



www.centralvalleynaturalists.org

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m.

In the Abbotsford Middle School Multi-purpose Room
33231 Bevan Avenue
Abbotsford, B. C.
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Abbotsford, BC V2T 6Z8
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NEWSLETTER

September 2009

*“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

Our monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of the month will be in the Multi-Purpose room of the **Abbotsford Middle School**, located on the corner of Bevan



*Don't forget to
renew your
2009 CVN
membership!!*

Avenue and Ware Street.
Please bring your own mugs.

September 9, 2009

“The Mystery of the Marbled Murrelets”



Paul Jones, a UBC Forestry graduate and retired international forestry consultant will be our speaker. Paul

has always had an interest in birds and natural history, and with the Friends of Caren was instrumental in saving 3000 ha of the Caren Range as Spiipiyus, a new provincial park on the Sunshine Coast where Canada's first active marbled murrelet nest was discovered, and home to Canada's oldest closed canopy forests.

October 14, 2009

“Natural History of South America”

Edith Camm, a retired Professor emerita of University of the Fraser Valley, will return to talk to us about her adventures in South America earlier this year, with a focus on natural and cultural history. Edith is an active member of the Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer Stakeholder group and was one of the original members of the



City of Abbotsford Environmental Advisory Committee.

November 18, 2009 (3rd Wednesday)

"Coastal Forestry Ecology and Issues"

Vince Poulin,

December 9, 2009

"Christmas Potluck"

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

FIELD TRIPS **And Community Events**

September 8 - 16?, 2009

South Migration of the Vaux's Swifts

Watch the Vaux's swifts enter the old Sumas customs building again for their night time communal roost. Perhaps a club viewing on September 11 or 12? More details at the September meeting.



FIELD TRIP REPORTS

June 10, 2009 Annual Picnic at Aldergrove Lake Park



"Getting ready to release rescued mallard ducklings and a green-backed heron in Pepin Brook"

June 13, 2009 - Saturday

Abbotsford's McKee Peak

When my mom invited me out on the Saturday nature hike, I asked her about the terrain. "Oh it's an easy, relaxing walk." she replied. Now, I would never accuse my mother of lying but perhaps she was thinking about some other random nature walk. Nonetheless, the hike up McKee Peak was worth the sweat, heat and bug bites.

When we arrived at the meeting spot and parked our cars we noticed the 'no parking' signs posted in the area. The group decided to risk potential ticketing/towing and continue on with the day's plan. The first hour of the walk consisted of uphill, never ending switchbacks. As we progressed up the hillside, we were provided with the background story. The land belonged to Mr. Trethewey and was used for grazing. However, as Mr. Trethewey had passed away, the land was now in the midst of being re-zoned for residential development. I was disappointed to find out that so little land was going to be put aside as parkland. What a shame! At about 45 minutes into the hike, we came upon a clearing that provided a view of the Eagle Mountain development. The comparison was startling. Here we were surrounded by lush meadows and vast forests and all we could see when we looked out at the view was bareness.

The hike continued and I found myself in disbelief that we would ever reach the peak. And then before I knew it, we had arrived. Initially, I was speechless. I can only describe the view as being the kind you experience from the window of an airplane that's coming in for a landing. We were told that on a clear day you could see the ocean. Unfortunately, there was a haze blocking this view. Looking down the steep hillside was a little unnerving as you couldn't see the bottom. While we were snacking and resting, we were greeted by a couple of turkey vultures and a peregrine falcon.



Again, it was a pretty amazing site. I didn't want to leave but the group decided to take a different trail back to our cars.

We were told that this trail would be challenging as it was steep and slippery. I was happy for the change of pace.



During the hike back, we were treated to views of majestic meadows and mossy green forests. We even came upon a couple of trickling waterfalls. Though the trail back required more concentration than the first one, my thoughts kept drifting. I couldn't imagine why anyone would want to destroy this ecosystem. The group confirmed that this site was one of a kind as all other hillsides in the valley had been developed.

I wish the public was aware of the fact that these meadows, forests and waterfalls were slated for destruction. However, as the land is private, hikers need special permission to enter the trails.

For me, the hike ended on a bittersweet note. I was thankful that I was able to participate in the hike, but at the same time, I found the situation depressing.

In case you were wondering, thankfully, no one received a parking ticket.

