



The Heron Herald

Volume 9 Issue 2 The Chilliwack Field Naturalists March 2004

CFN 2003-4 EXECUTIVE

President	Helen Turner	792-0972
Vice-President	Margaret Tranah	792-9049
Past President	Lee Larkin	858-5141
Secretary	Janne Perrin	796-9182
Treasurer	Val Whetter	858-6056

APPOINTED BY THE EXECUTIVE:

FBCN Director	David Hutchings	858-2486
Special Projects	Denis Knopp	858-5141
Field Trips	Hazel Cannings	858-0803
Conservation	Annabelle Rempel	823-6549
Membership	Judy Mueller	795-7296
Librarian	Helen Peterson	792-2937
Historian	Irene Mason	795-3537
Refreshments	Janne Perrin	796-9182
Phone Comm.	Chris Hutchings	858-2486
<u>Heron Herald</u>		
Editor/Distributor	Heather Larstone	823-6039
Publisher	Jack Jackaman	823-6922

Federation Findings by Director Dave Hutchings

Bowen Island was the setting for the Regional Meeting on March 6th. Thanks to the Bowen Island Nature Club for making the trip so interesting and for welcoming us warmly.

What follow are the highlights of the Regional Meeting.

1. Administration

- A. The FBCN executive has updated and slightly revised the schedule of FBCN awards. A new award – the FBCN Outstanding Naturalist Award – will be given annually at the AGM.

- B. A much-awaited Pocket Field Trip Guide prototype has been completed and, after scrutiny and suggestions by member clubs, will be finalized and printed, hopefully in time for this summer. The Guide will be available to clubs for \$3.00 per copy to recover printing and distribution costs.
- C. The FBCN executive has agreed to sign on to the Canadian Nature Network Accord. The accord will provide for National Naturalist Committees to study issues of significance occurring in 2 or more provinces.
- D. An item for discussion at the AGM will explore whether the FBCN should adopt a “trade name” such as Nature BC, to raise the profile of the FBCN for Internet users wishing to connect with naturalist groups. At present, if one “Googles” for “nature” the FBCN is way down on the list of websites. Do we have feedback on this?
- E. The FBCN has written a protest letter to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management about the high-handed, rather unaccountable process adopted by Land and Water BC in the sale of the Lannan Forest in the Comox Strathcona R.D.
- F. Applications for FBCN grants to clubs will be next considered in November. However, urgent requests may be considered during the summer.
- G. Presently, the Young Naturalists’ Club of BC has over 575 members, many of them family memberships.
- H. The WiTS project has been cancelled for now because of a lack of community and corporate support. The Community Mapping Network will still accept data from individuals or groups. Ken Summers of Abbotsford will continue to collect data.



2

2. Finance

- A. The FBCN has accumulated a \$11,00 deficit to date, but this will be mitigated by a \$44,000 bequest from the William Dickenson estate.

3. Conservation

- A. The Wetlands Working Group continues with staff support from MWLAP. Sustainable Resource Mgt. has withdrawn from the group. Ducks Unlimited is funding the work on the Wetlands Strategy Document. It is unlikely the government will agree to a "net loss" policy, but pressure continues.
- B. Eva Durance is coordinating changes to Ecological Reserve Wardens' Handbook.
- C. The first draft report of the Coalition for Licensing and Registration of Off Road Vehicles is complete and the final draft will likely be presented to government after the 2005 election.
- D. CPAWS are recommending that the government support nature interpretation in parks with core funding, and that a portion of the campground reservation service profit be dedicated to interpretation. This is unlikely to happen for summer 2004, so the FBCN will apply for 3 or 4 summer students, funded by the Summer Career Placement program, to be placed in parks which continue to run programs and operate nature centres.
- E. The FBCN and the VNHS met on March 3 with Bill Barisoff, the new WLAP minister. He listened but seemed non-committal regarding any significant changes in direction.
- F. It is suggested that the FBCN recommend the southern herd of Mountain Caribou be the spotlighted species at risk for the Canadian Nature Fed. Species at Risk Report Card, which will be presented to COSEWIC within the next few months.

Our day ended with a 2-hour walk on the SW corner of Bowen Island to view a large tract of land, which is under threat of development. It is a beautiful area, which takes in some dry ecologically sensitive bluff areas along the shore as well as some rare colonies of marine species.



The Chilliwack Field Naturalists

MEETINGS

JANUARY 20th - Denis Knopp described and showed, with his usual flair, slides of Cheam lake wetlands, before, during and after its reclamation.

EUBRUARY 17th - Thirty members and visitors attended this meeting to hear Mike Pearson of the Endangered Species Rescue Team gave us an impressive power point slide show re: two obscure species of fish - the Salish Sucker and the Nooksack Dace.

He described their habitat and distribution and outlined various threats to their environment such as - gravel extraction, cattle access, loss of riparian growth, dry summers, and lack of oxygen.

