



www.centralvalleynaturalists.org

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

In the Legacy Sportcentre
Conference Room
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Abbotsford B.C.
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Abbotsford, BC V2T 6Z8
Email: haroos@shaw.ca

NEWSLETTER

January 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

The new venue for our monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of the month will be in the Conference room of the **Legacy Sportscentre** on the east side of the track at Rotary Stadium. Please bring your own mugs.



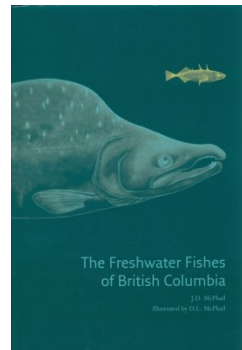
SILENT AUCTION

Thank you to all donors and bidders!
We raised just over \$600 for the Club
at our December meeting.

January 14, 2009

The Native Freshwater Fishes of the Fraser Valley.

By Dr. Don McPhail, a fisheries expert



The native freshwater fish fauna of the Fraser Valley is unique and several of our fishes occur nowhere else in Canada. This is remarkable in that all our native fishes are recent immigrants — they've all

arrived over the last 12,000 years. This talk outlines some of the remarkable journeys that brought them to our valley, as well as the behaviours and natural histories of selected species. The talk will close with a review of the flood of alien species that have come, and are still coming, to the valley and the threat they pose to our native species.

February 11, 2009

"Climate Change"

Guest speaker is Akua Schatz from the David Suzuki Foundation

March 11, 2009

Members Slide Night

April 8, 2009

WITS

By Jeannie Hughes, Wits coordinator

May 13, 2009

"Natural History of Princeton"

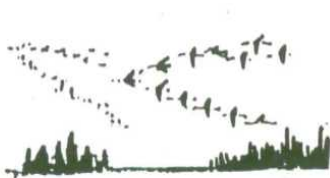
By Madelon Schouten

June 10, 2009 - Annual Picnic

January 2009 newsletter

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

*Don't forget to
renew your
2008 CVN
membership!!*



FIELD TRIPS

January 16, 2009

Silverdale Wetlands

Details to follow

The February and March fieldtrips are joint with the Langley club. Please call Anne Gosse 604-888-1787 if you are planning to attend.

February 8 - Sunday

**George C. Reifel Migratory Bird
Sanctuary, Delta**

We will join the guided walk with John Ireland at 10:00 am and hopefully see the nesting Great Horned & Northern Saw-whet Owls - as well as many more different species!

March 21 - Saturday

**Beach Grove and Boundary Bay Regional
Park, Delta**

We will join the Delta Naturalist and have a short talk by Anne Murray! Come join us at this great place to bird-watch in the winter - as the

populations of ducks in the bay exceed over 70,000 - as well as dunlin, sanderling, grebes, hawks, eagles, owls - plus many more species of birds! **Meet at Cammidge House in Boundary Bay Regional Park Tsawwassen at 9:30 am.**

April

Old Growth Stand, Sumas Mountain

Details to follow

May

TBD - Details to follow

June

McKee Peak - Details to follow

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

November 29, 2008 - Saturday - 9 am

**Birding at Blackie Spit with Steve
Howard**

This past Saturday was wet, cold and grey. You know the kind of day that inspires naps, comfort foods and sweaters. As nice as this sounds, these were not the plans for the day. The planned outing to Blackie's Spit in Crescent Beach was well enjoyed by all. I have to admit, my expectations were far exceeded. I was warned by one of the CVN members to be careful, that bird watchers were a little weird. I wasn't too worried as I had already been exposed to the addictiveness of this hobby via my mom (Jacqui Reznick).



Arthur Morris

Obviously, the birds a total of 22 species, seals, and flora observed throughout the morning were well worth the rain. We even came across two rogue coconuts. How totally and completely baffling! This was all complimented by the cohesiveness and warmth of the group. I am definitely looking forward to future Saturday morning adventures and now know that one should only approach a flock of birds once everyone in the group has had an opportunity to observe them through the scope and only then. I know my mom has now learned her lesson.

