



Newsletter

1 August 2021 | Issue 4

Upcoming Events

See our [Calendar](#) for local (and virtual) nature-related events.



Let's Stay Social

We'd love to hear from you!



Newsletter Contributions

Do you have nature stories, news, event details, or photographs you'd like to share with us as we assemble our new club newsletters?

Please send them to naturenanaimo@gmail.com with the subject "Newsletter" and we'll be in touch!



Club Events

Monthly Meetings

There is no monthly meeting for the month of August. Plans are underway for September's meeting. Please stay tuned & enjoy the summer!

Club Outings

We are tentatively planning for a field trip to **Paradise Meadows** as well as a **night creatures evening** looking for nocturnal insects and listening for bats using bat detectors. Neither has a firm date attached yet – Keep an eye out for more information in an email.

Picnic at Saysutshun (Newcastle Island)

In the morning of July 24th, 23 Nature Nanaimo members boarded the Grey Selkie at the Saysutshun dock in Maffeo Sutton Park for the quick ride over to the Island. We were greeted by the lovely serenade of Purple Martins nesting in boxes on the pilings at the island dock. A short walk took us to Shelter #3 which Julia had booked for us. From there, about 10 of us hiked over to Kanaka Bay to catch the very low tide, which was predicted at 0.45 m that day. We spent some time looking for creatures stranded by the tide. Blue mussels were crowded in crevices high and dry, and the effect of the heat dome earlier in the month was evident, with scores of empty shells everywhere. Ochre sea stars appeared largely unscathed, while some leather stars appeared to have damaged arms. Dan also found a mottled sea star. One was found with a y-shaped arm, probably the result of regeneration after an injury, demonstrating the fantastic regenerative powers of these animals. We also found anemones, sea squirts, sea cucumbers, coralline algae, and one lonely sea urchin which Doug discovered under a large, flat rock. We also found three species of fish, a plainfin midshipman with its belly reminiscent of a midshipman's uniform buttons (which gives it its name), a northern clingfish, with its amazing belly suction cup, and a dead shiner surfperch.



We then returned to the shelter for a late lunch, after which we engaged in a scavenger hunt organized by Julia. At the end of the day, we were entertained by a very strangely behaving Townsend's vole, which lived under the food locker, but ventured out in the open in search for food (and probably water). Julie gathered some green grass and was able to approach the vole within inches to offer it to the little animal. With behaviour like that, it is unlikely to last long! At the end of the day, people started leaving the island, although a few went for individual hikes despite the heat. All in all, a good time was had by all!



Mottled Seastar



Northern Clingfish



Townsend's Vole



Wildlife Photography

Club member Lynda Stevens has generously shared a helpful article that she wrote about wildlife photography! You've probably seen Lynda's beautiful photographs on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

The full article is available on the Nature Nanaimo website [here](#), and an excerpt is featured below. Enjoy!

An Introduction to Wildlife Photography

As naturalists we love to spend time outdoors exploring our parks and trails. An outing is made even more special when we have a wildlife encounter and can take photographs to record the event. Many people take up wildlife photography to remember these encounters while others use photography as a way to help them identify what they have seen. Having an image to look at after the outing allows you to study the animal in more detail and learn the distinctive features which can be especially helpful for birdwatchers. If you upload your photos to [iNaturalist.ca](#) and become a citizen scientist, your observations will be added to a growing database of sightings in Canada. By sharing your photos with others, you can also help to raise awareness of the natural world and work to promote its conservation. If you have been wanting to take up wildlife photography but didn't know where to begin, I am hoping that this introduction will get you started on very enjoyable addition to your naturalist experiences.

Wildlife photography is one of the more challenging, yet satisfying, types of photography. The challenges include trying to photograph subjects that are often moving and unpredictable, having no control over the lighting situation, and dealing with distracting elements such as branches and leaves. When you are able to "get the shot", despite these challenges, it is tremendously satisfying. Wind can be an issue when photographing insects, however insects often stay in one place longer than birds or other animals, allowing for more chances to get repeat shots or change camera settings.



When people ask me to give them tips on bird or insect photography they usually want to know the best camera settings to use. Settings and gear are important but the first thing that I mention, is the need for patience and perseverance. This type of photography requires being able to quietly stand and wait for the right moment, and capturing action shots involves more effort and patience compared to subjects that are still. Take the time to observe and learn the habits and behaviours of your subjects. For example, preening birds stay in one place for a

few minutes giving you the chance to get several shots. Birds will often poop right before taking off, so watching for that behaviour allows you to get your camera ready for a flight shot. I have counted in seconds how long a bee spends at a flower so that I can predict when it will lift off and move to the next flower. With waterfowl, learning about their landing and take off patterns will increase your chance of success. They will land and take off into the wind so positioning yourself correctly can improve your chances. If one bird in a large flock takes off it is likely that the others will follow. Being observant and watching for these types of behaviours will increase your chances of capturing the moment. Someone said that the better a naturalist you are, the better a wildlife photographer you will be.

Photographing any type of wildlife can be challenging since most wild creatures become alert the moment that they see or hear you. If you approach too quickly your subject will be alarmed and may fly or run away. Many birds have their own comfort zones so, if you slow down or stop moving and wait patiently, birds will often get used to your presence and go about doing whatever they were doing. Different birds have different tolerance levels for human interaction and the same is true for many insects. Barred owls can often be seen roosting in plain sight during the day and will often let you get quite close.



