



LIGHTHOUSE PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

February, 2011

Issue #15
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President's Message

by Alexandra Mancini

Last year was another year of significant progress in the stewardship activities of the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society. 2010 saw the removal of invasive species from North Piccadilly, Trails and Caulfeild parks as well as Lighthouse Park itself. Caulfeild was also the site of a major restoration planting with the help of a provincial Trees for Tomorrow grant of over \$2000 and a pilot project for the removal of knotweed by stem injection. We are very grateful to all the volunteers for their tireless efforts in tackling these invasive plants and restoration projects. In the fall, our art exhibition "Inspired by Nature" was held in partnership with the Ferry Building Gallery and received an enthusiastic response. In October, Grade 10 and 11 students from Rockridge School spent four days in Lighthouse Park with their science teachers, learning about ecology under the guidance of naturalists David Cook, Elaine Graham, Areta Sanders and Terry Taylor. These sessions motivated the school's environmental club to request an ivy pull after school in November. Ivy on the cliff sides of the Valley and Seven Sisters Trails provided plenty of material for their enthusiastic yanking!

If you haven't already seen our beautiful new signs, do take a walk in Lighthouse Park and treat yourself. In December, in partnership with the District, we erected six educational panels packed with information about the Forest, Wetlands, Biological Wealth, Wealth Lost, Rocky Bluffs and the Seashore. Also in December, Mountain Equipment Co-op generously granted \$2,000 to the Society towards restoration planting in Caulfeild Park. It was a happy culmination to a successful year for the Society.

2011 is turning into an equally busy year. In January, we made a presentation to the Parks Master Plan Working Group. We explained that, as stewards of the Six-Park Network, we try to engender more respect for the natural values of these parks through education and example. We also stressed that protection and preservation of wild places requires an adequate budget.

Please note that our ivy pulls start in February to avoid, as much as possible, any disturbance to nesting birds. Finally, if you are a nature photographer, expert or beginner, you may be interested in our photographic exhibition to be held in the West Vancouver Memorial Library at the end of the year. In the lead up to this event we are offering a workshop to help you become better friends with your digital camera.



American Mink, *Mustela vison*, photographed by Thibault Doix in Lighthouse Park

Inside this issue:

<i>President's Message</i>	1
<i>Thank a Bee</i>	2
<i>Members Activities</i>	3-4
<i>Photo Exhibition and Workshop</i>	5
<i>Woodpeckers</i>	6-7
<i>Klootchman Park</i>	8

Lighthouse Park Preservation Society is a membership based non-profit organization formed in 1998 to:

- *protect the natural integrity of Lighthouse Park;*
- *promote public awareness of its natural features;*
- *and support the development of biological zones near the park boundaries.*

President - Alexandra Mancini

Vice President - Jeff Marliave

Past President - Marja de Jong Westman

Membership Secretary - Aline Brown

Treasurer - May Loudon

Directors

Elspeth Bradbury

Ed Donaldson

Areta Sanders

Keith Wade



WEST VANCOUVER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

THANK A BEE!

By Dr. Elizabeth Elle

2



Two-ranked bumble bee on Sea blush

Photo: Elizabeth Elle

Have you thanked a bee today? You should, if you have had a cup of coffee or tea, eaten a piece of fruit, or indulged in a bite of chocolate. One out of every three bites we eat is thanks to a bee, either because the bee pollinated a flower that matured into a fruit (or seed) that wound up on our plate (think tomatoes, apples, almonds, and even canola oil), or because the bee helped produce the seeds we use to grow things, like lettuce and carrots. Of course, pollinators are also essential for the reproduction of many of the plants that make natural areas beautiful - so if you love nature, you have an extra reason to thank a bee.

