



# Oystercatcher

Newsletter of the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club  
Spring, 2012

@Dan Pancamo: www.wikimedia.com

The 40-50cm American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) is marked by its black and white body and a long, thick, orange beak. They mainly occur on the Atlantic coast of North America from New England to northern South America, nesting on coastal island beaches and feeding on marine invertebrates.



Our club members learn a little about vineyards and get a little refreshment in return. Thanks to Teresa Hitch for arranging the expedition and taking the images.

## Index

President's Report for 2011	2	Calendar of Events	5
2011 Annual General Meeting	2	About Hiking Boots and Carol Williams	6
Problem With Trans-Canada Trail	4	B.C. Nature Report - Winter 2011	6
PARC Trails - 2012	5	Mr. Anna's Soapbox	7

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For information on the Board of Directors and weekly outings, please see our website: [www.saltspringtnc.ca](http://www.saltspringtnc.ca)

# Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club President's Report for 2011

Annual General Meeting, 26 January 2012

*Kees Visser*

The Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club's mandate is to stimulate interest in hiking and related outdoor activities; and to study flora and fauna in their natural habitats. 2011 was again a good year for hiking, walking, rambling and indeed also for observing and enjoying nature on Salt Spring Island. There were many highlights, but there were also a few concerns.

Starting with the highlights:

-As you will see in the financial report, the club is financially sound and we have a large membership of over 200 members.

- We have decided to look after the Jack Foster Trail, since no other authority cares for it. We are currently trying to obtain funds for a boardwalk over a swampy section as well as stairs for safer beach access. Over the last year we did some trail clearing in Mt Maxwell and Ruckle Park; we also participated in the cleaning up of the Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve. Thanks to all volunteers, especially Herb Otto and Brian Radford.

- In June 2012, our Club will again organize a BC Nature Field Camp and preparations are well underway. The organizing committee of Nieke Visser, Zeke Blazecka, and Richard Shead works hard to make this Camp another success.

- In early May 2011, Nieke Visser and myself organized a three day Spring trip to Tofino. Twenty nine members participated with hikes on Flores Island (the Wild Side Trail) and on Meares Island, excursions by boat to watch birds and bear, whales and a dip in the Hot Springs and, last but not least, a shoreline excursion and walk in the National Park. The weather cooperated; the accommodation and food were great. In short, the trip was a great success.

- In November 2011 the BC Nature Director submitted a letter to the Northern Gateway Review Panel, in which our club expressed its concerns about the present plan for the pipeline to Kitimat.

-Nancy Braithwaite received the 2011 Trailblazer Award, thanks to her long commitment and hard work for the club, such as organizer of many walks and hikes, and as BC Nature Director for many years.

- On the social front, we had seven presenta-

tions this year. These evenings were generally well attended. Thanks to the coordinator, Niels Gerbitz, and all the speakers. We started to work more with the Salt Spring Conservancy by mutual advertizing and cooperative scheduling of events.

- We have had three issues of The Oystercatcher. Gary Adams is the editor and is doing a great job. Keep nature or hiking articles flowing to him.

- Many volunteers who are not on the Board, give us excellent support, I like to thank Sue Lehmann, who coordinates the website and the Driftwood announcements, as well as Marjorie Radford, Ann King, Jacquie Severn, and Lucille Adderley, who are always ready to help out at the "Socials". In addition, many members are involved in the annual Christmas bird count, that is sponsored by the club.

Now over to the concerns:

Although we now have more members coming forward to lead the weekly events, it is important to have a sizeable pool of leaders. I strongly encourage you to lead events; otherwise they will not happen. Your participation enriches the club and is appreciated by all. Some of the "older" leaders are more than willing to co-lead with you or to help you. This is also valid for spring and fall trips; these will not happen if you do not come forward.

As for this meeting, I like to encourage you to bring forward your ideas to make our club better. And during the year, please contact me or any other Board member with ideas, complaints, or issues you like to talk about.

