

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

To know, enjoy, and preserve Nature



TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message.....	2
Paradise Meadows.....	3
CBC 2010.....	3
Kidfest.....	4
BC Nature Fall General Meeting.....	5
Membership Renewal.....	7
40 th Birthday.....	8
Meetings and Outings.....	9 & 10

The Arrowsmith Naturalist is published three times a year...in February, June and October. Articles on birding, travel, botany and environmental matters are welcomed by the end of the month prior to publication. The next deadline is January 2011, for the February 2011 edition.

Hand-written or typed articles are accepted. Some editing may be required for length or held off for another edition according to available space. Please e-mail articles to mmhillm@shaw.ca or send by mail to: 194 Valdez Ave, Qualicum Beach B.C. V9K 1R8
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Promotion: Sallie Dabb
Refreshments: Alison Bakker
Young Naturalists: Alison Bakker
Conservation/Environment: Gary & Ronda Murdock
Web Site: David Helem
BC Nature: Pat Bourgeois

General Information: Club membership information is available at both of the public libraries, on the web site <http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>, or write to Arrowsmith Naturalists, Box 1542 Parksville B.C. V9P 2H4. Annual membership is \$35.00 per family, \$22.00 single or \$12.00 junior (up to 18 years). Membership includes monthly meetings (talks and/or slide shows), regular hikes (bird watching, botanical), BC Nature newsletter four times a year and club newsletter in February, June and October.

It's time to *renew Memberships for 2011*. Bring your dues in the form of cash or cheque along with completed forms to the November meeting or you can mail a cheque to the club's postal address. (See address above) Membership info on page 7

BULLETIN BOARD

Parking: If you find you have to park in the over-flow lot down the street from the school, be aware that the gates are locked at 9:30 p.m. One of our members found herself locked in and had to phone for a ride home.

No Smoking: Smoking is not allowed anywhere on school property.

Sunshine: If you know of an Arrowsmith Naturalist, who is ill, in hospital or recently bereaved, please contact: Pam Helem, at (250) 468-7475 or at arrowsmithnats@gmail.com

Club Publications:

A reference copy of the current newsletter is available at each of the libraries at Parksville and Qualicum Beach.

Meetings and Outings information sheets are available at Mulberry Bush Book Store in Qualicum Beach and Parksville.

Spring BC Nature AGM and Conference: It will be hosted by the Williams Lake Field Naturalist Club. Mark your calendars for May 12 - 15, 2011.
<http://bcnature.ca/pages/conferences/conferences.html>

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Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

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<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

President's Report

Once again, a new season of activity is upon us. Some of us have been busy preserving the bounty of summer, putting our gardens "to bed" for the winter, stocking up on seed for our bird feeders and looking forward to a new schedule of naturalist activities. We really know that the seasons have changed when the flocks of chickadees and juncos return and -yes- even the Steller's jays have reappeared.

We know we are well into autumn when our September monthly general meeting has come and gone and BC Nature has held the Fall General Meeting, this year in Langley. This meeting, which I have reported on elsewhere in this newsletter, was a resounding success. The urban/rural setting made for some unique field trip experiences, while unfortunately highlighting some of the less pleasant consequences of the urban sprawl which many of our communities must face. Now we can look forward to 2012 when we, along with the Nanoose Naturalists, can stage a FGM which features the uniqueness of our own Vancouver Island.

At our September general meeting, we conducted a poll of the members present to let us know whether the Wednesday/Sunday schedule for our outings was still convenient. The results indicated that a large majority preferred a Wednesday/**Saturday** schedule which we will implement in the New Year. This result indicates to me that not only is consultation with our members worthwhile, but that the old ways of doing things are not always in keeping with the changes in our membership and in our lives. Hopefully, we can continue to evolve in ways which provide for the needs and interests of our members.

But this sharing of "needs and interests" also necessitates that members be prepared to become involved in the overall direction of the Arrowsmith Naturalists. No group can sustain itself if it lacks the commitment of its members in bringing forward new ideas and new energies. We need **your** input.