The \$50,000 construction of a special habitat for Salish Suckers is providing important data to the team and proved to be a most interesting part of Mike's presentation.



FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, January 17th - some 23 people enjoyed the field trip along the "Hope River Trail" between Young Road and Corbould Street and beyond. It was a fine winter's day and several species of birds were sighted including several swans and a Great Blue Heron. An eagle was seen perched in a tree adjacent to the Minter Country Garden store parking lot.

Afterwards, many of the members enjoyed a noontime lunch at the Callicorpa Café located in the Country Garden store.



Lunch at the Callicorpa

Saturday, February 14th Five hardy CFN's braved the rain to bird Maria Slough on Valentine's Day. Happily, the canoe race-observing stand at Chowat road sheltered us to observe trumpeter swans, (including a family with 3 cygnets) hooded merganser, common merganser, Canada geese, glaucous-winged gull and bufflehead. After that the rain stopped for the remainder of the trip.

The other arms of the slough revealed many water birds. Included were mallards, ring-necked ducks, lesser scaups, green wing teals, American wigeons, pied-billed grebes, gadwalls and common goldeneyes.

At Chaplin Road, 2 bald eagles perched regally atop of some western red cedar trees. A belted kingfisher rattled, a steller's jay screeched, a northern flicker & downy woodpecker drummed and an American dipper bobbed and dipped near Canada agriculture No. 2 farm. Many "dickie" birds foraged in the hedges and trees at Grieshaber's property. Black-capped & chestnut-backed chickadees, dark-eyed juncos, song sparrows, spotted towhees, varied thrush, house & purple finches, and house sparrows stay all year, but the American robins and red-winged blackbirds hinted of spring. Northwestern crows worked the fields along with starlings.

At the far end of seabird island road, a red-tailed hawk at the top of the cottonwoods surveyed for prey. A raven croaked. Noting it was near 1 p.m., several of the observers retired to Seabird Café for a well-deserved lunch while others drove on to Agassiz to find lunch there. A very successful day with 35 species!

Janne Perrin



The Chilliwack Field Naturalists

THIS 'n THAT

1. This is the last call for 2004 membership dues and therefore the last newsletter available to non-members. Please remit your fee to Judy Mueller, our membership chair, if you have not already done so.
2. Roy Luckow is offering his photo workshops on the weekends of May 8th & 9th and May 15th & 16th. Contact Roy if you wish to participate - (604) 858-8315.



"It seems out of focus. All I can see is his teeth!"

3. Be sure to read the latest news from the Wild Bird Habitat Store. The spring issue is full of useful information. Remember, CFN members are allowed a 10% discount on all purchases.
4. Don't forget to bring your own cup to our regular meetings. As you know, Styrofoam cannot be recycled.
5. Your executive has decided to save the money spent on the escalating cost of our Post Office box; therefore, our new address is:
**46259 Stevenson Road, CHILLIWACK BC
V2R 2R5**
6. Many thanks to Lee and Hazel for acting as our nominating committee this year.
7. Help your club earn \$100 by "pitching in" for the big **cleanup**. Check announcements Page 6.

Young Naturalist Report — by *Dave Hutchings*

Our Young Naturalists' Club is well into the January – April schedule of events. In January, the youngsters received some excellent instruction from Marj Lightfoot on the art and process of sketching what they discover and observe in nature – birds, flowers, plants, and so on. Hopefully, this newly – developed skill will encourage and help the children to maintain an on-going Nature Journal. Thank you, Marj.

4

Our February 21st event at the Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve was a milestone of sorts for the YNC Chilliwack. The TD Friends of the Environment Foundation officially presented our club with a cheque for \$1,500 in support of the Young Naturalist movement. The money has been deposited with the Vancouver office, from which we can receive operating funds as needed. We have since received \$300 from Daphne Solecki, the provincial co-ordinator, who also drove out from Vancouver for the presentation.

The other activity on the 21st was the planting by the Young Naturalists (with a little assistance from parents) of dozens of Nootka rose and salmonberry plants along the new spawning channels below the Interpretive Centre. The club members learned also that these plants would eventually provide cover, food and nest sites for the finny, furry and feathered creatures, which call the Reserve home. If you looked carefully, you may have noticed the picture by Jenna Hauck in the *Progress*. Thank you, Jenna.

Our March-April outings will focus first on the great blue herons and bald eagles, and then on wildlife trees. We will be also taking part in the Heron Festival activities.