Rebecca Reznick



2008 Christmas Bird Count

(held January 3, 2009)

Stan and I would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Christmas Bird Count. While the numbers are down from previous years' counts, we consider this year's count a great success on many levels. We had four new species seen on count day. These were an American Bittern, Virginia Rail, Bohemian Waxwings, and a Harris' Sparrow. Also, for count week we added a Townsend's Solitaire as a new species for the count. Unofficially, our total for count day was 92 species and at least four additional species seen during count week. We had wonderful participation this year as well, which included several birders from Chilliwack and Harrison Bay. The weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of any of us despite slogging through the deep snow most of the day searching for birds. Of course, observing birds can brighten anyone's day. Finally, we were delighted to see so many come to the post count dinner. It is enjoyable to share our experiences of the day, both the delight in the birds we saw and the difficulties encountered in finding them. Again our deep appreciation to all those who helped make our Christmas Bird Count so very special.

Lynn Miller and Stan Olson, co-ordinators

Do Birds Count especially in the Cold?

Christmas Bird Count January 3, 2009

This year's Christmas Bird Count was postponed a week due to the snow. Jeanine & I met up with 8 other bird counters to count the birds that we saw at Mill Lake and Ravine Park in Abbotsford. We were one of about 10 different groups who counted the birds in the Abbotsford /Mission area on the same day.

Mill Lake was frozen over except for a small area. We got another light dusting of snow the night before and the car park and paths were still covered in snow. It was still around freezing; even the mallards and geese looked cold standing on the ice by the shore of the lake. This made it easier to count them. You didn't need your binoculars yet! We set off around the lake and the first stop was near to the unfrozen section of the lake. There were plenty of mallards, American widgeon and Canada geese standing on the edge of the ice. Some were swimming with two lesser scaups, and two ruddy ducks who dived as soon as you saw them surface. Overhead a V-formation of Canada geese flew over the lake heading northwards.

We continued around the lake to the east side where there are bushes and trees near the townhouses. Song sparrows were seen here as well as a fox sparrow. In the trees in the distance over the townhouses we saw a flock of about 8 evening grosbeaks, their yellow plumage visible in the early morning sun. A flock of pine siskins flew in and landed in the pine tree next to where we were standing. They fed, some of them upside down, on the pine cones as we watched. Behind us we hear the sound of the humming bird flying. In disbelief, we turned around and looked at each other. It's winter! They must have heard us questioning their existence, because they flew back and landed on a branch in the tree beside the siskins - right in front of us, and gave us an opportunity to study their colouring- the black bib - an Anna's hummingbird. Then, all of a sudden, one of the humming birds launched off the branch and flew straight at Henry stopping about 12 inches from his face. He (Henry!) jerked his head back and everybody laughed. It



must have been Henry's red toque!

The ice cracked a little as the group continued over the boardwalk. A northern flicker flew overhead, and lit in the tree beside the lake. A Steller's jay called out from the top of the evergreen tree, making sure Jacquie recorded him in the count. A bald eagle glided across the lake, followed by another a little while later.

Black-capped chickadees called out with their distinctive two note call as we continued on passing the south end of the lake. American robins were plentiful in the gardens as we head westwards. Three downy woodpeckers were seen clinging in the trees.

After a coffee break, the group went to Ravine Park. The paths were quite covered in snow, so the pace was a little slower. We entered the park and descended the path down to the stream below to be greeted by the sight of an immature bald eagle flying just above the bushes after a great-blue heron, squawking at the eagle as he made his escape. We did not see the ambitious eagle, but the heron was in a tree further down the path. We all assumed it to be the same heron!

Ravine Park is a city park that has some wetlands and tall Douglas fir and other larger trees growing on the slopes of the ravine. It is a good habitat for owls, but we were not lucky enough to see any. There were some mallards in the stream. Our stroll around the park was pleasant, the winter snow covering the bushes and trees. We saw varied thrushes, spotted towhees, fox sparrows, song sparrows and chickadees. We got the opportunity to see brown creepers on two different occasions - these small birds with their curved beak do really creep up and down the tree trunks looking for



insects. We also were delighted to see about ten golden-crowned kinglets and a couple of ruby-crowned kinglets.