And while I'm on this subject, our club still needs members to come forward to serve on the executive. Fortunately, most of the executive have so enjoyed themselves that they are staying on for another year. Some, however, are required by our club constitution to step down and others are seeking some well-earned respite. We are in dire need of a **recording secretary**, and we also require a **program coordinator**, a **field trip coordinator** and at least **one director**. None of these are onerous duties but they do make a great difference in the operation of a healthy club. If you are at all interested in serving in a particular capacity and are wondering what that position entails, please see me or any other member of the executive and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

In the coming weeks, we will be also asking for members to help with the planning and organization for the FGM in 2012. Whenever I have attended an AGM or a FGM, I have been struck by the involvement and the apparent enjoyment which the many host club members have demonstrated. Clearly, many hands make lighter work for all and a more enjoyable experience. When the call comes, please consider becoming "part of the party".

Lastly, it is time once again to renew our club memberships (single: \$22; family: \$35 and youth: \$12). Because we must submit the BC Nature portion of our dues earlier this year, we are asking that members renew their memberships by the end of November. If you wish, you can bring your dues in the form of cash or cheque to the November meeting or you can mail a cheque to the club's postal address. In either case, if you prefer, a post-dated cheque is acceptable. Let's all help out Gail by getting our membership dues in early.

Dave Hutchings, President

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

PARADISE MEADOWS 2010

Here are two shots of the walk at Paradise Meadows, July 14 of this year, lead by Pam and Dave. Some of the wild flowers were only just out in the meadows area and the walk up to Battleship Lake required winter boots over the crusty snow drifts on the path. The day was great with a goodly, group.

Photos by: Robert Mercer



Christmas Bird Count

Our 20th Parksville Qualicum Beach CBC will take place on **Sunday, December 19, 2010.**

Birders for teams in the field and Feeder-counters are needed !!!

For more info and to sign up contact: Sandra 250-248-5565

In the meantime ... check out this website for current and historical results, annual summaries, photos, research. <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

Kidfest 2010

Sunday, August 22 saw the Parksville Community Park swarming with people - children, adults, locals, visitors...Although the wind threatened to blow over our tent early in the day, the weather settled down for a perfect children's festival. Children and adults were enthused about viewing the Young Naturalists' display - puzzles, shells, quizzes, and the live water animals from off our shore.

Island Scallops provided small Wolf eels, large scallops, sea urchins, sculpin, anemones, and a few scale crabs. We collected other specimens at French Creek Bay including: an ochre star, leather star, sunflower star, pink star, oyster, barnacle, hermit crab, shield crab, Dungeness crab, and a sand anemone. A dark colored live sand dollar was used to contrast with the white shell of a dead sand dollar to encourage people to know the difference and to leave the live ones on the beach.

Our continuing success with our Naturalist exhibit at Kidfest is thanks to the volunteers. We would like to thank Island Scallops for providing some deep water specimens. Also Roger Simms for delivering these from Island Scallops, Martin and Marg Hill for transporting the tables, Bill Campbell and Irene Lambert for helping to collect specimens at French Creek beach. Also the following for working at the display: Alison Bakker, Val Tinney, Pam Helem, JoAnna Qureshi, Rose Lovell, Pat Bourgeois and Penny Marshall. Many people expressed their thanks for being able to view the display and learn a little bit about the sea life on and in our beaches.

Robert Mercer and Betty Collins



Photo by: Robert Mercer

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

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October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

BC Nature Fall General Meeting - hosted by Langley Field Naturalists

Fall General Meetings are always enjoyable for, not only do they mark the changes that a new season brings, but they do not seem to have the gravity of the Spring GM's with weighty and often contentious resolutions and the election of a new provincial executive. The Langley meeting was no exception.

The theme of the Langley meeting was "Nature on the Urban Edge" - very timely for a club which witnesses daily the challenges of rapid urbanization and development in the lower Fraser Valley. David Helem, Pat Bourgeois and I represented our club, although not all of us were able to take in the full three-day program. Most of the field trips focused on the study, conservation and restoration of areas such as the West Creek Wetlands, Derby Bog, Pepin and Gordons Brooks and Mountain View Crown Lands. Other trips dealt with Ethnobiology and Healing Plants, Raptor Ranch, the Mountain View Conservation and Breeding Centre and a walking tour of Brae Island and Fort Langley.

