



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

November 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

November 14, 2007

“The South Okanagan-Similkameen – at the Crossroads”



Robert Handfield, a retired geologist, will take a look at why it is crucial to establish a National Park in the south Okanagan.

December 12, 2007 at 6:30 pm

- NOTE TIME !!

Annual Pot Luck Christmas Dinner

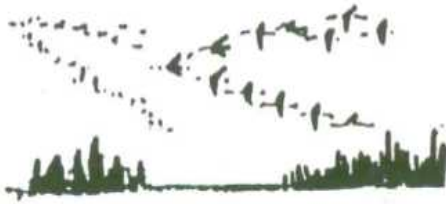
For the Potluck Dinner, please bring your own plates, cups and cutlery.



If your last name begins with:
A to O bring salad or a dessert
P to Z bring an entrée

Paul Jurgens and Steve Howard will show some more slides of their trip to Namibia.

We will again have a silent auction of good donated items. (Please no white elephants)



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 **Michael Manley at 604-859-9982**. **N.B. PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER A DAY BEFORE THE FIELDTRIP OF YOUR INTENT.** This will greatly help in planning and carpooling, etc.

November 10 – Saturday

Maplewood Flats Conservation area in North Vancouver

Joint fieldtrip with Langley & Delta Field Naturalists. We will join Al and Jude Grass on their monthly nature walk where we will be looking at Divers and Dabblers – how ducks do it! Meet at 10:00 am at the Sanctuary Office for a two hour walk, rain or shine! Located at 2645 Dollarton Highway, North Vancouver (2 km east of the Second Narrows Bridge).



November 17 & 18, Saturday and Sunday ***Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival***

See hundreds of eagles in their native habitat! 12 festival sites from Mission to the Harrison River and learn how you and your family can help the environment. The festival features: speakers, wonderful food, displays, crafts, children's events, jetboat tours and more...See the website at www.fraservalleybald eaglefestival.ca



The Central Valley Naturalists will participate again in this year's event. Stephen Howard will be there with his display and his live Eagle. Gerry Powers will be there with all his owls. And the CVN display will be there. We will have lots of room and need volunteers !!!.

Last year there were 850 Eagles in attendance and 750 Swans, making it an event not to be missed! So while you are there anyway, give us a hand. Sign up at the meeting, or contact Johanna at 856-4982

December 29 – Saturday ***Christmas Bird Count***



More details will be available at the November and December meetings.

Christmas Bird Count

How did it start?

In 1900, Frank Chapman, and American ornithologist and Editor of *Bird-Lore* magazine (motto: "A Bird in the bush is worth Two in the Hand"), wrote:

"It is not many years ago that sportsmen were accustomed to meet on Christmas Day, 'choose sides' and then...go into the fields and woods on the cheerful mission of killing practically everything in fur or feathers that crossed their path...Now *Bird-Lore* proposes a new kind of Christmas hunt in the form of a Christmas bird-census, and we hope that all who have the opportunity will aid us in making it a success by spending a portion of Christmas Day or in our case December 29 with the birds and sending a report

of their ‘hunt’ to the organizers this year before they retire that night.”

Little did Frank Chapman know that he was launching what was to become the biggest and best known birding activity of North America? In the first year 25 censuses were recorded; now there are over 1,800 Christmas Bird Counts. They take place in all of North, Central and South America, the Caribbean and some Pacific Islands – everywhere that breeding birds of North America are found in winter.

Why not count yourself in this year’s *Christmas Bird Count* out in the field or in your backyard?

Results will be tabulated at the after Bird Count Dinner.

Field Trip Reports

A Good Day for a River !

Rivers Day – Vedder River Cleanup September 30

Unfortunately due to Severe Rain, the fieldtrip was cancelled. Too much rain for the naturalists, plenty of rain to swell the river!

Umbrellas & Mushrooms

Campbell Valley Regional Park October 21

A small group set out for a short stroll in the park on yet another wet day for a fieldtrip with umbrellas in hand and anticipating looking for wild mushrooms that we had been told were in season.