Finally, for 2012 we should have a new Board. Some Board members are staying on in their position, but some have finished their term and will be leaving the Board. I like to thank all Board members for the work they have done, express my thanks to leaving Board members Zeke Blazecka, Janice Dickie, Marcelle Roy, Niels Gerbitz, Teresa Hitch, and Marilyn Harding. I, as your President, intended to leave as well but, at the AGM, I was nominated again as President, which I have accepted, but I intend to resign after 1 year in January 2013. We will be looking forward to a good hiking 2012!

Did you know that you can purchase a Discovery Pass from Parks Canada providing a year of free admission to all National Parks and Historic Sites in Canada. Prices range from 57.90 for a senior to 136.40 for a family. Check out <http://www.pc.gc.ca/voyage-travel/carte-pass/intro.aspx> or inquire at any Parks office.

**This article (Minutes of SSTNC  
Annual General Meeting) has  
been deleted at the request of the  
President.**



## **Problem With Trans-Canada Trail**

*John Heddle*

We are having problems with the Trans Canada Trail. Maybe you can help. The Trail (TCT) is not the problem; indeed, it is a great success. To date, almost three quarters of the trail is completed, about 16,500 kilometers so far, with many sections completed in BC. The Spring Outing on the Kettle Valley Trail a few years ago was, in fact, on the TCT as the TCT includes the Kettle Valley Trail. You can see a map of the TCT at <http://tctrail.ca/explore-the-trail/> and can find many other local trails that are a part of it. The website says it will be the longest system in the world – or maybe it is already.

Our problem with the TCT is connected to our donations to it. For a number of years, our club has been giving a donation to the TCT in memoriam for members who have died in the previous year. At first we were giving one metre of trail, a \$25 donation, for any member who had played a significant role in the

club while a member. This, in itself, posed a conundrum for the Executive, namely how to decide whether the role was significant enough. Clearly, there is a continuum of contributions from being a President or a very frequent hike/walk/ramble leader down to long standing members who participated whole-heartedly without having any designated role. So how to decide? Often the person's contributions were made before any of the Executive were even members. Partly for this reason the club has recently donated \$150 annually on behalf of all of the members who died in the previous year. The difficulty is how this should be recorded on the Trail.

When the donation was made in respect of a particular member, that member's name was put on the plaque – 25 characters maximum, including spaces and punctuation. This left no space to mention the source of the donation, the Salt Spring Island Trail and Nature Club (40 characters, by itself). Now for \$150 one might expect that six times as much space would be available, but the plaques are all sized for 25 characters, not for 150 characters. We suggested the following to be on three plaques, one above the other

- 1 In memoriam 2010
- 2 Salt Spring Trail &
- 3 Nature Club

But this was rejected by the TCT.

A number of other possibilities have been suggested:

- A. SALTSRINGTNC IN MEMORIAM
- B. SALT SPRING TRAIL & NATURE” is one character too long but  
SALTSRING TRAIL & NATURE would fit.
- C. SST&NC IN MEMORIAM
- D. SS T&NC IN MEMORIAM

If you have any suggestions or opinions about the preceding possibilities, please send them to me ([jheddle@YorkU.ca](mailto:jheddle@YorkU.ca)) or put them in the Treasurer's folder in the Cobbler's shop. We still do not have any plaques for our last year's donation in respect of 2010 and it is time to give for 2011!

## **PARC Trails 2012**

***Kees Ruurs, Manager PARC***

Spring and summer are around the corner and that means the PARC trail crew is getting back into action. The year 2012 promises to be another busy one, maintaining, upgrading, and building new trails for us.

