



www.centralvalleynaturalists.org

Meetings are held the second
Wednesday of each month
(except July and August) at 7:30 p.m.
in the Seniors' Resource Centre
Michael Collins Room
2478 McCallum Road, Abbotsford

Mailing address: P.O. Box 612
Abbotsford, BC V2T 6Z8
Email: haroos@shaw.ca

NEWSLETTER

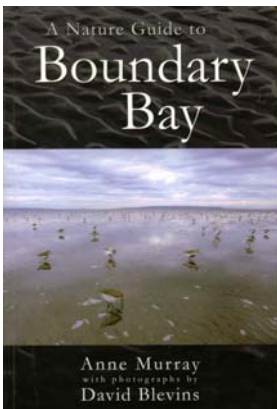
January 2007

*“To know nature
and to
keep it worth knowing”*

The objectives of the Central Valley Naturalists

- *To enjoy and interpret natural history*
- *To promote an understanding and an appreciation of natural ecosystems*
- *To promote the concept of stewardship of natural resources*
- *To participate as naturalists in public consultations related to questions of environment and development in the Fraser Valley*

Meeting Schedule



January 10, 2007 “What's so special about Boundary Bay”

Naturalist and author,
Anne Murray, will give
a wonderfully illustrated
talk on the wildlife and
environment of Boundary
Bay and the surrounding
area from Robert's Bank

to Langley. Anne's presentation will be
based on her recent book *"A Nature Guide
to Boundary Bay"*.

February 14, 2007 “Beaver Ecology”



Biologist and environment
consultant, *Oliver Busby*, will share his in-
depth knowledge of beaver ecology with us
on Valentine's Day. Oliver has provided
service for the past eight years to various
governments helping them to make wise
decisions about managing beaver issues on
public lands. This requires an intimate
understanding of the life cycle and
behaviour of this Canadian symbol. He is
also involved in biophysical inventories
including McKee Peak. Oliver hopes to
start his PhD on this species in the fall.

March 11, 2007

McKee Peak stream mapping and wildlife inventory

To be confirmed

*If you have any suggestions for a topic or
speaker, please contact Wendy DaDalt at 604-
856-2575 or Kathy Wilkinson at 604-854-3203*



SILENT AUCTION

Thank you to all donors and
bidders! We raised **\$552** for the
club at our December meeting.

FIELD TRIPS

The **FIELD TRIPS** could be of 2 to 4 hours in duration.

Please remember that all participation in field trips is at your own risk. For details on any of these Field Trips and carpooling, contact Jacqui Reznick at 604-557-1828

N.B. PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER A DAY BEFORE THE FIELDTRIP OF YOUR INTENT.

This will greatly help in planning and carpooling, etc.



January 20 - Saturday

Reifel Bird Sanctuary

Meet at the Sanctuary at 10:30 am.

To get there take Highway 1 West, take 232nd Street exit South,

Highway 10, Ladner Trunk Road, River Road W, turn right at Westham Island Road and follow signs.

February 17 - Saturday

Silver Creek Wetlands in Mission

Meet at 1:00 pm

Travel west on Lougheed Highway, turn right on Nelson and stay on the right side on Nelson and less than a km is the parking area. Sharon Syrette will be our guide.

March – West Creek Wetlands

Details to follow

April – Barnston Island

Details to follow

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Sunniest winters:
Winnipeg, with an average of 358 hours of sunshine during December, January and February

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



“After Bird Count dinner and results tallying”

The following is a brief preliminary summary of our ***Abbotsford-Mission Christmas Bird Count***, held on Friday, December 29.

We had **29** field observers who spent the day counting **23,551** birds of **90** different species. There were at least **5** additional species seen during "count week", being 3 days before and 3 days after the count day. No new species were seen on count day that had not been observed on any of our previous Christmas Bird Counts.



“Birding in Ravine Park”

However, the count week period produced a **Hutton's Vireo** and what is surely the highlight of the count, a **Great Gray Owl** rediscovered at **Downes Bowl** the day after the count; both new to our Christmas Bird Count.

Other birds recorded during Count Week were submitted by Glen Ryder from **Sumas Mountain**; a **Ruffed Grouse**, **Western Screech-Owl**, and **Hermit Thrush**.

