



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

# NEWSLETTER

March 2010

*“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 (except 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday for March) will be in the Multi-Purpose room of the **Abbotsford Middle School**, located on the corner of Bevan Avenue and Ware Street.  
Please bring your own mugs.



March 17, 2010

*“Barn Owls in the Fraser Valley: Survival in a changing landscape”*

Sofi Hindmarch, Biologist



April 14, 2010

*“Landscapes, plants and animals of Canada and the Atlantic Seaboard”*

Bob and Sheila Puls from the Langley Field Naturalists

May 12, 2010

*Members' Slide Night*



This is the time to share your nature pictures with the rest of the club. Please contact Kathy Wilkinson if you have any pictures to share.

June 9, 2010, 6:30 pm

*Annual Picnic location to be confirmed*

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

*Don't forget to renew  
your 2010 CVN  
membership!!*

## FIELD TRIPS and Community Events



### March 20, Saturday, 10:30 am Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve

This 1 ½ hour tour through the reserve will be led by the Chilliwack Field Naturalists. Nesting of the herons should be in full swing. Leader/contact is Scott Denkers 604-823-4563

To get there follow Highway 1 east to just across the Vedder Canal Bridge, take exit 109, keep right onto Yale Road and then turn right at Sumas Prairie Road. The heron interpretive centre is at the end of the road on the dyke.

### March 23 - 26 Regional Science Fair

Check out the projects at the University of the Fraser Valley.



### April 9 - 11, Bradner Flower Show

Held in the Bradner Community Hall located at 5305 Bradner Road, Abbotsford



### April 17, Saturday, 9:30 am Hogan Family Nature Park spring clean up

Let us meet on Saturday, April 17th, with our garden tools and walking shoes. After the work party we'll have a pleasant walk and admire the spring flowers.



### April 24, Saturday, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Earth Day Weekend Silverdale Wetlands Grand Opening

The rehabilitation of the wetland habitat has many trails, bridges, 5,000+ native plants, frog habitat, snake hibernacula, bird boxes, nesting platforms and educational signage. After many years of hard work they have come to this point of

celebration.



**May 8, Saturday, 9:00 am**  
**Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area**  
We will explore the area together with the Chilliwack Field Naturalists and led by Denis Knopp. More details to follow



**May 13 - 16**  
**BC Nature AGM in Kamloops**  
**"Grasslands: Past, Present and Future"**  
Check the winter 2009 BC Nature magazine for a schedule of topics, fieldtrips and registration information or check out.  
[www.bcnature.ca](http://www.bcnature.ca)

**May 14, Friday**  
**Arbour Day** at Bateman Park from 9:30 am - 2 pm

**May 24, Monday, 8:00 am to 12 noon**  
**A Rocha - Bird Walk**  
This morning of birding is open to all levels of birding skills to four different areas in South Surrey, Langley and White Rock. For more information contact Stan Olson.



**May 29, Saturday, 6:00 am to noon**  
**Glen Valley Bird Count**  
Meet at the Fort Winery. More details to follow.

## **FIELD TRIP REPORTS**

**January 30, 2010**  
**Silverdale Wetland, Mission**

It was anything but a fine Saturday morning when 9 of us took the opportunity, in the pouring rain to visit the Silverdale Wetlands, led by Jim Taylor (while his wife, Terry pulled out blackberry bushes).



The weather soon faded into the background as Jim proceeded to inspire us as we toured the wetlands. He explained all the work and improvements that have been made as well as plans for future improvements.

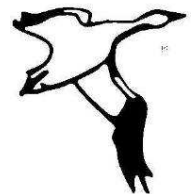
It sounds like they have thought of everything in their effort to restore this wetland to healthy habitat for all species that would naturally be found there, while eliminating harmful, invasive, introduced species.

If you have never visited the wetlands, be sure to take the opportunity and I am sure you will want to return. The Grand Opening of the wetlands is scheduled for April 24.

*Hank Roos*

**February 21, 2010**  
**Reifel Bird Sanctuary**

On a beautiful, crisp, sunny morning ten members of the CVN met at Tim Horton's to carpool for the trip to Reifel. Stopping at the green bridge at Westham Island we watched Mute Swans swimming in and around the floating homes.



At the Reifel Sanctuary ducks were plentiful along the pathways, always looking for handouts. Included in our sightings were the following: Red-winged Blackbird, Starling, N.W. Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Coot, Double-crested Cormorant, Ring-necked Duck, Mallard, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail (both mature and juvenile), Dunlin, Rock Dove, Bald Eagle (both mature and juvenile), Peregrine Falcon, Purple Finch, Western Grebe, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, Common Golden-eye, Glaucous-winged Gull, Pied-billed Grebe, Gadwall, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Night Heron (both mature and juvenile), Cooper's hawk, Northern Harrier, Kildeer, Merlin, Saw-whet Owl, American Robin, Raven, Sanderling, Song Sparrow, Trumpeter Swan, Fox Sparrow, House Sparrow, Green-winged Teal, Spotted Towhee, American Widgeon, Marsh Wren, Sandhill Crane, Tree Swallow, and in the water, a seal.

We were joined by three CVN members who found us near the Sandhill Cranes on the outer pathway. The volunteers at Reifel were very helpful directing us and relating information about recent sightings, feeding patterns, nesting habits and so on. We enjoyed our lunches on the deck of the lunchroom.



