



NEWSLETTER

January, 2017

“To know nature and to keep it worth knowing”

www.abbymissionnatureclub.org

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m.
**at the Ravine Park Hatchery, 2395 Crescent Way, Abbotsford by the
Abby Arts building.**

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The objectives of the Abbotsford-Mission Nature Club

- *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 Abbotsford and Mission area*

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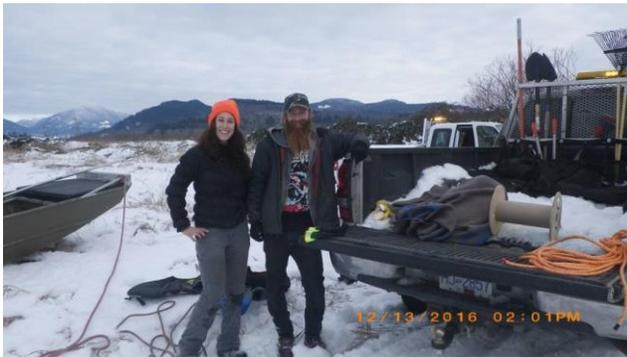
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Injured trumpeter swan on the ice at Willband Creek Park became Swan Lake. (reprinted with permission)

A concerned citizen contacted us (Abbotsford Urban Forest Dept.) about a trumpeter swan which appeared to be trapped or injured on the ice in the middle of the large, central pond at Willband Creek Park. They had tried numerous other agencies but nobody could assist.



The Parks' wildlife technician attended immediately to find two ladies lugging a canoe into the park to attempt a rescue. After assisting them, to no avail due to the fact that canoes do not make good ice breakers, staff asked them to discontinue the effort for their own safety as night was falling. We promised to try again in the morning light.



After formulating a plan and holding a safety meeting, Barry Mayo and Sara Appleton enacted the plan and managed to retrieve the swan without incident. The plan entailed launching their flat bottom boat and “poling” across the ice surface like a gondolier. Once at the swan, a blanket was placed over it as this has an unusual calming effect on most wildlife. The animal was then loaded into the

boat. The return trip was accomplished by feeding out an anchored retrieval rope as they left shore and then pulling themselves back across the ice using this tether line.



This magnificent bird appeared to be injured but, by all accounts, happy to see the crew as it put up no resistance to being handled. We coordinated with Elizabeth's wildlife rescue and had the swan in good hands before morning coffee break. Coincidentally, the Burnaby wildlife rescue is searching for a companion swan for the one they have who is not eating so the two will now have company

during their recovery periods. Birds of a feather...



Annual Christmas Dinner Held December 14th, 2016

(photos by Alice Roos)

This was a very enjoyable evening with good food, fellowship, caroling and a silent auction which brought in \$212.00.



Audubon Christmas Bird Count Day December 30, 2016

at Mill Lake & Ravine Park

What a lovely day to have the bird count this year. One of the groups counted birds in Mill Lake area and also Ravine Park. One of the highlights in Ravine Park was the spotting and picture taking of barred owl. It has been seen in the same spot for many years. At 5:00 pm many of the birders gathered at Mandarin Gardens for supper and to tally the number of species that were spotted by the many counters in our area and that was 93.



Lha:It/Harrison-Chehalis Wildlife Management Area

On November 16th, 2016, the provincial government established the 1033 ha Lhá:It/Harrison-Chehalis Wildlife Management Area under Section 4 of the BC Wildlife Act. The announcement coincided with the annual Bald Eagle Festival.

The WMA contains the dynamic river channels and active floodplain delta associated with the Harrison and Chehalis rivers. It stretches from the Hwy 7 bridge over the Harrison River in the South up to the Morris Creek wetlands in the North. About 833 ha of the WMA proposal is comprised of Crown land and another 200 ha is made up of private conservation lands belonging to the Nature Trust of BC. The private conservation lands that are included in the proposed WMA are leased to the Crown for the purpose of conservation management. The province has been managing the Crown land in the area for fish and wildlife conservation purposes for the past 40 years through various *Land Act* designations

A WMA designation can provide a more effective management framework and some additional management tools for conserving the area's internationally significant fish and wildlife values while also considering other compatible land use interests. The many historical uses of the area, including First



Nations traditional uses, commercial forest industries, and fishing, are recognized and managed within this framework. Part of the area, 200 hectares, is also dedicated for conservation by virtue of its prior ownership by The Nature Trust.

The WMA designation was the culmination of more than more than 25 years of work. The first Harrison-Chehalis Wildlife Area Plan commissioned by then Regional Wildlife Biologist, Tom Burgess, was completed in 1992 as a tool for establishing a Wildlife Management Area (WMA). In 1997 the first WMA plan was written and used to further consultation under the government's ever progressing public and stakeholder engagement process, leading to provincial approval of the plan in 2002 (<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/habitat/conservation-lands/wma/harrison-chehalis/>).