Although many people understand the concept of pollination, they assume that all that hard work is done by one species - the honeybee. Honeybees were introduced to North America from Europe, so if you think about it, any plants that were here before that introduction must have relied on something else for seed production. Many plants rely on the wind to blow pollen from one plant to another. Local examples include grasses, red alder, and hemlock. Others may rely on beetles or flies, moths or butterflies, or even hummingbirds, but the vast majority of animal-pollinated plants in British Columbia rely on native bees. Though the number keeps increasing, recent estimates suggest we have as many as 500 species of native bees in our province, well over half of the native bee species in Canada! Bees are hugely important pollinators because unlike other animals that visit flowers, bees

actively collect pollen and nectar to feed their offspring. This means that they visit flowers more often than other animals do, and they have special adaptations that increase their ability to pickup extra pollen - like fuzzy hairs.

Although vulnerable to increasing foot traffic, the rock outcrops of Lighthouse Park are still home to a diverse array of wildflowers such as sea blush, camas, and harvest brodiaea. I've studied these plants on Vancouver Island. They are all pollinated by native bees and a few flower flies. This means restoration of plant communities must consider the bees' needs, which include food (wildflowers) but also nesting sites (depending on the bee species, either untilled ground or cavities in wood).

There is increasing concern worldwide about pollinator extinction and what this might mean for reproduction of both wild and agriculturally-important plants. Research performed in my lab suggests the ground nesting bees, which include bumblebees, mining bees and digger bees, are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss.

So if you want to thank a bee for what is on your plate, or for the wildflowers around you, consider gardening for pollinators: provide flowers from early spring to fall, in a diversity of shapes, colours, and sizes, and leave the bees some untilled ground to nest in.

GUEST SPEAKER SERIES

West Vancouver Memorial Library, Welsh Hall

There will be a members' update before each talk

SATURDAY, MARCH 12th

2:00-4:00 p.m.

ELIZABETH ELLE

“Thank a Bee”

Dr. Elle is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at SFU, with a research program focused on pollinator biodiversity and conservation. She will speak about the natural history of our wild pollinators, (we may have as many as 500 species of native bees in BC!), what is known about pollinator declines, and the role of gardeners, like you, in conserving pollinator biodiversity.



SATURDAY, APRIL 30th

2:00-4:00 p.m.

FRIENDS OF CYPRESS PARK

“Cypress Through the Seasons”

Cypress Provincial Park, located in the mountains above West Vancouver, contains an exceptional number of beautiful sub-alpine flowering plants. Photographs by Rosemary Taylor and others show the development of these plants through the seasons and bring attention to the park's rich biological diversity. This presentation will be introduced by Friends of Cypress Provincial Park president, Katharine Steig and narrated by well-known Vancouver naturalist Terry Taylor.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

For all volunteer Saturday events, please bring clippers if possible, and wear old clothes and work gloves.

Saturday, Feb. 5th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Piccadilly Park - Ivy Pull

Meet at the junction of Piccadilly North & Clovelly Walk, north of the railway crossing. Call Dick at 604-922-8407 for more information.

Saturday, Feb. 19th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Lighthouse Park - Ivy Pull

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot of Lighthouse Park. Call Alexandra at 604-922-1485 for more information.

Saturday, March 5th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Caulfeild Park - Removal of Invasives

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road. Call Terry at 604-925-9288 for more information.

Saturday, April 16th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Caulfeild Park - Restoration Planting

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road.

Saturday, May 14th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Lighthouse Park - Broom Pull

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot.

MONTHLY BIRD COUNTS

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot in Lighthouse Park on the

first Sunday of every month at

8:00 a.m. February 6th, March 6th, April 3rd

7:30 a.m. May 1st, June 5th, July 3rd, Aug 7th,

Sept. 4th

“BC’s Natural Treasure: Will it Still be Here for your Children?”

with

Marian Adair, R.P. Bio.

after our

Annual General Meeting

SATURDAY, JUNE 18th, 2011

3:00 p.m.

Sk'iwitsut Hut, Lighthouse Park

BC is characterized as “The Best Place on Earth”. We need to start treating it that way. Find out what biodiversity means from a BC context and why we should care. Come and hear a presentation on the major findings from *Taking Nature's Pulse; The Status of Biodiversity in BC*; a comprehensive, science-based assessment of the state of the province's natural environment. Marian Adair is Chair of Biodiversity BC and Habitat Ecologist with The Nature Trust of British Columbia. Marian enjoys the challenge of managing multi-disciplinary studies and has the ability to communicate effectively with client groups, government agency personnel and the general public.