The Friday morning presentations went like clockwork, with good breaks between the talks and strict adherence to the one-hour which had been allotted to each presenter. As one might expect, the presenters focused on the challenges to endangered species, conservation and the Metro Vancouver Regional Parks system and its role in addressing these issues.

Perhaps one of the highlights of the FGM was the evening barbecue in the Campbell Valley Regional Park. Most of the food was prepared and supplied by outside caterers; however, the barbecuing was done by members of the Langley club. Apparently, the caterers did not want to take on the male members of the club who "would 'supervise' and 'help out' to make sure that each morsel was cooked 'properly' ". Doesn't sound like any men I know!

Following the barbecue, participants had the choice of owling (with Al Grass), telescope stargazing, or an old-fashioned campfire singalong. Many thanks to

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks who provided the park interpreters for each of the above programs.

Saturday focused on the morning BC Nature Directors' meeting, the afternoon General Meeting and a promised address by Barry Penner. The Directors' Meeting ratified the appointment of Claudia Copley - a member of the Victoria NHS - as the new Secretary. She brings the added advantage of youthful energy to the Executive. Nieke Visser, who was elected at the May AGM, has had to resign for health reasons. Still needed are a Treasurer (although a possible candidate may be in the wings), a Vice-President and a Coordinator for the Kootenay region.

For a half-hour discussion, Directors gathered in regional groups to share both the conservation concerns for their region as well as successful strategies from other regional clubs which their clubs might try to replicate. Following this discussion, Bob Dyer - President of the BC Naturalists' Foundation- announced that \$6,000 would be available this year for grants to support the projects of BC Nature clubs. Bev Ramey reported that efforts are underway to hire a Program and Communications Manager, a vital step in the implementation of the Strategic Plan adopted at the May AGM. This contracted part-time person would oversee projects, apply for grants, encourage citizen science projects and improve communications. Also, in an effort to improve communications, the recently-implemented "e-news bulletins" will be made available directly to all members at the discretion of their individual clubs.

Park Interpretation was an important topic. Bev Ramey reported that, for the summer of 2010, BC Nature coordinated the hiring of 17 summer students for BC Parks through Service Canada, enabling 14 Provincial Parks and one Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to provide programs to park visitors. Service Canada provided about \$76,000 in wages (through federal summer student job creation) and the Park

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

Fall General Meeting...cont'd from p.5

Facility Operators contributed \$40,000, plus in-kind support. BC Parks did finally commit a \$30,000 grant to BC Nature in April. BC Nature estimates that as a bare minimum an annual commitment from the Ministry of Environment of at least \$275,000 is required to co-ordinate a minimal program of interpretation. In the last year of adequate funding by the province (2001), interpretation was provided in 40 parks and reached over 800,000 park visitors at a cost of \$800,000 - not including BC Park staff support of these programs. At present, BC Nature is considering whether or not continue its co-ordinating role for 2011 as BC Parks has committed only \$40,000. One of the Directors representing the Boundary Bay WMA requested that, as well as Provincial Parks, WMA's be included in the Park Interpretation program.

The meeting concluded with the announcement that the 2011 AGM will be held in Williams Lake, the 2011 FGM in the Delta- Tsawwassen area, the 2012 AGM in Kelowna and, of course, the 2012 FGM in Oceanside - hosted by the Arrowsmith Naturalists and the Nanoose Naturalists.

Barry Penner's address produced little in the way of announcing changes in the manner of operations or funding at the Ministry of Environment. His main priority seemed to be to push for the renewal and improvement of signage in parks. He stated that his ministry "is working" to implement the recommendations and management plans outlined in the Auditor-General's critical report (*Conservation of Ecological Integrity in BC Parks and Protected Areas*), which was high-lighted in the most recent BC Nature Magazine (page 15). However, Penner urged patience for "consultation with First Nations and other interested parties is time-consuming". The Minister also summarized other initiatives of MOE: in concert with DFO the Ministry will continue the program of gravel removal from some areas of the Fraser River, mindful of protecting salmon and sturgeon habitat; in an effort to encourage better water use and management, the Water Act is being modernized, with the goal of having new legislation

enacted in the spring of 2012; recommendations for a revision of the Species at Risk list are due by the end of December, and restoration of the meander of the Okanagan River is underway. Any word on the amount allotted for Park Interpretation will not come until the Spring Budget is tabled. Since requests for funding for park interpreters need to be finalized early in 2011, for BC Nature Penner's statement only further complicates the co-ordination of this program. Although the Minister had stated previously that he would "answer questions", he allowed only one question from the meeting before he departed.