Surprisingly, the species with the highest individual total was **American Wigeon** with 3,265, surpassing even the **North-western Crow** with 3,236 and the 2,749 **European Starlings** seen.

Also impressive was Gerry Power's report of 43 *Barn Owls*. Last year's total of 38 Barn Owls was the **high count for all of 2005 North America's Christmas Bird Counts** and I suspect this year's Abbotsford-Mission Christmas Bird Count will continue to hold this place of honour.

Thank you to all who participated in this year's count to make it a success.

News from CVN friends



Over the holiday season it is very satisfactory to hear from absent friends, particularly if they are faring well. Both Irene Harris, for years our hospitality chair and Natalie Rowe, our webmaster, have settled in well in their new environment. Irene has found a book discussion group, bridge partners and lovely trails she and her daughter's dogs enjoy. Where she lives there is a clear river, full of fish. She agrees with the Canadian Geographic which has declared that her village, on Lake Huron, has the most beautiful sunsets in the world. Irene checks them out most everyday!

Natalie too enjoys her new surroundings, in rural Quebec; her Christmas card featured bilingual jokes!

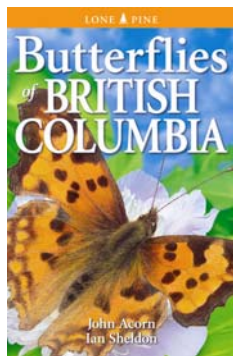
Once a Naturalist, always a Naturalist: she is illustrating a children's book about Western Diamond back rattlesnakes! We must acquire a copy once it is published.

Johanna

Butterflies of BRITISH COLUMBIA

by John Acorn & Ian Sheldon.

Published by Lone Pine Publishing,
2006. 360 pp.
Retail Price \$28.95.
Reviewed by
Kathleen Wilkinson.



A recent addition to Lone Pine's arsenal of natural history books, this handy-sized field guide covers butterflies and skippers of the province and should appeal to both complete beginners (such as myself) and experienced enthusiasts. A quick

reference guide at the beginning allows readers to compare a specimen to the illustrations, zero in on a likely family or species and then turn to the appropriate page in the text for more information. This is followed by an introduction that includes sections on how butterflies are named (in considerable detail), basic butterfly biology and how to get the most out of your butterfly watching. A glossary, resources list (including reference books), checklist and indices to scientific and common names is supplied at the end of the book.

The main body of the book is comprised of 1-2 page descriptions of over 180 butterflies and skippers, arranged by families, subfamilies and tribes. An overview of each group is presented, along with beautiful photographs of one or more members. For each species, a short text is provided which gives background on the taxonomy, behaviour, colour variability and other comments of interest, accompanied by large, detailed coloured illustrations of male and female specimens in natural positions (usually butterflies rest with their wings closed and



therefore the underside of the wing is usually shown, as well as the topside), along with other species which look alike.

Especially helpful is the species at a glance section containing short notes on other names the butterfly is known by, wingspan size, what to look for to aid identification, comparison with similar species, caterpillar food plants, habitat and time of year when the species is most likely to be seen, and a distribution map.

The authors have chosen not to illustrate caterpillars as there is no simple way to distinguish between butterfly and moth caterpillars, most caterpillars change appearance as they grow, and/or may occur in different colours. Despite these difficulties, I would have preferred to see at least commonly seen caterpillars illustrated, and less emphasis on taxonomy, which is obviously of keen interest to Acorn.

I found the information on butterfly behaviour fascinating. I have often observed butterflies gathering in mud puddles or on manure, but never realized that these butterflies are all males who are sipping salts to increase the quality of their sperm. Males also "hill-top", congregating on these high areas in order to attract a mate. Butterflies are actually a subgroup within moths, and unlike most moths, don't spin a cocoon around the pupa. Although individual butterflies only live about a week the butterfly season in B.C. can run from March to October.

Acorn's passion for butterflies (and all insects, I believe, having seen his TV show *The Nature Nut* regularly in Alberta) is evident throughout the text. This book makes an attractive contribution to the naturalist's library and if 10 or more CVN members are interested in purchasing a copy, we will receive a 40% discount from Lone Pine.

