

Sargeant Bay Society

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Newsletter #75

Editor: John Newell
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New Directors

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on April 5. Resignations from the Executive were received from Don Basham and Michael Jackson, both of whom have other heavy volunteer commitments. Annette Clarke and Ron Dinsdale offered to stand as replacements and were duly elected. The full slate of directors for the current year is therefore:

Tony Greenfield: President
Joop Burgerjon: Correspondence Secretary / Webmaster
Maggie Marsh: Treasurer
John Newell: Recording Secretary / Newsletter Editor
Katie Caple: Membership Secretary
Elise Rudland: Summer Program Organizer
Pam Runkle: Director at Large
Ron Dinsdale: Director at Large
Annette Clarke: Director at Large

On completion of the business of the meeting, Quinn Runkle presented a most enjoyable slide show of her expedition to the Antarctic.

Summer Program

This year's summer program, organized by Elise Rudland, comprised three events: Kye Goodwin's two plant-identification walks in April and Tony Greenfield's traditional morning "Birding by the Bay" in May. All were well received.



Menzies' Larkspur

Photo: Rand Rudland

The flowers on The Rock always provide a glorious show on Kye's walks, as well illustrated by this image by Rand Rudland.

Elise also organized a work group to haul some driftwood logs from the beach to points around the margin of Colvin Lake. As hoped, they have been used as resting places by mallards, common mergansers, and wood ducks. Great blue herons have also used them as hunting perches.

Triangle Lake Trail Extension.



Triangle Lake, seen from the new trail

Photo: Joop Burgerjon

Obtaining the necessary permissions to undertake the Triangle Lake trail-extension project, involved approvals from BC Parks and an archaeological impact survey by the Sechelt First Nation. This took a while, but work on the ground is now well advanced. Clearing and chainsaw work are complete, but there is still quite some trimming and grading to be done.

The Society acknowledges the grant of \$6,560 received from the Union of BC Municipalities, without which this project could not have been financed.

Also acknowledged are John Nicholson, past principal of HMB school, and Don Basham, past director of the society, for helping with the construction of the trail. More help would be welcome. Call Kye Goodwin at 604-886-8414, if you want to help.

Eric Hoare Dogwood Trees

The interpretative sign, drawing attention to the Pacific dogwood trees planted in memory of Eric Hoare, has been installed on the Information Centre on the berm.



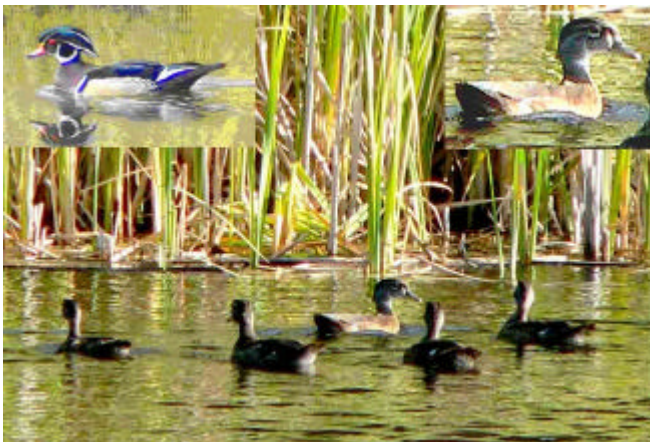
Photo: Joop Burgerjon

The text in the photo is not readable in the pdf format of this newsletter. It provides a brief description of the Pacific dogwood, noting that although common on the Sunshine Coast, it has been absent from Sargeant Bay in recent years. It records reintroduction of the species, by the Society, in memory of Eric Hoare's sterling service as Membership Director during the critical years 1988-99, when the society was at the height of its activities, rehabilitating the wetland, building trails and promoting the extension of the park boundary to include Triangle Lake.

The trees themselves have met with mixed success. Of the 12 trees planted only 6 are still alive. The four at the trailhead, above Redrooffs Road are doing well. The two below the road, however, are looking very sickly and may die. Consideration is being given to planting replacements.

Birds

Wood ducks bred successfully in the wetland for a second season. Hopes were high that this would happen when several birds arrived in late April. No further sightings were reported through the summer and it seemed that they had moved on elsewhere. However, on August 12 John Newell



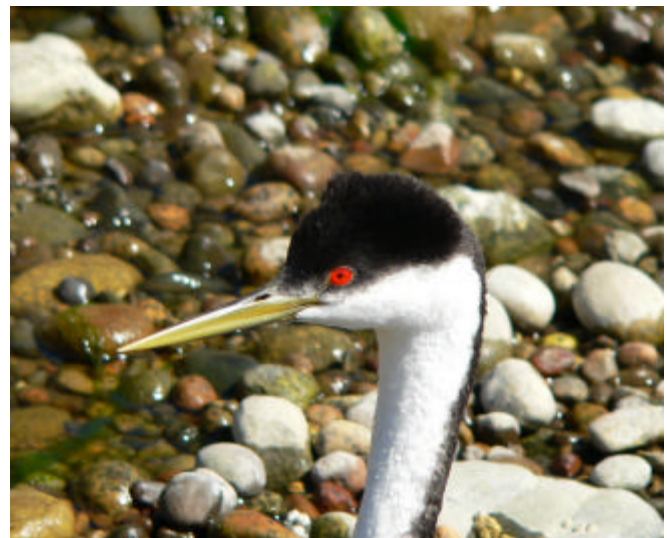
Immature Wood Ducks in the wetland

Photo: Joop Burgerjon

spotted five juvenile birds roosting on one of Elise's logs, near the nest boxes. Joop checked the nest boxes and confirmed that two had been occupied this season. The insets on the photo are of one of the immature birds enlarged, to see its distinctive head pattern, and one of a male bird in his colourful breeding plumage.

Other successful breeders in the park, unconfirmed until this year, include great blue herons. Half a dozen birds appeared in the wetland in late June and several active nests were located in the tall timber north of Redrooffs Road. Could this be the start of a larger nesting colony? We certainly hope so. Maybe it is my imagination, but summer songbirds seem to have been a little sparse this year apart, of course, from the ever-present red-winged blackbirds

Western grebes are becoming quite a rare bird on the Coast, although the first five years' results from the Coastal Waterbird Survey suggest that the decline in the winter population in the Georgia Basin may have stabilized after several decades of decline. Neither Joop nor I could recall seeing one in Sargeant Bay in recent years, until a single bird showed up on August 20. I checked my notes and found that my last previous record was back in 2001. This year's bird hung around for several days, very close in-shore, allowing Joop to capture some first class pictures.



Western Grebe, looking at you

Photo: Joop Burgerjon

Among other species commonly seen in Sargeant Bay, Waterbird Survey results suggest an upward trend in the regional population of double-crested and pelagic cormorants, great blue herons and buffleheads, while Barrow's goldeneye appear to be in decline. Meaningful trends for our other common wintering water birds are not apparent in the data, but five years is not a very long sampling period.

Feedback

Finally, the customary note that feedback is always welcome.

As you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is easy for you to let us have your comments: Just click the reply button, or click: sargbay@dccnet.com