Rockridge students, flanked by teacher Tom Harding and Environment Club sponsor/Librarian Arlene Anderson, after pulling ivy in Lighthouse Park on a wet November afternoon. Photo: Areta Sanders

WANTED - CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS!

of Lighthouse Park and the five small neighbouring parks that make up West Vancouver's Six-Park Network (Klootchman, Trails, The Dale, Caulfeild and Piccadilly North).

We invite photographers, young and old, to explore this network of parks and to use their imagination as well as their skill to illustrate the beauty, fragility and diversity of these precious natural environments.

A juried exhibition will be held at the West Vancouver Memorial Library from November 5th, 2011 until January 8th, 2012 with a Grand Opening on November 18th, 2011. Work may be offered for sale.

If you are interested in taking part, please send your name to lighthouseparkps@gmail.com using the subject line PHOTO EXHIBITION, or call Elspeth at 604-926-9390. We shall then send you more details and keep you updated on related activities.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY IN LIGHTHOUSE PARK WITH RON LONG**Sunday, May 15, 2011****9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Ron Long graduated from the Photographic Arts program at Ryerson University and for thirty-six years was employed as a full-time photographer at Simon Fraser University. For fifteen of those years Ron photographed exclusively for the Biology Department and so has a great deal of biology in his background. Ron is the Vice President of the Native Plant Society of BC, is active in the Vancouver Natural History Society and is on the speakers committee of Van Dusen Gardens.

This workshop is for anyone who still has questions about digital photography regardless of their experience level or the type of equipment they use. It will begin with a presentation and question period in Sk'iwitsut Hut at the foot of Beacon Trail. Over an extended lunch break we shall have the opportunity to wander in the park and take our own photographs. Ron will then use these as a basis for discussion and a critique in the afternoon. The workshop will end around 4:00 p.m.

Please bring your own camera and camera instruction book along with a notebook and pen. The Lighthouse Park Preservation Society will provide drinks and snacks, but bring your own lunch. The workshop will take place rain or shine, so dress appropriately for the outdoors.

This event is **limited to fifteen participants** with registration on a first come first serve basis. To register please call Elspeth at 604-926-9390 to make sure space is available. You will then be required to mail a cheque for \$35 payable to the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society to:

LPPS PHOTO WORKSHOP

4939 Water Lane,

West Vancouver, BC

V7W 1K4

WOODPECKERS - Woodland Specialists

by Marja de Jong Westman

6

I think all birders would agree that a day of forest birding is not complete without seeing a woodpecker or two! Their noisy animated calls and bold behaviour make them almost impossible to miss. I find them captivating -- everything about them is so beautifully suited to their tree-chiseling, bug-hunting, hole-nesting ways.

Woodpeckers are a widespread group with 127 species identified worldwide. Although ranging from the edge of the tundra to tropical forests, they all seek woodlands or areas with tall standing plants, including the cacti of the deserts of southwestern US. North America has 22 breeding species and of these 8 are regularly found in B.C. Fortunately for Vancouver's north shore residents, woodpeckers tolerate residential areas when there is access to forest containing large diameter trees - either living or dead - and many of us share our gardens with them year round.

Woodpeckers possess some novel features, one being their peculiar feet. Like most birds, they possess four toes (except for the aptly named three-toed woodpecker). Other birds have three toes facing forward and one facing back, while woodpeckers have two toes pointing forward and two pointing back. The backward-facing toes help support the bird on vertical surfaces. Along with these toes, the tail also works as a brace. I love watching woodpeckers at my window-feeders, because it is then I can see the workings of the tail close up. As the bird clings to the feeder, a central shaft of tail feathers flexes out from the rest of the tail, and presses against the windowpane, securing the bird into its feeding position. I know when the woodpeckers have been visiting, because there are feather marks on the glass under the feeders and because a feeder filled in the morning is often empty by twilight.