Meanwhile, non-government groups besides the Nature Trust were actively recognizing the natural values of the area, which has been designated internationally both as an Important Bird Area, the Chehalis IBA (<http://www.ibacanada.ca/site.jsp?siteID=BC033>), and a North American Pacific Salmon Stronghold (<http://www.stsailesdevcorp.com/natural-resources/harrison-salmon-stronghold>). A strategic plan for the Harrison Salmon Stronghold was completed in 2013 (<http://www.stsailesdevcorp.com/downloads/salmon-stronghold-strategic-plan.pdf>). Then in 2016, the BC government established the WMA through parliamentary approval.



Information on Hummingbirds and Pesticides

Pesticide exposure: As many of you know (and have laughed about collecting urine and feces), a number of the team have been working hard to develop a method for assessing pesticide exposure in hummingbirds. They started in the Fraser Valley and as usual, have been very lucky with assistance and interest from site hosts. This is a collaboration with Christine Bishop (who is training as a hummingbird bander) from Environment Canada. She recently presented all the findings to EC colleagues in Ottawa and at the SETAC conference in Orlando. The primary focus was on the neonicotinoids, since they have been shown to affect birds, as well as invertebrates.

Here is a quick summary of the project questions and answers so far:

2015 – Questions: Can we detect neonicotinoids in hummingbird urine? Can we obtain sufficient urine for these tests? These questions meant collecting urine in the field and asking the lab to develop a test for hummingbird urine. The answer was an unequivocal YES. However, the site that was expected to be ‘clean’, still showed traces of neonicotinoid.

2016 – Questions: Can we find a clean reference site? Can they detect differences in exposure from different areas of the Fraser Valley? Again YES. They have two clean sites on Vancouver Island, Goldstream Hatchery and Franklin Mill, near Port Alberni. They also detected clear differences in urine



neonicotinoid levels between sites close to heavy spraying and sites further away. As with 2015, they found neonicotinoids in the urine from hummingbirds at ALL the valley sites.

So at this point, we can say that birds using the valley are being exposed to these



pesticides. There are two major routes: from their carbohydrate source (nectar) and from their protein source (invertebrate prey). For those breeding in the area, it is a chronic exposure during the breeding period. This does not necessarily mean that the pesticides are harming the birds or their offspring. That is not something they can determine as yet.

1. For your calendars: The biennial meeting is on the May long weekend (arr. May 19, sessions Sat and Sun, leave Sun evening or Mon morning) and is being hosted by Gail Roughrider’s North Okanagan Team. All hummingbird, banding teams, volunteers and site hosts are welcome to attend. Planning has started. The team is considering a similar format to 2015, with banding first thing in the morning followed by sessions during the day on the Saturday and Sunday. Tek-Mar has kindly offered their conference facilities again. The team is looking into billets and hotels. They are also planning for lunches to be catered (\$10-15/day), with breakfasts and coffee breaks hosted by the team.

Please contact (Alison) or Louise Breneman louisebreneman@gmail.com for registration.

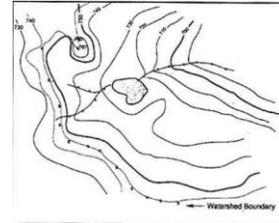
2. Latest Long-distance recap: An adult RUHU male that was banded on the 28th April, 2012 on the north side of Saltspring Island by Jessie Fannuchi was recaptured on the 29th Oct, 2016 in Cheriton Virginia. Not only is this quite an old male (must be at least 5 years old), but it confirms that many of our coastal birds are overwintering in the Gulf States.



PROGRAMS AND FIELDTRIPS January - June 2017

January 11, 2017 Monthly meeting at 7:30 pm "Suckers, Swallows and Snails" by Christy Juteau, National Conservation Science Director for A Rocha Canada

She will share how they monitor species at risk in the Little Campbell River watershed (where they discovered the endangered Salish Sucker) and how that is feeding into land use planning processes.



Refreshments will be served but please bring your own mug.

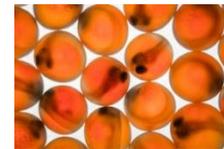
Goodies provided by Heather MacLean and Jean Lewis

January 2017 Fieldtrip - Brunswick Point looking for Snowy Owls (tentative-dependending on the arrival of the owls)

January 14, 2017 @ 10 am - Fieldtrip - Abbotsford Ravine Park Salmon Enhancement Society Hatchery



We will see first hand how the hatchery operates and what activities the volunteers are engaged in.