Rebecca Reznick

July 18 - Saturday ***Heather Trail/Alpine Meadows - Manning Park by Val Carleton***

On a perfect, sunny Saturday morning, eleven CVN members set out from Abbotsford for Manning Park. After a brief stop at the Lodge to watch the Columbia Ground Squirrels, we headed up the steep road leading to the microwave towers at the top of the opposite mountain. Right from the beginning, a

variety of flowers began to appear along the sides of the road, daisies, penstemon, yarrow, tiger lilies, and many more. We stopped at the lookout point with its grand panorama of the surrounding mountain peaks to the east, west and south across the US border. Tiny Yellow Pine Chipmunks popped into view looking for a handout, and ravens and Clark's Nutcrackers flew up boldly as well.

We parked the cars at one of the upper parking lots and started our walk along Heather Trail. It was breezy and cool, a pleasant change from the warmth of Abbotsford. Flowers were everywhere, bordering the path and extending in swaths up and down the mountainside. The western anemones were finished blooming but had left their mark in many fuzzy "towhead babies". Purple was a dominant color with arctic lupine, spreading phlox, a couple types of penstemon and mountain phacelia. Pink mountain heather bloomed in patches here and there. Heart-leaved arnica, lance-leaved stonecrop and western St John's wort were bright yellow. Red Indian paintbrush and columbines made bright splashes of colour. The beautifully sculpted and ribbed leaves of hellebore plants stood out above the lower foliage, though their flowering spikes weren't fully out yet.

The walk proceeded slowly. This wasn't an outing for serious hikers! Among the group were people interested not just in flowers but also birds, butterflies and dragonflies, so we made frequent stops to identify and photograph. At one point we heard the low, booming hoot of a blue grouse. It took a lot of scanning of the nearby foliage before we finally located it about 20 feet up a spruce tree, eating the fresh tips of the twigs and hooting at regular intervals. Stan checked the call on his ipod and confirmed that it was indeed a blue rather than a spruce grouse.

The trail looped round the mountainside and emerged at the upper parking lot. Pikas and marmots are sometimes seen on the scree slopes here but we were out of luck this time. As we ate our lunches at a couple picnic tables, a family of grey/Canada jays approached and begged for bites from our lunch bags.

Each year the alpine flowers come into bloom on different dates, depending on the year's weather. This year we managed to choose a date that was

right at the height of the flowers. It was a pleasure to see the variety of colours, shapes and plant types.



Participants: Hank & Alice Roos, Stan & Marijke Olson, Lorna Keith, Neil & Val Carleton, Herman & Joyce Venema, Heather McLean and Eigil Jensen

The following lists were compiled by Stan Olson – AMAZING!

Plants (Alpine Meadows and vicinity)

Common Name	Latin name
SHRUBS	
Blue-leaved huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium deliciosum</i>
White Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron albiflorum</i>
Pink mountain heather	<i>Phyllodoce empetriformis</i>
Mountain Ash	<i>Sorbus sitchensis</i>
FLOWERING PLANTS	
Tiger Lily	<i>Lilium columbianum</i>
False Hellebore	<i>Veratrum viride</i>
White Rein-orchid	<i>Platanthera dilatata</i>
Alaska Rein-orchid	<i>Platanthera unalascensis</i>
Sulfur Eriogonum	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>
Lance-leaved Stonecrop	<i>Sedum lanceolatum</i>
Tolmie's Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga tolmiei</i>
Redstemmed Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga lyallii</i>
Leatherleaf Saxifrage	<i>Leptarrhena pyrolifolia</i>
Western Anemone	<i>Anemone occidentalis</i>
Red Columbine	<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>
Meadow Spirea	<i>Luetkea pectinata</i>

Fan-leaved Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla flabellifolia</i>
Arctic Lupine	<i>Lupinus latifolius</i>
Cow Parsnip	<i>Heracleum lanatum</i>
Mountain Phacelia	<i>Phacelia sericea</i>
Spreading Phlox	<i>Phlox diffusa</i>
Scarlet Gilia	<i>Gilia aggregata</i>
Mountain Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis alpestris</i>
Milkweed	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>
Wood Betony	<i>Pedicularis bracteosa</i>
Sickle-top Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis racemosa</i>
Elephant's Head	<i>Pedicularis groenlandica</i>
White Paintbrush	<i>Castilleja parviflora</i> var <i>albida</i>
Red Paintbrush	<i>Castilleja miniata</i>
Mountain Veronica	<i>Veronica cusickii</i>
Little-flowered Penstemon	<i>Penstemon procerus</i>
Davidson's Penstemon	<i>Penstemon davidsonii</i>
Orange Hawkweed	<i>Agoseris aurantiaca</i>
Salsify	<i>Tragopogon dubius</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millifolium</i>
Oxeye daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Subalpine Daisy	<i>Erigeron peregrinus</i>
Heart-leaved Arnica	<i>Arnica cordifolia</i>
Woolly Groundsel	<i>Senecio canus</i>
Woolly Pussytoes	<i>Antennaria lanata</i>
Edible Thistle	<i>Cirsium edule</i>
Western St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum formosum</i>
Sitka Valerian	<i>Valeriana sitchensis</i>