## **Calendar of Events**

**Friday, March 9, 2011**

**Wade Davis**

### **Salt Spring Conservancy Event**

Dr. Wade Davis, author and ethnobotanist, anthropologist and photographer, will present his book "Sacred Headwaters: The Fight to Save the Stikine, Skeena and Nass". He will be joined by fellow Massey Lecturer Ron Wright for questions. Fundraiser for the SSI Conservancy and the Sacred Headwaters project at the David Suzuki Foundation. Artspring, 7 p.m. Tickets \$25. April 6, 2012

**Thursday, March 29, 2011**

**Lynn Thompson**

Presents the Skyline Trail in Jasper National Park beginning at 7:30 in the lower hall of the United Church (111 Hereford Ave).

**Friday, March 30, 2011**

**Karen Barry**

### **Salt Spring Conservancy Event**

Karen Barry, Bird Studies Canada, will speak about bird conservation issues and what citizens can do to help. Karen coordinates the BC Coastal Waterbird Survey and the Beached Bird Survey Program. Community Gospel Hall, 7 pm. Suggested donation \$5.

**Friday, April 27, 2011**

**Dr. John and Mary Theberge,**

### **Salt Spring Conservancy Event:**

these wildlife ecologists and authors of *The Ptarmigan's Dilemma, An Ecological Exploration into the Mysteries of Life*. Community Gospel Hall, 7 pm. Suggested donation \$5.

Our trail work season always starts with a thorough inspection of all the trails. The winter storms often create obstacles on trails or erosion in places you would not think of during the dry summer. We already know of several places in the Duck Creek Park and Channel Ridge trail networks where we can make more improvements to keep standing water off the trails.

After that is completed we will finish what we started late last year and that is the new trail that connects Blackburn Road with Frasier Road. We are only 150 meter away from completing it and that should take only a couple of weeks at the most. That trail has a fairly major standing pool of water during the winter and it may have to be designated as a seasonal trail only. The cost of having to construct a 20 meter long bridge over 2 feet of water for only a few months of the year probably is not warranted by the number of users it will see.

Another trail we plan to build this year is the through western Mouat, we have found a route that is agreeable to several biologists. We usually do an inventory of natural features in areas where we want to construct a trail to make sure we don't destroy habitats of significance and in Mouat we were advised to move the original route to somewhere else by the biologists we contracted to do the inventory for us. The new trail will connect the existing trail network with Rainbow Road right next to Pallot Way. It should be a nice extension of the hiking opportunities in that park.

Then we plan to develop a trail that leads south from Drake Road to Cypress View Road and Bishops Walk Road and on to Dean Road. Some of that trail already exists, some will need to be constructed. Also a trail up the creek valley from Rainbow Road to the top of Juniper and Springgold Way will hopefully get done this year and if time permits a new trail will be developed from Liberty Hall Lane over Mount Belcher to the end of Mtn. Belcher Heights

Several more locations are on our planning list, but it remains to be seen how far we get with these first priorities before we look further afield.

This winter our trail crew assisted the SSI Conservancy to develop a trail through the new Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve. That trail connects to a trail system in Mill Farm Regional Park. In discussions with Regional Parks, agreement has been reached to sign those trails in the Park to make sure people do not

get lost on the existing trails in that Park.

If you have suggestions for trail improvements or new locations please contact us at 250 537 4448. We always love to hear from you.

Salt Spring Island Conservancy now has a Facebook site. It can be easily accessed through its website <http://www.saltspringconservancy.ca/contactus.html>. Just click on the Facebook icon. The latest events, volunteering opportunities and photos of recent activities are on there, and the Conservancy welcomes photos of wildlife and natural areas on Salt Spring. Yours, Jane Petch.

## About hiking boots and Carol Williams

*Betty Kirk*

The little hiking boots that Carol Williams so diligently collected from every Thrift Shop she found, were once again prominently displayed on our table decorations at the Christmas luncheon. During the time that Carol and Bud were active members they came early every year with their helpers to make sure that, whatever the venue, we had a very festive ambience. The little shoes were used every time.

Carol gave the shoes into safe-keeping to a couple who have now left Salt Spring and they are now cared for by Kees and Nieke Visser. Although not an SSTNC member anymore, I think club members should be made aware of Carol's contribution on behalf of the club. I have been asked several times to explain the significance of the little shoes, represented the club logo, so perhaps it is time to give credit where credit is due.