Our thanks go to Lynn Miller, who was accompanied by his son, for sharing his knowledge, his scope, and

The red-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguinem*) is blooming, which means it is time to get those humming bird feeders cleaned and put out.



**The HUMMINGBIRDS ARE COMING!**

books, with all of us.

*Margaret Bunbury*

## **CONSERVATION** **& EDUCATION**

### **Ornithology**

#### **'Least-known bird' finds safe haven**

Unseen in 140 years, large-billed reed warbler is sighted in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan - One of the world's rarest birds, which had not been seen for 140 years, is being protected by Afghan authorities after its breeding grounds were discovered in a remote mountain corridor.



The large-billed reed warbler had been called "the world's least-known bird" after being documented only twice. The drab, khaki-coloured bird was discovered in India in 1867, but it was not seen again until 2006, when one was spotted near a sewage works in Thailand.

An ornithologist unwittingly recorded the bird's song in 2008 while surveying species in Afghanistan's remote north eastern Wakhan Corridor. When the song was analysed, Robert Timmins realized he had found the elusive warbler and returned with colleagues to catch and study 20 specimens last year.

Afghanistan's Environmental Protection Agency has now added the warbler to its protected species list, which was established last year.

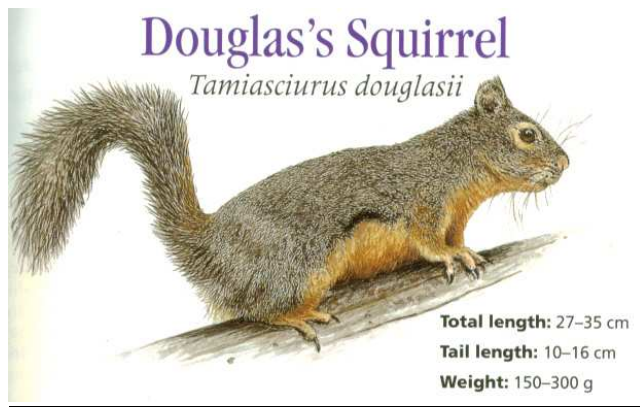
*"It is not true our country is full of only bad stories," said Mustafa Zahir, the agency's director-general and a grandson of the late king. "This bird, after so many years, has been discovered here.*

"Everyone thought it was extinct." When Timmins, of the Wildlife Conservation Society, heard the warbler's distinctive song in the Wakhan Corridor of the Pamir Mountains in 2008, he assumed them to be Blyth's reed-warblers.

He only realized they were a different species after seeing skins in the Natural History Museum in Tring, Hertfordshire, England. A warbler expert suggested they could be the long-lost large-billed variety.

A total of 48 species, including the snow leopard, wolf and brown bear, appear on Afghanistan's protected species list. However, hunters and trappers still illegally sell snow leopard pelts.

*Vancouver Sun, March 1, 2010*



About 5 years ago the Douglas squirrel was a frequent visitor to our back yard. We put up a squirrel nest box and for several years watched the young come out of the nest and play in the fir tree that the box was fastened to.

Then, came the grey and black squirrels, which soon replaced the Douglas squirrel. The nest box was taken down and put away. We did not want to encourage the big squirrels as they were introduced and 'not native'.

To our surprise about a year ago we heard a Douglas squirrel. Not long after, we actually saw one traveling through our trees to the neighbour's yard. We got our hopes up that this would be a frequent occurrence, which it turned out to be.

This winter we watched the squirrel scamper over the fence into the neighbour's yard and we presumed it lived in their wood pile.



One day as I was talking to Cliff Jury at the Backyard Birding store, he told me that the little Douglas squirrel is quite aggressive. This was confirmed about a week later when the little squirrel took on a big grey squirrel. We thought for sure he was going to get hurt. He just kept charging towards him and then

quickly retreating. Well, our little 'Dougie' managed to chase him out of the yard and he has not been seen very often since.

Hank repaired the squirrel box and hung it back on the Douglas fir tree and it has been carefully checked out by Dougie. The box has two layers. There is a side opening, then a floor and in the far corner another hole to go to the bottom level where they nest. A few weeks ago we saw him/her bringing dried leaves into the box.

Is there a mate for the Dougie in the area? We hope so. Following mating in early April, two to eight (usually four) young are born after a gestation of 35 days. The young are weaned at two months and then have to establish their own territories. Juveniles are sexually mature following their first winter.

*Alice Roos*

## DID YOU KNOW?

A famous resident population of Harbour Seals lives in Harrison Lake, B.C., more than 180 km upriver from the coast.

## 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        |              |
| Field trips   | Kathy Wilkinson         | 604-854-3203 |
| Conservation  | VACANT                  |              |
|               | 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 |
|               | gerrypowers@shaw.ca     |              |
| 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 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

**NOTE:** Participation in any Central Valley Naturalist Club activity is at your own risk.



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## **BACKYARD BIRDING**

### **Naturalist Members !!**

Present this ad or your membership card and get  
**10% off any regular priced items.**

#### **➔ 2 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU**

#13-33324 S. Fraser Way

Abbotsford V2S 2B4

Ph - 604-852-1960

8810-C Young Rd

Chilliwack V2P 4P5

Ph - 604-792-1239

HOURS: Mon.-Sat. 10:00-5:00