We set off along the Little River Trail stopping by the bridge to see if the ducks had umbrellas – it was raining hard. There were none! All was quiet that afternoon – just the chickadees and the fall colours and the sound of the rain pouring on the umbrellas.

Our route took us onto Deer Tail where the park management recently developed and planted shrubs the new creek - in past years this had been an area for floods. To our surprise, I almost stepped on a garter snake in the grass – it’s foot long black body with yellow strips slid off into a nearby bush.

We crossed the Little River Bowl, and followed the leaf covered lane up to 208th St. and turned right onto the muddy Shaggy Mane Trail. This trail was the highlight of the trip for me – protected by the canopy of the trees from the driving rain, this trail proved to be an adventure in discovering the various types of mushrooms. Different shapes and sizes, some growing on the sides of trees, by the edge of the path, on dead logs and under bushes – white, brown, yellow and grey. If only we had a book to identify them!

We encountered a few horses on the trail. They were not so sure of the red umbrella! Their manes all wet and their riders soaked to the skin – but all happy to be on the trail. I guess that why the trail is called the Shaggy Mane Trail. Or is it?

When I got home I continued my mushroom hunt on the internet to discover that there is a mushroom called the Shaggy Mane. So “which came first” - the mushroom or the horse when they named the trail?

Michael Manley



<http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com>

Warnings – Some Mushrooms are Very poisonous and can kill if eaten.

Further information on Mushrooms:-

<http://bcmushrooms.forrex.org>

<http://bcmushrooms.forrex.org>



BRANDT'S CORMORANT

WHAT IT'S

CALLED: Brandt's cormorant, or in Latin, *Phalacrocorax penicillatus*. In Latin, *penicillatus* means painter's brush, and in the case of the cormorant, refers to the delicate white plumes that appear on its neck and back during breeding season.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: It's a large (about 80 cm long) dark water bird with a long hooked bill and a long tail. It also has a long graceful neck which comes in handy for fishing. Enhancing its elegant appearance is the fact that it often will perch on rocks and gaze out to sea in a way that suggests a vast knowledge of all things nautical. Its name, Brandt's, comes from German naturalist Johann Friedrich von Brandt of the Academe of Sciences in St. Petersburg, Russia, who described the species from specimens he collected on expeditions made to the Pacific in 1837.

WHERE TO FIND IT: It lives year-round along the Pacific coast from Baja California to southern B.C., but during breeding season it will venture farther north. Hence it's a fairly common sight along any of our Lower Mainland beaches, though it is red-listed, meaning there are conservation concerns around it. Take harbour ferry trip in False Creek and you'll probably see one or two.

WHAT IT EATS: a variety of saltwater fish, including the Pacific herring. It also has a taste for some crustaceans, including crab and shrimp.

HOW IT LIVES: Gregoriously. Cormorants will feed, roost, nest and fly in flocks. As expected, it spends much of its time fishing, but with its streamlined body and long bill, it's ideally suited to that—like a sleek black torpedo. It's also fairly quiet. When it's nesting it will emit the odd guttural croak, but unless you're only a few feet away, you won't hear it.

HOW IT BREEDS: Here in B.C. egg-laying (usually of three to four eggs) occurs mainly in June. In California, it takes place a little earlier. Both Mum and dad take turns incubating the next, a process that lasts about a month. Once they're born, chicks stick around for a bout six weeks before they're fledged. Females will breed when they're two years old, but males have to wait till they're four. But alas, connubial bliss doesn't last. Cormorant males have roving eyes and don't stay faithful for long.

Vancouver sun, September 15, 2007

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Project Feeder Watch

Many of us in the Bradner Area have bird feeders and enjoy the coming and going of our feathered friends. We really live in a bird paradise, because the variation of habitat alone, particularly in the North Bradner area, attracts a great variety of birds. We have forests, agricultural land, wetlands, live close to a large river. Then there are the seasonal variations that bring variety, and finally, we are living in an important flyway that brings us birds from far away.