## BC Nature Report - winter 2011

*Nieke Visser, BC Nature Director*

### BC Nature Field Camp on Salt Spring Island - 2012

Many of you may have noticed the announcement in the fall issue of BC Nature Magazine that the SSTNC will hold another BC Nature Field Camp in June of 2012. An organizing committee (Zeke Blazecka, Richard Shead, Kees Visser and myself) has been struck in the summer of 2011. We put together an interesting program highlighting geology, marine wild life, shoreline exploration, birding at Ford Lake, and hikes through Gary Oak habitat such as AVNR and some parts of Mt Maxwell, and a walk through

## Mr. Anna's Soapbox



I am an Anna's Hummingbird and I live on Rourke Road, Salt Spring Island. Perhaps you can tell that I belong to the male gender. Just look at my red/purple head. It is shimmering in the late afternoon sun.



Sometimes the colour of my head-dress is less spectacular. That's the sun's fault of course. Anyway, it's mid-July and breeding season is far away, so my colours are not all that important to impress the ladies. No, no, something else is going on. Let me explain.



We Anna's share this habitat with the Rufouses. These pesky neighbours have just produced a dozen or so offspring. Like their rowdy parents, these youngsters do nothing but squabble and chase each other and making life at the feeders and flowers very difficult for family of good standing like us Anna's.



Our kids, of course, are well-behaved young adults now. Admittedly, from time to time I had to act in a disciplinary manner when they were a little too exuberant during their growing-up time. But, between you and me, they were in general an example of well-mannered hummers compared to those uncivilized Rufouses.



The good thing is, that these noise-makers are about to pack their bags and head South. They do that every August. It beats me why they undertake such a dangerous journey. Apparently it has not sunk in yet that the good folks here on Rourke provide feeders year-round. Even heated feeders when the temps go below freezing!



Well, their departure suits me just fine. I am looking forward to a nice and quiet period where one can leisurely check out the flowers and from time to time take a sip at the feeder. The bad thing is that next March they will be back again...

*Text: Nieke Visser; photo's: Peter Dankers, a visiting friend of the author*

the new Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve. Participants will be accommodated in the Cusheon Lake resort. A complete program outline is posted on the BC Nature website: <http://www.bcnature.ca/>. Registration started on January 15 and the camp was fully booked (24 participants) within an hour with ten eager beavers on the waiting list. We must have made a reputation for ourselves with the previous camp in 2010. However, you may be interested in one of the six other camps

running between May and October.

We recruited expert volunteers as event leaders: John Moore/Jack Gunn for the geology, Susan Hannon/Karen Ferguson to lead the birding, Ashley Hilliard and Robin Anshild to tell us all about the Alvin Indridson NR, and last but certainly not least, David Denning to teach us about the critters of the intertidal zone. More volunteers may be needed in the

future and if so, I will send out a call via the Google email.

### **BC Nature Conference and AGM 2012**

BC Nature's AGM will be held in Kelowna this year, from May 10-13. The actual meeting is only one afternoon. However, the conference part is most interesting this year starting with a day-long excursion in the southern Okanagan before moving to the central part of the valley. BC Nature's conferences provide an opportunity to experience other parts of our beautiful province for a fraction of the costs when being shown around by a professional outfitter. Registration is only \$100 pp plus accommodation and meals. By choosing accommodation with a kitchen one can reduce the costs of meals, and if you are adventurous consider camping. Excursions and presentations are included, and there are many to choose from. I attended a few

AGMs and FGMs here and there during and I was always amazed about the level of entertainment and expertise of the presenters and leaders of the excursions. So mark these dates and find more information on this event on BC Nature's website: [www.bcnature.ca](http://www.bcnature.ca) or in the BC Nature magazine.



*David Denning in action on Baker Beach, 2010. Photo by Nieke Vissér*



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