The business of the afternoon General Meeting began with an announcement from the new President -John Neville- that he would be touring the clubs in the northern part of the province in the coming weeks...a good decision. Many of these members must feel very isolated, distant relationship with the workings of BC Nature and our more southerly clubs because only seldom are they able to attend either an annual AGM or FGM. Hopefully, John's trip will help to shore up a provincial membership which has dropped by 237 in the past year.

The Office Manager, Betty Davison, reported that BC Nature is "on track and on budget".

The Conservation Committee reported the supporters of the proposed South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen National Park are cautiously optimistic. Some changes have been made to the planned boundaries. However, members are still encouraged to write letters supporting the park to Parks Canada and the federal Environment Minister, especially urging that the White Lake area be included within the park.

Christine Rock, the SFU graduate student who is the latest recipient of the Rene Savenye Scholarship, told the meeting of her project. She is studying riparian health in the Revelstoke area, with the seven-year survival record of the yellow warbler as an indicator species. Christine Webber of the Young Naturalists reported that new club and individual donations have helped immensely to offset the loss of gaming funds, which had accounted for 30 percent of the YNC budget. Also, a YNC member from Denman Island has been featured in Canadian

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

Fall General Meeting...cont'd from p.6

Geographic for his swan observation project. The importance of the BCN Field Camps was stressed by Anne Murray. The camps allow naturalists to closely study different regions and ecosystems and to indulge their interests, whether they be birding, botany, geology, marine biology, and so on. These camps also raise money for BC Nature and the sponsoring clubs. With 2011 marking the 100th anniversary of BC Parks, perhaps Strathcona - the first declared park - would be an appropriate site for a 2011 camp.

The regional coordinators outlined the projects, issues and challenges involving the clubs in their regions. Space does not permit a full discussion of these in this report. Updates were provided regarding BC Nature projects. In particular, BC Nature seems well aware of the difficulties of the

WiTS Program and is working to develop ways of re-starting and improving WiTS, especially on Vancouver Island. Further information regarding BCN projects (the *Living by Water* project, in particular) can be seen on the BCN website under "stewardship projects".

I came away from the Langley FGM feeling once again how important these gatherings are in connecting naturalists from around the province and what a splendid job of planning and execution clubs like the Langley Naturalists do. Some gatherings are more "high tech" than others, but the reasons for success are more to do with the sharing of experiences, connecting with old friends, learning and just having a good time. I look forward to the next gathering in Williams Lake.

Submitted by Dave Hutchings



A Fall Conference, group outing on the Langley Derby Reach Bog. There was about 6 metres of moss under us. It felt like we were walking on a bed.

Photo by: David Helem

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

This coming year we must pay our dues to BC Nature in January rather than in March, as we have in the past.

I invite and encourage all members of Arrowsmith Naturalists to pay their dues as soon as possible.

We also must sign the Release of Liability waiver form annually to be involved in the programmes and activities of the club.

To find the Membership form and Waiver form, go to the club website at www.arrowsmithnats.org and under Menu, click on Membership.

Print out forms 1 and 2 (preferably back to back) (less paper) and fully fill in both forms before coming to the next meeting. The dues are the same as last year: Individual, \$22.00, and Family, \$35.00

Thank you for your co-operation, as this means less phoning for me.

Looking forward to seeing many of you back this fall again, for another great year!!

Thanks, Gail Armstrong (250) 248-0587 or armstrong.gk@shaw.ca

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

October 2010

<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY ARROWSMITH NATURALIST CLUB!