Dragonflies (Beaver Pond)

Northern Bluet
Paddle-tailed Darner
Four-spotted Skimmer
Red-waisted Whiteface

Butterflies (Alpine Meadows)

Anise Swallowtail
Lustrous Copper
Boisduval's Blue
Anna's Blue
Northwestern Fritillary
Anicia Checkerspot
Edith's Checkerspot
Vidler's Alpine



August 8 - Saturday

Birding in Point Roberts, Washington

It was an unusually cool August day that a group of 10 naturalists visited Point Roberts. Some members were unable to join us as passports are now a requirement to enter even this tiny US enclave. We missed you.

I had a few questions about this area but a National Geographic article from August 2004 answered them for me. Briefly then, it is a 13 square mile area that is part of the US but sits at the tip of a Canadian peninsula. In 1846 when the border between Canada and the US was drawn along the 49th parallel, it cut off a tiny lobe of land just south of Tsawassen, hanging out in the Pacific all by itself. Certainly it would have been more sensible to leave it as part of Canada. It is beautiful but inconvenient for the US citizens living there----no hospital, no doctor and no pharmacy, but apparently one of the best places to view orcas. J, K and L Pods are supposedly native to the Point.

However, we saw no orcas. We certainly scanned the waters for whatever was out there though. Our first stop was a marshy area near the beach to observe a few waterfowl species, and then we headed for Lighthouse Marine Park where we spent quite a while walking along the stony beach. Ten pairs of eyes observing with their various interested biases resulted in much to be noted and seen. Several gull types, swallows, ducks, cormorants, jelly fish, rocks, shells, fish, seals and more were examined and enjoyed.

These were the bird species observed: Winged Gull, Ring Billed Gull, Thayers Gull, California Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Harlequin Duck, North Western Crow, Great Blue Heron, Pelagic Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Barn Swallow, Starling, Brown Creeper, Black capped Chickadee, Chestnut Backed Chickadee, American Robin, Rock Pigeon, Pigeon Guillemot



Another destination was Lily Point which I would describe as a very special area with a high eroding ridge overlooking the water, where we were able to see an incredibly vast area of the Strait of Georgia. This area is a mixed evergreen and deciduous forest with a number of very old trees and beautiful undergrowth. **A special place needing some further exploration!**

It was a lovely and a very interesting day spent in excellent company. Thank you to the planners of the outing and the excellent guides as well as the drivers.

Erica Flint



BC Nature Fall Conference and FGM The Value of Nature – Summit to Sea September 10 to 13, 2009

Hosted by the
Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society

[Register](http://www.penderharbourwildlife.com) now for our Fall Conference and General Meeting, hosted by the Pender Harbour & District Wildlife Society on the Sunshine Coast. For more information about the program and accommodations, please visit www.penderharbourwildlife.com.



CLUB NEWS

A Fond Farewell!



In all likelihood most, if not all our members, are aware that Henk and Johanna Saaltink have left the Fraser Valley and moved to the Okanagan Valley.

Those of you who could attend, on July 19 enjoyed a wonderful Sunday afternoon at the Bunbury's, who hosted a farewell "open house" for them. It was said by many and thought by all that they will be greatly missed!

As founding members of the Central Valley Naturalists, they both completely immersed themselves from the very beginning in all aspects of conservation, education and providing leadership for our club in particular and other environmental organizations in our area of the valley. Always quick to take on a task, their enthusiasm seldom seemed to wane.

It sounds like a contradiction "that in their effort to reduce our footprint on the environment, they leave such enormous sized shoes to fill"!

So goodbye and thanks again!

Club Strategic Planning Results **- Member Opportunities**

In the spring of 2009, our club received a grant from BC Nature, in part to conduct a strategic planning exercise to identify member interests and priorities, and to set goals for the next 5 years. Based on the results of a member questionnaire, and a subsequent planning workshop, we have identified the action items below for the upcoming year and the club contact(s) for these initiatives:

1. Explore the possibility of establishing an organization similar to Langley Environmental Partners in Abbotsford. **Herman Venema (826-6872) or Dick Bunbury (852-2744).**
2. Provide more media coverage for our club and natural history and environmental issues. **Jacqui Reznick (557-1828).**
3. Help with conservation advocacy. **Kathy Wilkinson (854-3203).**
4. Hold another nature symposium in Abbotsford, similar to the well-received 2000 Nature at Our Doorstep. **Kathy Wilkinson (854-3203) or Alice Roos (853-4283).**
5. Promote our club through increased displays at both environmental and non-environmental events in our area. **Jacqui Reznick (557-1828 evenings)**
6. Website development **George Duffy (851-5097).**
7. Help with Articles for Newsletter **Alice Roos (853-4283).**

CONSERVATION **& EDUCATION**

Hello from Pender Island! It is hard to believe that six years have gone by since we left Abbotsford and our special friends at CVN. We are thankful to stay in touch with a number of you, and we have a special welcome mat here should the urge for a wee island visit overtake any of you!