One of the most recognizable features of a woodpecker is its bill. The straight, chisel-shaped structure is used like a handyman's multipurpose tool, employed for feeding, nest building and even courtship. As with other birds, feeding tends to be a full-time occupation. Most woodpeckers are insectivorous, and extract insects from decaying wood. Some species, like the Lewis's woodpecker, catch winged insects in flight much like a flycatcher. For most others, feeding begins by hammering on a tree trunk and is then followed by chiseling through the bark. It is thought that the hammering disturbs the resident bugs and sends them fleeing to the surface. Drilling may also result in access to sap, one of the preferred foods of our

red-breasted sapsucker. It's not surprising that the head of a woodpecker is specialized to withstand all this action. The frontal skull bones are folded at the base of the bill and absorb shock. Further, to prevent the inhalation of wood chips and sawdust, the nostrils located in the top fleshy part of the beak are recessed and surrounded by extra feathers.

Different species forage for different foods, and their diet can vary with the seasons. The Pileated woodpecker, for example, feeds on insects in spring and summer, preferring carpenter ants, and may switch to nuts and seeds later in the year. Our winter bird feeders often support this switch, as feeders loaded with suet and sunflower seeds are frequented by woodpeckers of all sorts. Even sapsuckers will switch to berries in the winter. Some woodpeckers cache food in the cracks and crevices of tree bark. The hairy woodpecker hoards insects in this way.



Hairy Woodpecker, *Picoides villosus*

Photo: Dick Cannings

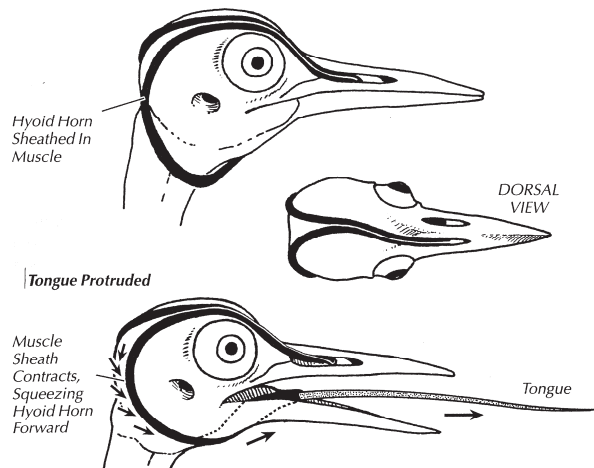
Introduced starlings often take over the nest sites of these woodpeckers, out-competing their intended residents. This along with the loss of habitat is causing the decline of this species.

WOODPECKERS - Woodland specialists

by Marja de Jong Westman

7

Whether it is sap or insects they are after, a woodpecker's tongue is a most useful food-gathering tool. Covered in sticky saliva and often barbed, the tongue is well suited to locating and extracting insect prey.



"Handbook of Bird Biology"; Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Princeton University Press, c. 2004.

The tongue and the muscles used to manipulate it are supported by a series of bones called the hyoid apparatus. This apparatus is much longer in woodpeckers than in most other birds and its extensions called "horns" wrap backwards around the head. Although a woodpecker's tongue is only about the length of its bill it can be protruded beyond the bill by the muscles that move this elongated hyoid apparatus. Some woodpeckers can extend the tongue 13cm out of the bill.

The sound of hammering to a woodpecker is like a love song to a warbler. Species have their own specific drumming patterns, which can proclaim territory and be used in courtship. Courting birds will often hammer in duets. These sounds differ from the irregular hammering created when woodpeckers are feeding. Many species form long-term pair bonds. Nest building follows, and the same strategies for chiseling holes in bark for insects are used to create nest cavities. Both sexes help out and nests are often filled with fresh wood chips. Fortunately for other cavity-nesting birds like owls, most woodpeckers tend to excavate new cavities each year! It takes about 2 weeks to prepare a new nest cavity.