In September, 1970, George and Pauline Tranfield of Parksville initiated the formation of the Arrowsmith Naturalists and for the past 40 years a love of the outdoors, and a passion for learning more about the natural world seems to have been the common bond which has sustained this club.

For many club members, the outings are the highlight of their membership in the Arrowsmith Naturalists. A glance at the archives yields a sample of their outings for the month of September, 1970: 13th - Labour Day Lake, 20th - Gabriola Island and 26th - Little Mountain. For September, 2010, forty years later, the following trips were planned and the archives will record: 15th - Kinsol Trestle, 19th - Great Canadian Shorelines Cleanup with Oceanside Young Naturalists, and 26th - Nile Creek Trail

There is a spirit of camaraderie on these outings and the "older" members become informal mentors to those new to the group, and possibly new to Vancouver Island, by the sharing of their "collected wisdom". George Tranfield's passion was fossils, Pauline's was local wildflowers and the conservation of the endangered Vancouver Island Marmot, and in the years following there has been a long line of fellow naturalists who have guided field trips and generously passed along their knowledge. Just as in the usual cycle of life, we have seen members come and others go who are sadly missed, but it is their collected wisdom and volunteering which has kept the club viable over the decades.

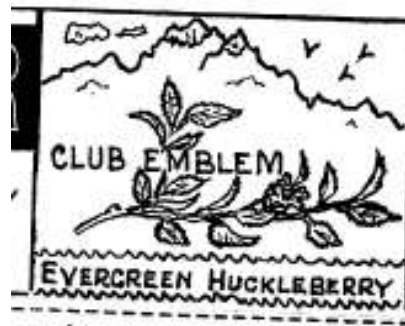
For forty years the monthly meetings continue to be well attended. Conducted nine times a year, the meetings deal with the usual business connected with running a club, and its affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Naturalists, (now BC Nature). They also provide members with updates about the many ongoing environmental issues. A guest speaker, whose expertise may cover one of a very wide range of topics in natural history and the environment, is also a feature of most meetings.

Over the years, another factor in the continuity of our club's activities and an avenue for passing along the club's "collected wisdom" has been the Newsletter, produced so ably three times a year by a dedicated series of editors. Always, an enjoyable range of topics are contributed by members, as well as reports of the various projects which the club members have either initiated or participated in. Our members participate in the annual Brant Festival; the Wildlife Tree Stewardship program, which monitors and plots the extensive number of Bald Eagles nests in the area from Nanoose Bay to Deep Bay; the annual Christmas Bird Count; the formation of an Oceanside chapter of the Young Naturalists of BC; the annual Kidfest in Parksville and the Stewardship of the Englishman River Estuary in partnership with the Nature Trust.

With the inevitable coming of the digital age in the 21st century, a club website was established. Our website not only records club activities but also provides a listing of environmental concerns for our region. In addition, it offers, an extensive photo gallery and lists of plant and animal species found in our region. And, of course, valuable links are provided to a variety of naturalist and other agencies with similar interests.

Having very successfully hosted the combined Annual General Meetings for both the Federation and Nature Canada in the spring of 1998, the Arrowsmith Naturalists, together with the Nanoose Naturalists, are looking forward to hosting the BC Nature Fall General Meeting in October, 2012. Once again it will be "all hands on deck".

Submitted by: Pam Helem



Happy 40th Birthday
Arrowsmith
Naturalists!

Original Club Emblem

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

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<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS - MEETINGS & OUTINGS

November, 2010 to March, 2011

Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Carpool if possible. For more information, contact Pam and Dave Helem at 468-7475. By popular demand, Saturday outings have replaced Sundays.

Wednesday, Oct. 27th – Mushroom Walk at the Big Qualicum River

This is one of our most popular outings. Bring lunch and delight in a mature forest as we search for fall mushrooms. This is a moderate walk, with some stairs and hills. Dr Bill Weller, mushroom expert, will accompany us. Bring a lunch. Meet at the Qualicum Beach Tourist Office at 9:30 am. Leader: David Helem.