Grab a few shots from a distance, then slowly move a few feet closer, take some more shots, move closer and so on. Do not make sudden moves and try to avoid eye contact with a bird as some birds will perceive this as threat. You will have more success photographing birds if the bird feels safe but you rarely get really close so this is where the use of a telephoto lens becomes necessary. Occasionally, you might be lucky enough to encounter a young bird since inexperienced birds can be quite curious allowing you to get closer than you might expect. I recently had a close encounter with a juvenile raven who flew right up to me and looked at me with great interest for several minutes before deciding to have a preening session.

[Read more](#)

A Fantastic Contribution by Bill Merilees!



Vancouver Island man donates 140,000 mollusk specimens...

UBC's Beaty museum grateful for Bill Merilees's historical record of B.C. marine biodiversity A Nanaimo man's 140,000-specimen mollusk collection has found a new home at a B.C. biodiversity museum. Bill Merilees, a retired B.C. Parks regional...

[Read more](#)

www.saanichnews.com

Find The Birds App

In case you missed this fun & educational app in the last newsletter: <https://findthebirds.com>



COVID-19: Single-use Plastics -- The Pandemic Wrinkle



Shoreline cleanup finds COVID-related trash increased...

Cigarette butts still topped the list of the 10 most commonly collected items. Organizers of a national conservation program aimed at removing trash from the country's many shorelines say the COVID-19 pandemic has even changed how we litter.

[Read more](#)

vancouver.sun.com

Southern Resident Killer Whales in the Salish Sea



Georgia Strait Alliance on Twitter: "After an..."

After an unprecedented absence, all three pods of Southern Resident Killer Whales #SRKW have finally returned to the #SalishSea yesterday! We all have keep working to support their recovery and protection to make these appearances less rare...

[Read more](#)

twitter.com



Monthly Roundup of Nature Events

Cornell Lab (LIVE) Q&A with Experts on August 3rd



How High-Energy Hummingbirds Survive-a Q&A with the...

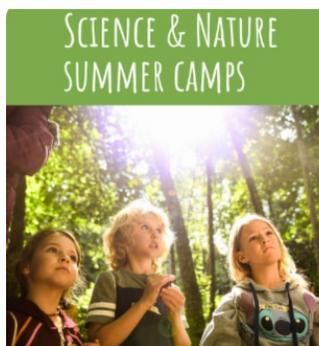
Hummingbirds delight with their brilliant colors and dizzying flight. But all that nonstop activity comes at a high energy cost, so how do hummers meet their calorie needs? Join researchers Anusha Shankar from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and...

[Read more](#)

academy.allaboutbirds.org

Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre

August Summer Camps



Registration Open!

July-Aug 2021
Summer Camps!

Campers will explore the life of pollinators, shoreline plants, inter-tidal species and coastal birds, practice their discovery skills, expression of gratitude, and respect for self and others through play!

We are excited to offer week-long camps in July and August as well as one day camps on August 3th, 4th and 5th. We incorporate COVID-19 advisories into our programming and daily routines to ensure a safe and fun experience for all campers!

Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre



Summer Opening Hours

August: Sat & Sun 1-3pm

Extra Holiday Hours - Aug 2nd: 1-3pm

We are excited to be returning to summer weekend opening hours! Starting July 1st you can walk through our doors and learn about the Cowichan Estuary and its inhabitants, visit our observation tank to see some local sea creatures and pick up some fantastic local and West Coast inspired gifts in our Gift Shop! As a volunteer-run Nature Centre we take the health and

well being of our wonderful volunteers and guests to heart. We ask visitors to maintain physical distancing indoors at the Nature Centre, unless you are with your family bubble, and ask adults to continue to wear masks for now, especially to keep the many children who visit and aren't vaccinated extra safe. We look forward to welcoming you again!

If you are interested in volunteering with us do get in touch! We are always looking for friendly guides to welcome visitors in the Centre! Call 250-597-2288 or email info@cowichanestuary.ca

<http://www.cowichanestuary.ca>

The Backyard Wild Bird and Nature Store – Guided Bird Walks



Due to Covid-19, our guided bird walks have been put on hold. We are tentatively considering starting them up again in August so please check in with us if you have any interest in joining one!

We have been hosting weekly bird walks for over 20-years in the Nanaimo area of Vancouver Island. Our walks are scheduled for Sundays (Nanaimo) and Tuesdays (Parksville/ Qualicum), and we post all scheduling information on [our blog](#).

The Sunday Bird Walk leaves the Birdstore at 9 a.m. on Sunday Mornings. The Parksville/Qualicum Beach Tuesday Bird Walk leaves the Parksville Beach Community Park (at the end of Corfield) at 9 a.m. on Tuesday mornings. We meet near the parking area at the Lion's Playground. The Tuesday Bird Walk is not held during the summer months (July & August) but it resumes the first Tuesday in September. There is no charge for our bird walks, and they are designed to conclude before lunch (average approximately 2 hours). Want more information? Call the store at 250-390-3669 or email us at thebackyard@shaw.ca.

<http://www.thebackyard.ca/birdwalks.html>

Nature Nanaimo | naturenanaimo.ca

