastically reduced by an introduced mite. Most of the agricultural crops in British Columbia depend on pollination by bees.

Dave Lacelle

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Ring-billed Gull feasting on spawned-out Sockeye Salmon, near mouth of the Adam's River. Note the yellow bill with black ring near tip, yellow eye and legs, and black wing tips with a white spot near tip. This is a non-breeding bird with slightly streaked head.

Charles Brandt photo and description



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Sharing Our Natural History: a new project for CVNS

CVNS has a new project: '*Sharing Our Natural History*': a project to create a contemporary nature viewing guide to the Comox Valley.

Funding for the project has been received through the 'New Horizons for Seniors' program administered by Human Resources & Skills Development Canada. The contemporary nature guide will have a summary component in the form of a brochure to be distributed at community venues such as the Visitors Centre; and a more in-depth, on-line component. This will be in the form of expanded information available to the broader community through the CVNS website.

Long-time members will recall the 'Nature Viewing Guide to the Comox Valley & Environs' book produced by the CVNS in 1997. The book is being used as a basis for this new project.

The CVNS has many knowledgeable, talented and enthusiastic members - we have the expertise to make this project a success! An advisory team of senior CVNS members to oversee the progress of this project is already in place. Many CVNS members have already come forward to offer their expertise with natural history technical information; with production technical information; with participating in information gathering and review; and offering to contribute photography, artwork and writing for the project.

Below are some ways CVNS members can get involved with this exciting project:

1) Contributing Production elements:

- Photography
- Drawings/artwork
- Writing
- Graphic design & layout e.g. w/ Adobe InDesign
- Map-making e.g. w/Google Maps/Google Earth
- On-line field data entry e.g. w/Google Docs/Excel
- Webpage design & layout using Wordpress

2) Participating in Field Trips:

Many of the nature viewing sites from the first guidebook, as well as new sites, are being visited - to gather information on such things as facilities, access, etc. as well as up-to-date natural history info. Members are encouraged to accompany or lead these explorations which will be ongoing into the summer.

3) Reviewing the Website:

Since a major portion of the new nature viewing guide will now be on-line, feedback will be needed from

members (with all levels of computer expertise) who are willing to review the web pages as they are developed - from approx. March to August. To participate in any part of the project please contact: Project Coordinator, Krista Kaptein, kapteink@shaw.ca 250-338-9962 as soon as possible.

Krista Kaptein

Sockeye Salmon Adams River near Chase



Photo Charles Brandt

Elder College needs Presenters

The Elder College fall lecture series is *Frontiers of Science*. We are looking for knowledgeable and passionate presenters to give a general discussion of recent developments in their field and predict what developments might occur in the next few years. If you or someone you know might be interested please contact Bucky Buchanan jdbucky@shaw.ca

The Comox Valley Elder College (CVEC) is a program designed for seniors - all members are to be at least 55. Twice a year, CVEC offers an eight-week lecture series. CVEC is run entirely by volunteers drawn from among its members. NIC provides valuable and essential staff support, registration, class scheduling, financial administration, and facility use coordination.

All presentations are given on a Saturday morning in October or November of 2011 in the Stan Hagan Theatre, North Island College in Courtenay. The lecture audience will be up to 220 persons. The audience education level runs the gamut from some high school to PhD. Regardless of the lecture topic, questions for the speaker will be many in number and high in quality. CVEC activities are low cost to make them as widely available as possible. We do not offer honorarium to speakers, but will reimburse travel and accommodation expenses if requested and will definitely provide lunch at a local restaurant after the presentation. *Bucky Buchanan*

CVNS Nature Walks & Activities March to June 2011

Those who wish to carpool, meet 30 minutes prior to start of the walk at Old Church Theatre 755 Harmston Ave Courtenay to arrange rides among the group. Meet guides at trail heads.

Thursday, March 3, 1:30 pm, Kin Beach Park. Start at park entrance. Guide: Fred Constabel. FMI: 250-335-1352.

Saturday, March 12, 1:30 pm, Brooklyn Creek – Mack Laing Park. Start at Comox Mall east entrance. Guide: Jill Hart. FMI: 250-339-9880.

Saturday, March 19, 9:00 am, Airpark Trail. Start at Mansfield Drive. Guide: Fred Constabel. FMI: 250-335-1352. (*walk will be open to the general public)

Saturday, March 26, 9:00 am, Airpark Broombash, parking on Mansfield Drive, bring along clippers and gloves, water and a snack. Frank Hovenden FMI: 250-338-9962.

Thursday, April 7, 9:00 am, Tsolum River Trails. Start at Curling Rink parking lot on Headquarters Rd. Guide: Fran Newson. FMI: 250-339-4001.

Thursday, April 14, 9:00 am, Lazo Marsh . Start at the entrance of Lazo Marsh off Lazo Rd. Guide: Robin Harrison. FMI: 250-339-4754. (*walk will be open to the general public)

Saturday, April 23, Noon to 3 pm, Goose Spit Park, Comox. Join birders of the CVNS to celebrate the migration of Pacific Black Brant at the RD Goose Spit Park, as part of the 2011 Brant Wildlife Festival. Learn about the Brant's long journey and get a chance to observe the birds up close through spotting scopes set up along the beach. FMI: Art Martell: 250-334-2979.

Thursday, April 28, 9:00 am Puntledge Park. Start at parking lot on 1st St. .Walk Puntledge Park and Rotary Riverside Trail to Masters Greenway. Bring lunch. Guide: Karin Franzen. FMI: 250-334-7737.

Sunday, May 1 all day, the annual **Comox Spring Bird Count.** This is your opportunity to join in a day-long bird count, followed by a pot-luck supper, in much better weather than at Christmas time. FMI: Carol Muirhead: 250-331-0511.

Saturday, May 7, Oyster River to Salmon Point with lunch at the restaurant. Meet at Harmston Road at 9:15 am and/or at Oyster River Parking lot off HW 19A at 10:00 am. Guide: Fred Constabel. FMI: 250-335-1352.

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 am, Seal Bay Park around Melda's Marsh . Start at Bates Rd parking lot. Guide: Frank Hovenden. FMI: 250-338-9962. (*walk will be open to the general public)

Saturday, May 21, 9:00 am, Morrison Creek Trails. Parking on Lake Trail Rd in front of Lake Trail School, across from the convenience store. Walk from Arden Rd. to Robert Lang Dr, through Morrison Park & part of Masters Greenway. Guide: Steph Nathan. FMI: 250-334-7701.

Saturday, June 4, Ship's Point . Meet at 9:15 to car pool on Harmston Ave. or/and at 10:00 am at Fanny Bay Hall on HW 19A. Guide: Fred Constabel. FMI: 250-335-1352 (*walk will be open to the general public)

Saturday, June 11, Miracle Beach Park. Meet at 9:15 am to car pool on Harmston Ave. or/and at 10:00 am at the Park entrance (Nature House). Bring a snack and a drink. Guide: Betty Brooks. FMI: 250-337-8180.

Please note: Guides: All non-member field trip participants to sign a waiver recognizing that there are risks inherent to all outdoor activities. On all Field trips wear suitable clothing and footwear, and bring water & a snack. **No dogs please.** Share traveling expenses when car-pooling: i.e. 10 cents / km/ person.