Saturday, Nov. 13th – Jack Point & Biggs Park Easy walk with some stairs along the peninsula jutting out from the eastern side of the Nanaimo River Estuary. Lunch at the Crow and Gate Pub. Meet at Craig & Jensen at 9:30 or Arlington Inn, Nanoose Bay at 9:45. Leader: Pam.

Mon. Nov. 22nd – General Meeting Springwood Middle School, PV – 7:30 p.m.

DR. JOHN GUNTON is returning to present Part 2 of his topic "Geohazards of the Georgia Basin"

Wednesday, Nov. 24th – Nile Creek and the Lighthouse Trails Nice forest nature walk along a major creek located just north of Qualicum Bay and nearby trails presently being improved by the RDN. Lunch at the Bean Counter in Bowser. Meet at the Qualicum Beach Tourist Office at 9:30 am. Leader: Maggie.

Saturday, Dec. 4th – Courtenay Riverway, Goose Spit & Kye Bay Easy good birding along a paved walkway around the airport, and then later at the Goose Spit and Kye Bay. Bring a lunch or eat at a pub . . . your choice. Meet at Qualicum Beach Tourist Office at 9:30. Leader: Roger.

DECEMBER: No meeting, but that special year-end event -- Christmas Bird Count.

Sunday, Dec 19th - Christmas Bird Count and Potluck dinner

Join us to count the birds and then come to potluck which always promises good food and many tall tales from the participant birders. Call Sandy at 248-5565 to help with count.

~ 2011 ~

Wednesday Jan. 19th – VIU Deep Bay Field Station & Deep Bay birding The morning starts with a tour of Centre for Shellfish Research and after lunch we will bird in the area. The beautiful long-tailed ducks usually can be seen close to the shore. Lunch at Ship and Shore Cafe. Meet at the Qualicum Beach Tourist Office at 9:30 am. Leader: Gil.

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter

Volume # 16

Issue Number 3

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<http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>

Monday, Jan. 24th - General Meeting Springwood Middle School, PV - 7:30 p.m. - MEMBERS' NIGHT A favourite event for members to share their photos. Please limit your digital images or slides to a dozen. Bring any items you'd like to raffle. Raffle tickets are 3 for \$2.

Saturday, Jan. 29th - Nymph Falls Easy walk following the Puntledge River through forested areas. Bring a lunch. Meet at the Qualicum Beach Tourist Office at 9:30 am. Leader: Margaret & Martin.

Wednesday, Feb. 9th - Neck Point, Nanaimo Easy birding in area which often yields a great variety of seabirds. A developed trail runs around the park, with boardwalks and lookouts. Meet at Craig & Jensen at 9:30 or Arlington Inn, Nanoose Bay at 9:45. Lunch at Pipers Pub. Leader: David Helem.

Saturday, Feb 19th - Morrell Sanctuary, Nanaimo Enjoy this woodland walk which includes visiting a beaver pond and Morrell Lake. Easy with a few inclines. Lunch at the Jingle Pot Pub. Meet at Craig & Jensen at 9:30 or Arlington Inn, Nanoose Bay at 9:45 Leader: TBA

Monday, Feb. 28th - General Meeting Springwood Middle School, PV - 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker: Lisa Spaven, coordinator of B.C. Marine Mammal Response Network, based at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo. She will share her wide knowledge of the behavioural and environmental aspects of the fascinating marine mammals, such as seals, sea lions and whale species found in our coastal waters.

Wednesday, Mar. 2nd - Parksville/Qualicum area herring spawn and seabird viewing Location depends on previous day's action - eagles, ducks, gulls, sea lions and fish boats. Meet at Craig & Jensen at 9:30 am or Arlington Inn, Nanoose Bay at 9:45. Bring a lunch. Leader: Sandy.



Kinsol Trestle on TransCanada Trail Nov. 04/05
(Cowichan River) Vancouver Island
(815 ft. long 125 ft. above the Koksish River)
Largest wooden trestle in the British Commonwealth.
The construction started in 1911. All the timbers were cut and left at the site. Construction was halted due to 1st World War. After the War the timbers left on site had deteriorated and had to be replaced. The trestle was completed in 1920. It was last used in 1979.

Photos by: Gilles Gratton

