



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

September 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

September 12, 2007

“Summer travels in
Africa”

*Steve Howard and Paul
Jurgens went to Namibia to find*



*birds and found much more i.e. more natural
wonders/wildlife.*

October 10, 2007

“To the Rescue: Protecting British
Columbia’s Rich Biodiversity”

Speaker is **Lindsay Coulter** with the
David Suzuki

Foundation as the
Conservation Policy



Analyst, currently
specializing in the Species at Risk.

Come learn about B.C.’s remarkable
biological richness. Find out which species
are at risk of disappearing and if you live in
a “hotspot” of endangerment. Most
importantly, learn how you can help.

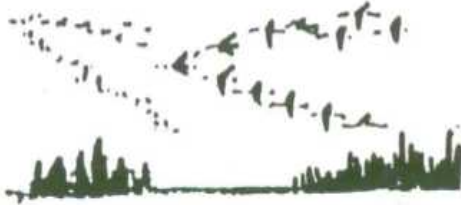
November 14, 2007



“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
Christmas Potluck
and silent auction?



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.

September 30 - Sunday
Rivers Day – Vedder River Cleanup
Details to follow

October 21 - Sunday
Campbell Valley Regional Park
“Ditch to Creek” project
Details to follow

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
Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival
Mark your calendars. More details to follow.

December 29 – Saturday
Christmas Bird Count

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Manning Park – Heather Trail
July 29, 2007

Eight of us went on the Manning Park walk. Someone asked who would take notes, and Christine Horsfield, being the only one with pencil and paper, bravely volunteered to record our observations, despite the fact that she is brand new to the world of plant identification. We had a lot of fun correcting her spelling, so I in my arrogance said I would edit her notes and make the final copy. The bad news is: I lost her little slips of paper. The good news is: they went out in the recycling. (You environmentalists will be OK with that.) Therefore, I am unable to fully record just how beautiful that day was. I looked through my alpine plant books for help in recalling what we saw, but have to rely on a pretty poor memory because a lot of those alpine flowers were ones that I am not very familiar with.

However, there was one discussion that was extremely interesting to me. People were puzzling over some brown dried material on many, many of the growing plants; about 4 inches from their base and Herman Venema insisted that it was mice droppings.



After a while, everyone conceded that he had to be right about that, but it was a great puzzle. Only later on our trek did his wife, Joyce, suddenly understand why that brown dried material was lodged high up on the plant. It would have been, she said, due to the fact that mice made their homes around these plant stalks during the winter when the snow was on the ground. Now the snow was gone and all that remained was some brown dried material. I thought she was extremely clever. The trail we took was called “Heather,” and so appropriately named it was. There were large beautiful hillsides covered with the lavender colour of heather. We saw a white Indian paintbrush called lesser paintbrush (*Castilleja attenuate*).

At the top of this particular walk is a lovely clump of trees providing shade for a picnic lunch. The weather could not have been better for a mildly rigorous walk at some points. Some of us stopped at a cedar grove at the west end of the park, where huge cedars have escaped the logger’s saw for many years, and provide a tranquil oasis beside a beautiful stream. It was worthwhile, and I promise on any future expeditions *not* to volunteer to be the recorder!

Gerda Peachey



Identifying plants

John Visser receiving CLUB AWARD
June Picnic at Saaltink’s



Fall Conference

October 11 to 14, 2007

Hosted by the Chilliwack Field Naturalists at the Executive Hotel in scenic Harrison Hot Springs.

“North Cascades Ecology: Sasquatch Country!”

Be sure to take advantage of all these events so close to home! Check the Summer 2007 BC Nature magazine for details or www.bcnature.ca



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BANANA SLUGS

What they’re called: Banana slugs, because in their own yellow slimy way, they look like bananas. And they’re slugs.

What they are: They’re mollusks, which means they’re soft-bodied with no visible skeleton, However, they do have other interesting parts, including a muscular “foot,” which they use to “walk” in gradual wave-like movements, a meaty hump on their backs, and something called a radula, which is composed of sandpaper-like grinding mouth parts.

How big are they? Big, for a slug. In fact, at 25 centimetres which is about the length of a banana, they’re the second-largest slug species in the world.

Where to find them: On forest floors along the Pacific coast from California to Alaska. On wet days, you might see them crossing a path or climbing a stump looking for a dark place to hide. Once they find that spot, they stay there when the days get dry. Slugs hate dry weather. When it gets like it is now, they shield themselves with a mucous coating and insulate themselves against

the heat with a layer of soil and leafy debris. As soon as it rains again, they're out.

What they eat: They love mushrooms. They're also the original recyclers. They chew up leaves, animal droppings and other dead plant material and recycle it into soil. As they eat, they also spread seeds and spores.

That slime: It may not be the most attractive of features, but it serves a purpose. Slugs coat themselves with slime that oils their movements and keeps their skin moist. If it were to



dry out, they wouldn't be able to breathe. It also protects them from predators. Not surprisingly, creatures that would normally eat slugs—raccoons, garter snakes, ducks and geese, among them—don't like slug slime, either. Even so, scientists have tried to reproduce it because it is one of the best glues in nature, and could be of use in medicine. So far, the composition is a secret known only to slugs.

Those feelers: They have two sets. The larger pair at the top of their heads have a small black spot at each tip they use to detect light. Slugs cannot see images as we do, but instead rely on brightness or darkness to tell them which direction they should move. They also have a second pair of antennae at the lower front of their bodies. This pair acts like a nose, picking up chemical smells.

Source: Stanley Park Ecology Society – *Nicholas Read and Vancouver Sun*

The Birder's Bug Book



by Gilbert Waldbauer, Harvard University Press,

The cover of this intriguing book, showing the blissful expression of a fledgling screech owl about to devour a cecropia moth, is enough to encourage us to add the book to our library! In this case, you really can judge the book by its cover, for it is captivating from beginning to end.

My Naturescape curiosity regarding the minutiae of life in my garden and beyond is certainly piqued and satisfied by this intriguing book - as has been the case with Waldbauer's previous entomological publications, including *What Good Are Bugs?*, *Insects Through the Seasons*, and *Millions of Monarchs, Bunches of Beetles*.

Waldbauer takes some of the least appreciated species in various ecosystems and eloquently discusses many of the roles they play - sharing his respect, admiration and wonder for the insects he has spent his life studying. A book that can make fascinating reading even about lice is, indeed unique. Did you know that there are certain species of lice specific only to hummingbirds?

Chapter titles outline the ground covered. Some of these are: *Bugs and Birds Through the Ages*, *Bugs That Birds Eat*, *The Bugs Fight Back*, *Bugs That Eat Birds*, *The Birds Fight Back*, *Bugs That Eat People*, *People Fight Back*. These are followed by a brief guide to the insects, and a summation, sadly, on the disappearing diversity of birds, bugs and beyond. Waldbauer concludes with the message,

The greatest of all human adventures is the quest for self-knowledge. But since we are but one aspect of the planetary web of life, we can understand ourselves only in the context of all life. The loss of a species or the destruction of a habitat narrows our view of ourselves, thus diminishing us and impoverishing our spirit.

Sylvia D. Pincott
Pender Island

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: _____

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Particular nature interests? (optional) _____

Expertise which could benefit the CVN. (optional) _____

Additional donations gratefully accepted Amount \$ _____

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