Science Fair

The next Fraser Valley Regional Science Fair will take place Febr.26 and 27, 2007. As supporters and participants we have again been asked to judge our category (Nature and Environment). We are looking for four CVN Judges and we have only one: Henry Savard. What is needed are a couple of hours to view the exhibit, Monday and Tuesday afternoon, and to interview and question the students about their project. On Tuesday afternoon the judges, after consultations decide on the winners, 3 winners in total: 1st and 2nd prize, awarded by C.V.N. and one prize offered by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists. If you can help please phone Henry Savard at 604 853-5188 or Johanna Saaltink at 604-856-4982



WINTER BEAUTY

Flakes have individual characteristics.

The Lower Mainland may not have seen its last dusting of snow for this winter.

But there is more to these tiny crystals than shovelling, skiing and snarled traffic.

Snow has a science of its own

Once they land, snowflakes blend with fallen snow, blurring their individual geometry. But they do retain some separation: The air spaces between the flakes insulate the ground and muffle sound.

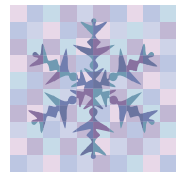
According to the United States National Snow and Ice Data Center, 10 inches of fresh snow, 7 percent water, is roughly equal to a six-inch layer of fibreglass insulation R-value of R-18 – about the level of heat resistance recommended for residential walls.

The blanket keeps animals underneath it warm, and it shields shrubs and ground cover from bitter winds. That is why horticulturists do not advise brushing it off unless the weight threatens to break a branch.

Scientists classify snowflakes into eight main categories. The best-known, familiar from holiday decorations and winter sweaters, is the “stellar dendrite,” the six-sided star. A real flake does not have

four, five or eight sides, but six (or, more rarely, 12), reflecting its molecular structure.

There also are sectored plates, hollow columns, needles, spatial dendrites, capped columns, timed crystals and the all-purpose “irregulars.” Check them out on www.snowcrystals.com



Is it really true no two snowflakes are alike? Roughly summarized, it depends in part on your definition of “alike.” Some simple flakes are, but it's unlikely that two complex ones are identical. (See Kenneth Libbrecht's book *The Snowflake: Winter's Secret Beauty*)

Humidity and temperature are the major shapers of snowflakes, which are actually individual or clustered ice crystals. Flakes are born in clouds, where they attach themselves to small particles such as ash, clay, sand or soil. They grow by pulling water molecules out of the air and incorporating them.

Temperatures determine whether the flakes grow flat or columnar, but it is not a simple formula. For example, snowflakes in the lab will form as plates at 5 and 28 degrees, as needles at 23 degrees. Shapes generally are more complex at higher humidity. The wind sculpts the flakes by pushing them into other flakes or spinning them around.

Each of us also makes a small contribution to the creation of snowflakes, in the form of water evaporating from skin or exhaled. Each person exhales about a litre of water every day, and most of this water rains or snows back down again within a week's time.

To study the varying shapes of flakes, watch them in midair or as they land on a cold surface; even a glove will do. A piece of frozen black cardboard is better. A chilled windshield, which can be looked at in comfort from inside your vehicle, serves the purpose, but the view doesn't last long if the car is warm. A magnifying glass will enhance the detail.



“ice on

window”

We have enough time left in winter, whether we get snow or not, that we will have frosty mornings.

Whether you look on the car windows or the blade of grass, it's just beautiful stuff. It says, “Look at me and enjoy me”.

Membership Fees - Single \$25, Family \$30 which are due January 1 each year.
Membership provides the following benefits: 5 CVN newsletters per annum, automatic membership in the Federation of B.C. Naturalists, subscription to "The B.C. Naturalist" (4 issues per year)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

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_____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Particular nature interests? (optional) _____

Expertise which could benefit the CVN. (optional) _____

Additional donations gratefully accepted Amount \$ _____

Please mail to Central Valley Naturalists, P.O. Box 612, Abbotsford, BC V2S 6R7, or give to Jacqie at the hospitality desk at the monthly meeting. Membership fees are due January 1st each year.

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