As much as seeing woodpeckers on a bird walk is always rewarding, woodpeckers should be honoured as key players in the health of forest ecosystems. Their insect eating habits reduce the number of insects. Their excavations can provide homes for bats, squirrels, small owls and other species.

While most populations of B.C.'s woodpeckers are secure, the Lewis's Woodpecker and White-headed Woodpecker are considered Threatened and Endangered respectively.

You can help all woodpeckers by maintaining dead snags and large diameter trees in your garden. Instead of removing dead trees, Parks Departments across the Lower Mainland are leaving part of the trunks standing to serve as "wildlife trees". Also some woodpeckers, like the northern flicker, will use appropriate nest-boxes should you wish to provide them.

For help building a woodpecker nesting box see:

[http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/how_tobuild_your_ownwdpkr_box)

[how_tobuild_your_ownwdpkr_box.](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/how_tobuild_your_ownwdpkr_box)

or <http://www.birdhouse101.com/Downy-Woodpecker.asp>.



Northern Flicker, *Colaptes auratus*

Photographed in Caulfeild Park by Marja de Jong Westman

Male flickers usually choose the nest sites, which can be used for several years running. I recall a neighbour's good fortune of having a pair of flickers nesting in a deck post year after year!



White Fawn Lilies, *Erythronium oregonum* Photo: E.laine Graham

This secluded park was originally part of a large tract of land purchased from the Crown in 1891 by a millwright Nils Frolander for \$164.00. Later in the 1890's the land was purchased by Francis Caulfeild, who donated the Klootchman Park area to the Municipality of West Vancouver on February 21, 1926. The main access, formerly named High Rock Ridge, passes between some private lots before reaching a rocky knoll and the steps into the park.

The name "Klootchman" means "woman" in Chinook jargon and was so named when Caulfeild donated the park. It is correctly spelled with a "t" although the sign at the entrance reads "Kloochman Park" and this spelling is frequently used. The most prominent bluff in the Park was formerly named "Steep Bluff" but in 1926 the District of West Vancouver proposed changing the name to "Indian Bluff". The change was made because traced on its face by quartz veins on a dark background are the figures of an Indian and a bear, which can be seen from the water.

Large Douglas-firs surround the sign marking the entry to the Park. Laurels, blackberries and ivy have invaded the narrow pathway entrance. Once into the open, ferns, grass, and, in spring, even fawn lilies enjoy the rocky, sunny slope. The stairs leading into the park, which were re-built in 2010, end with an unusual tree that started life as two trees, but about 15 feet up merged into one. A little further on, another tree started as a single trunk and ended as two trees. The path winds through old-growth Douglas-firs, cedars, hemlocks and maples, standing, leaning, lying or rotting, and a groundcover of salal or ferns until the trail

reaches the water, close to private property. There stands a large, lone, Sitka spruce flanked by cedars. Turning back to a junction, another trail leads up to the bluffs. At Indian Bluff there are views to Juniper Point, Batchelor Point, the Grebe Islands (also called East and West Islands), and farther away to Passage Island, Bowen Island and the Sunshine Coast. The bluff is home to pines, Douglas-firs and gnarled, smooth skinned arbutus trees. On the ground are moss, salal, ferns, kinnikinnick.

Of our Six-Park Network, Klootchman Park appears to be the least affected by invasive plants, but areas of the park bordering private property have serious infestations of ivy, laurel and lamium. These are hard to control as the park borders are not defined. Garden debris is cast off from private homes. The bluff areas are used by rock climbers and much of the native vegetation has been worn away. The Lighthouse Park Preservation Society had an ivy pull focused on the entry and central part of the Park. Dedicated members hauled bags of ivy up the long flight of stairs for removal, but the ivy is still approaching from the edges of the park, even climbing up trees, and we need to remain vigilant.

Klootchman Park is not a large park, but it has so much to offer. It is a haven and a small reminder of the way our lands were when only the native people lived here. It is peaceful and secluded, with magnificent trees as well as glorious views.