This summer our welcome mat has been particularly in place for a new visitor - one who, according to the records, has never been seen here before! Of course, he may have been here unbeknownst, but we are very happy to give him the official welcome to

Pender Island! He is a blue-listed Townsend's Big-eared Bat! He is an ideal guest, asking nothing of us but quiet days to hang from the ceiling of our carport storage cupboard, where he rests up for his night-time forays in search of mosquitoes and moths. While we don't have many mosquitoes here, there is an interesting abundance of moths. On a recent very warm evening I counted six species as they fluttered outside a brightly lit window.



As you will see from his photograph, "Batty" is very cute - at least "only a mother could love" kind of cute. I had observed him hanging from the ceiling for a number of weeks, but only as

a little blob. That was until early July when Keith's visiting daughter and her husband decided to tidy our storage cupboard! I worried about disturbing the bat in the process, but he turned out to be only mildly concerned, merely stretching his head down to check things out. When I saw his silhouette I recognized the BIG ears and ran for the camera! That was really a bonus day, for we ended up with not only a tidied cupboard, but a new bat for the record!

Something I was not aware of is that Townsend's Big-eared Bats do not roost in narrow cracks as do Little Brown Bats, but prefer an open ceiling situation (I guess they need room for their ears!) That should have been my original clue, but I was clue-less in that regard until reading more! We do have Little Brown Bats roosting in a crack in our carport from time to time, with tiny guano offerings sometimes dropped onto the car. The tenacity of these droppings always amazes me. We can drive around for days without them being dislodged!

Batty's coordinates have now been GPS'ed for the records of the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre, and we enjoy a wee hello to him each afternoon.

Such is life on Pender Island!

Sylvia Pincott



The [Fall 2009 edition of Check It Out!](#) is now available online. Take a look and discover lots of great programs that will entice your family to explore, learn and experience nature in our parks.

Some of the fun family events coming up soon include the annual Coho Walk at Capilano River Regional Park on Sunday, September 13, and the Country Celebration at Campbell Valley Regional Park on the weekend of September 19 and 20 (page 1). We've also got outdoor health and wellness programs so you can get your legs moving and enjoy the fresh air (page 3). Or, explore our pristine watersheds (page 4). Finally, keep learning about your region and attend one of our new presentations (page 5).

There are a lot of programs available this fall! Register early to ensure your spot and avoid disappointment. We hope to see you.

If you have comments or photos to share, please send them to checkitout@metrovancouver.org. We are accepting high resolution images taken in our regional parks; scenery, plants, animals or people having fun. You may see your photo in the next edition of Check It Out!

CVN EXECUTIVE

President	Hank Roos	604-853-4283 haroos@shaw.ca
FBCN Director	Margaret Bunbury	604-852-2744 richard.bunbury@shaw.ca
Secretary	Herman Venema	604-826-6872 hcpvenema@shaw.ca
Treasurer	Jacqui Reznick	604-557-1828 mareznick@hotmail.com
Programs	Wendy DaDalt	604-856-2575 wendy@dadalt.net
	Kathy Wilkinson	604-854-3203
Field trips	VACANT	
Conservation	VACANT	
	VACANT	
	Kathy Wilkinson	604-854-3203 kwilkins2@shaw.ca
	Wendy DaDalt	604-856-2575
Hospitality	Christine Horsfield	604-853-0464 chorsfield@shaw.ca
Displays	Steve Howard	604-751-0282 sawhorse4@hotmail.com
	Jacqui Reznick/Gerry Powers	604-856-8166
Newsletter	Alice Roos	604-853-4283 haroos@shaw.ca

Membership Fees - Single \$30, Family \$35 which are due January 1 each year.
Membership provides the following benefits: 5 CVN newsletters per annum, automatic membership in BC Nature (FBCN), subscription to "BC nature" (4 issues per year)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Particular nature interests? (optional) _____

Expertise which could benefit the CVN. (optional) _____

Occupation (optional) _____

Additional donations gratefully accepted Amount \$ _____

Please mail to Central Valley Naturalists, P.O. Box 612, Abbotsford, BC V2T 6Z8, or give to Jacqui at the hospitality desk at the monthly meeting. Membership fees are due January 1st each year.



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