Saturday, February 4, 2017 Fieldtrip - Reifel Waterfowl Sanctuary in Delta



This is our annual trip to the sanctuary to see the many snow geese, raptors, songbirds and other waterfowl. Meet at the Tim Horton's located at Mt. Lehman and Highway #1 at 8:00 am. Dress for the weather, bring a lunch and wear sturdy footwear. There is a small entrance fee. Lynn Miller will be our leader.

*Level - Easy

Confirm your attendance to Alice Roos, haroos12@gmail.com or 604-853-4283 by Friday evening 8 pm



February 8, 2017 Monthly Meeting at 7:30 pm
"Snakes of British Columbia"

Dr. Christine A. Bishop is a Research Scientist with ECCC and adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. Christine has been working on reptile conservation for over 20 years. She will describe snake ecology and conservation efforts



Refreshments will be served but please bring your own mug.
Goodies provided by Margaret Bunbury and Debra Irwin

March 8, 2017 Monthly Meeting at 7:30 pm

Speaker to be determined

Refreshments will be served but please bring your own mug.

Goodies provided by Maxine & John Glasson and Alison Roberts

March 11, 2017 -Fieldtrip - Cheam Lake Wetlands Regional Park - Popkum 9:30 am



The wetlands protect about 93 hectares of marsh, lake and uplands, and is home to many different bird, animal, insects and plant species. Bring your binoculars and field guides to help identify the different species you will encounter. Dress for the weather, bring a lunch and wear sturdy footwear. Ken Summers will be our leader. Level - easy

Meet at Tim Horton's at Whatcom Road and Highway #1 at 8:45 am

Confirm your attendance to Alice Roos, haroos12@gmail.com or 604-853-4283 by Friday evening 8 pm

March 25, 2017 - Invasive Plant Removal at Willband Creek Park from 9 - 12 noon.



We will tackle the blackberries and other invasive plants. Please wear sturdy footwear and garden gloves, bring garden tools, especially clippers, shears and the like. Lunch will be provided for the workers.

Confirm your attendance to Alice Roos, haroos12@gmail.com or 604-853-4283 by Friday evening 8 pm

**April 4 - 7, 2017 - Fraser Valley Regional Science Fair @ UFV
"Celebrating Young Scientists"**

The winners will present their projects at the meeting on April 12 and accept their first prize of \$100 and second prize of \$75

April 12, 2017 Monthly Meeting at 7:30 pm

Laurie Kremsater guest speaker

"Owls at Risk"

Focussing on owls in the lower mainland especially the Screech Owl



Refreshments will be served but please bring your own mug.

Goodies provided by Jacqui Reznick and Gordon & Laraine Butt

April 8, 2017 - Hogan Family Nature Park work bee & walk @ 9:00 am (located on Debruyne Road just off Bradner and 2 streets north of Fraser Highway)



© Can Stock Photo

We hope to plant some trees in an open area, remove some invasive species and do some general cleanup. Many spring flowers should be in bloom at that time. Sturdy footwear is suggested and bring gardening tools and gloves. Refreshments will be

provided.

Confirm your attendance to Alice Roos, haroos12@gmail.com or 604-853-4283 by Friday evening 8 pm

May 10, 2017 Monthly Meeting at 7:30 pm

Dr. Rob Higgins: The Ants of British Columbia: Ecological Giants.

Ants are one of the most successful groups of animals on the planet. About 15,000 species have been described and they contribute more biomass to most ecosystems



than any other animal group. Dr. Rob Higgins is an entomologist at Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops - a keen naturalist and an enthusiastic speaker. He will describe this diversity of ants and the ecological roles that ants play in British Columbia. He will also talk about

new arrivals - the fire ants - that are overshadowing our native species.



Refreshments will be served but please bring your own mug.

Goodies provided by Jack and Alice Van Dyke and Vicki and Rinze Kiljan



**May 4 - 6, 2017 BC Nature AGM in Lillooet
"Canyon to Alpine"**

For more details check the winter edition of the BC Nature magazine or <http://www.lillooetnaturalistsociety.org/agm> or www.bcnature.ca

May 13 or 27, 2017 Fieldtrip - Kanaka Creek Regional Park



We will view the newly opened Kanaka Creek Watershed Stewardship Centre which replaces the Bell-Irving Hatchery and walk some of the trails. Wendy DaDalt will be our leader. More details to follow

Confirm your attendance to Alice Roos,
haroos12@gmail.com or 604-853-4283 by Friday evening 8
pm

June 14, 2017 Annual Picnic (location to be determined)



NOTE: We welcome suggestions for speakers, topics and fieldtrips. Contact one of the members of the executive.