SPECIAL - Blackberries Doomed

Nice to eat but a pain when allowed to become overgrown



As most of our club members know, the naturescape project at the Camp River wildlife area has been threatened with the intrusive growth of Himalayan blackberries. Our efforts to eradicate or even to control them have been in vain. Fortunately our vice-president Lee has used her imagination and influence to solve the problem. BC Parks will provide a grant of \$1000 (plus 10 "people days" later) to enable us to hire a contractor to do a major mowing job - by March 15th. We will use \$500 from

The Chilliwack Field Naturalists

our Kournosoff account to help with the plan. We certainly appreciate Lee's efforts and the coordination of the work by Denis. Call Denis if you'd like to be present when the machine is in action and don't forget the work party (tree planting) on April 4th (see announcements).

NATURAL-NUT

Dear Natural-Nut;

Last week I noticed a couple of sparrows in a little patch of dry soil fluffing themselves up and tossing dust all over their feathers. What's going on?

Dusty

Dear Dusty;

In the bird world, appearances are important especially in springtime (mating time). You've no doubt noticed changes in the males' coloring. In order to keep their feathers clean, bright and fully functional, birds spend a great deal of time grooming. House sparrows, wrens and grouse like getting down and dirty as you saw. Dusting, followed by a vigorous bout of preening, helps rid the feathers of excess oil and parasites and aligns the barbs.

Bills are usually the tool of choice for the hygienic task of grooming. By nibbling or drawing the feathers through their bills, wing structure is restored and dirt and parasites removed. The bills also spread the oily products of the *preen gland* which is situated above the base of the tail. The secretions help waterproof and condition the feathers.

A few birds possess an additional tool. Herons and barn owls have a special comb on one toe of each foot. Such parasites as mites are most easily removed by running this comb through the feathers - very useful for long-necked birds (egrets, bitterns and herons). It's hard to access those necks with their bill!

Of course birds also care for their feathers by bathing. Mid-sized birds with strong legs, such as robins, wade right into shallow water and splash water onto their backs with their wings. Smaller birds such as warblers, often dash into the water and quickly flip over onto their backs. Swallows prefer a quick dip as they flit across the lake or river.



5

Woodpeckers choose to sit on an exposed branch during a gentle rain, wings drooped and fully open to take advantage of the natural shower.

A few birds enlist help. Jays, grackles and many other birds wipe crushed or live ants across their feathers. Formic acid, released by these distressed insects deters mites and lice. Crows actually squat on an anthill and allow the angry creatures to swarm through their feathers, purging them of parasites in one treatment.

Thank you Dusty for introducing this interesting topic to our readers.

Signed: *Natural-Nut.*

The Chilliwack Field Naturalists

Details, details...

Consider the case of the Washington Biological Survey people who track birds.

On each bird they put a leg band with the abbreviation "Wash. Biol. Surv." This had to be changed to the "Washington Wildlife Service" after they got a nasty letter from an Albertan farmer who'd shot one of their marked crows.

Writes the irate farmer: Dear Sirs: I shot one of your crows and followed the instructions attached. I washed and boiled it and then served it up. It was terrible. You shouldn't try to fool people with things like that...

Submitted by Roger Pitts

PHOTO CONTEST

PRIZES!!

Here are the rules photographers!

Please submit one or more 5x7 photos by May 18th

Bring your submissions to the May meeting or arrange to give to Helen in advance (792-0972).

Three Categories:

A. Landscape

B. Wildlife -birds, insects or animals

C. Plants - trees, plants or fungi. (Preferably natural or native)

You may enter three pictures in any or all of the three categories



EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED TO ENTER

PRIZES!!



Calendar of Events and Announcements

Please call our CO-ORDINATOR Hazel for questions re: Field trips

Date	Time	Event	Location	Details	Contact
Saturday Mar. 27th	10 a.m.	Field Trip	Meet at Minter's Young Street parking lot	Dike Hike on Jespersion Road	Margaret Tranah 792-9047
Sunday April 4th	10am	Work Party	Camp River Wildlife Area	Meet at Kourmosoff Property with gloves etc.	Denis 858-5141
Tuesday April.16th	7:30 pm	Regular Meeting	Vedder School	Craig Breckenridge Vancouver Astronomical society	Helen 792-0972
Monday April 19th	6 pm	Pitch-in Cleanup	Meet at Minter's Young Street parking lot	Bring boots. gloves and small bags	Helen 792-0972
Sunday April 25	9 am	Field Trip	Meet at Earl's	Explore the Othello Tunnels	Helen 792-0972
Saturday May 8th	9 am	Field Trip	Meet at Earl's	Walk the trails at Campbell Park	Margaret Tranah 792-9047
Sunday May 16th	9 am	Field Trip	Meet at Vedder Crossing Restaurant	Mystery Outing	Denis 858-5141
Tuesday May 18th	7:30 pm	Regular Meeting and Photo Contest	Vedder School	Bob Knapp Slides on "The Plovers" Bring Photos	Helen 792-0972

Chilliwack Field Naturalists 46259 Stevenson Road CHILLIWACK BC V2R

B Check out our Web site at www.chilliwackfieldnaturalists.freewebsitehosting.com