In the evening, most of the bird counters (35) met at a restaurant in Abbotsford for a meal, to talk about the day and most importantly to tally the count for this year. This year's tally was 91 species of birds (down a little from last year's 104 due to the weather) but a great success, especially with the turnout of people in the cold. Other groups had seen raptors, a pheasant and swans and ducks to name a few. A very enjoyable

day was had by all and it was a great start to Birding in 2009. Happy New Year!

Michael Manley

WILDLIFE IN OUR AREA

Johanna and I have owned the 39 acre property on the corner of LeFeuvre and McTavish for 30 years and we have enjoyed every moment of it. Half of the property is on the escarpment that surrounds Glen Valley and that part is covered by second growth forest. Graham Creek bubbles away at the foot of the hill. Not surprisingly, the area is alive with all sorts of interesting creatures. We have been able to identify more than 75 different species of birds that visited the area. We have met all kinds of mammals, including Skunks, Porcupines, Martens, Coyotes, Deer, Rabbits, and more.

Over the years we developed walking trails on the slopes, and these days we walk some of these trails every morning to keep fit, both physically and mentally. Even if the weather is not inviting, or dog SAMSON insists that we go out! He is an energetic young black Labrador retriever who regulates much of our lives.

And that's the way things were one day last week. As usual we started our morning walk at the West end of the property and followed one of our trails in easterly direction. Samson ran happily back and forth, scouting the trail ahead of us. Almost half way I noticed the dog was barking, which he frequently does when he notices something of interest, usually a deer. I moved forward around a corner in the trail to see what excited him this time. And there, about twenty feet ahead of me, there was a big black bear. Johanna was a few steps behind me



Fortunately the dog, although excited, was not behaving very aggressively. The bear remained still at the edge of our trail as I turned around and preceded by Johanna, started on my way back to "safe" ground. What is "safe" under those conditions? Judging by the sound of Samson's barking, the bear was moving down the slope in the direction of Glen Valley. When we reached the house we were much relieved.

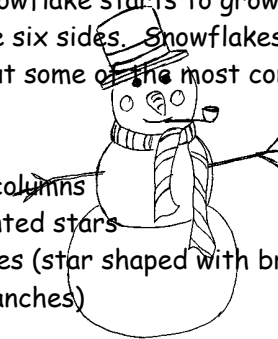
Of course we phoned our neighbours to let them know the bear was in the area. Then we discussed with several people the proper behaviour when meeting a bear. And we learned something new! Johanna happened to call a relative in The Netherlands and mentioned what happened. Bears do not exist in Holland, but our relative had made a trip to Northern Europe and had met some Laplanders who knew about bears. The proper behaviour in that part of the world, Johanna learned, is to drop your pants. The bears will sniff you a little and will wander off !!!!! Well, it is something to contemplate.....

Henk Saaltink

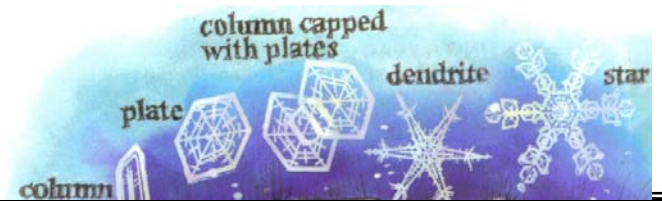
Snowy Stars and Needles

Snow crystals form in the clouds. Water vapour freezes on a little bit of dust, some floating bacteria, or some other small particle. After that happens, the snowflake starts to grow. Most snowflakes have six sides. Snowflakes can take many shapes, but some of the most common are

- Plates
- Needles
- Hollow columns
- Six-pointed stars
- Dendrites (star shaped with branches and side-branches)



So what makes some flakes look like needles and some look like stars? It mostly depends on the temperature outdoors. Different shapes form at different temperatures.



CONDOLENCES

Our condolences are extended to Henk and Johanna Saaltink. Their 22 year old granddaughter, Heather Saaltink, was tragically killed in Ottawa by a drunk driver just before Christmas. Some of us got to know Heather as she came to visit her grandparents and often joined the naturalists on their fieldtrips.



Johanna Saaltink, Heather Saaltink and Lyanna Sweetnam overlooking Hayward Lake July 2004

CVN EXECUTIVE

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	Johanna Saaltink/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: _____

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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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