Johanna and I have lived here almost thirty years, and Johanna has kept track of the birds that paid us a visit. It will surprise many of you reading this, that we have been able to identify more than 75 different species. Of course we have taken part with the Naturalists in the annual Christmas Bird count, the results of which are passed on to the Audubon Society.

Recently we became aware of the fact that our efforts could actually become part of an exciting new venture, namely **Project Feeder Watch**. Using data collected by 20,000 volunteers across North America, Project Feeder Watch monitors changes in the size and distribution of winter bird populations. The Project began in 1976 as the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey and expanded to cover all of North America in 1987. There are over 2,500 Feeder Watchers across Canada.

The information collected goes to **Bird Studies Canada**. BSC is Canada's leading bird conservation organization, with a mission to advance and encourage the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of wild birds and their habitats throughout Canada and around the world. Those interested can find more information

about this organization and its programs by visiting their website:

www.bsc-eoc.org/national/pfw.html

The feeder watch will help to provide information about the status of the bird population. Unfortunately their numbers are diminishing, mostly because of habitat problems.

Henk and Johanna Saaltink



Why Are Millions of North American Birds Disappearing?

CBC News The National ran an in depth report on why millions of common North American birds are vanishing.

See Nature Canada's Ted Cheskey and Bird Studies Canada's Stuart Mackenzie as they discuss how modern trends in farming, forestry and urban sprawl are destroying millions of common birds in North America. As well as Robert Bateman.

Reporter Joan Leishman, with information from the Audubon's 2007 "Common Birds in Decline" report, explores which bird species are most affected, and what will happen if something isn't done to stop this trend.

[Watch the CBC News The National clip!](#)

Once you've watched the video, [take action! Sign our petition to save the songbirds of the Boreal Forest!](#)

For more information please contact [Nature Canada](#) or [Bird Studies Canada](#).

Memorial Bench in Mill Lake Centennial Park

Ann Cox, daughter of Dorma Pattison, sent us word from Calgary that she and her brothers have had a memorial bench installed in Mill Lake Centennial Park in honour of their parents. It is located at the access of Bevan Avenue and Primrose Street and lies on the pathway just East of the playground near a very nice-looking tree!

Dorma was a member right from CVN's inception until she left Abbotsford for Calgary to be closer to her family. She is remembered with much affection by all who knew her as a cheerful companion, always ready to lend a helping hand.

When, soon in our existence, we organised the AGM for the Federation. Dorma was there helping with flower arrangements, whipping up special green scarves identifying CVNers to our visitors, helping with the registration, filling lunchbags etc.

Of course we still enjoy many of her beautiful photographs of the flowers in Hogan Family Nature Park, surely not one of the wildflowers escaped her attention and her lens.

We think her children chose a fitting location for us to remember Dorma, true naturalist and friend.

Johanna Saaltink

Dan Rempel

Mary Rempel phoned us last Sunday to inform us that Dan has passed away. The Rempels have been faithful members of the Central Valley Naturalists since 1992. Henk and I first met the Rempels at the Langley Field Naturalists where they were very active birders. Dan was a good teacher when it came to winter raptor surveys. We learned a lot from him and we will remember him as a good companion and a true Naturalist.

On behalf of the CVN we have expressed our condolences to Mary. We plan to dedicate a meter of the Trans Canada Trail route to his memory.

Johanna Saaltink

NEWSLETTER - the newsletter is published in September, November, January, March and May. Any news items and interesting articles can be sent to Alice Roos at haroos@shaw.ca or 604-853-4283

E-MAIL ADDRESSES - In order to keep our costs down; the newsletter will be sent by e-mail to those that have an email address. Please provide your e-mail address to either Jacqie Reznick or Alice Roos. For those that cannot be reached by e-mail, copies will be available at the monthly meeting.

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: _____

Address: _____

_____ 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 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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