



Newsletter #83

Editor: Joop Burgerjon

September 27, 2010

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Society was held on April 14. The directors for this year were all re-elected and their functions decided in a subsequent directors' meeting as follows:

Tony Greenfield: President
Joop Burgerjon: Secretary / Editor
Maggie Marsh: Treasurer
Katie Caple: Membership Secretary
Elise Rudland: Summer Program Organizer
Ron Dinsdale: Director at Large
Annette Clarke: Director at Large
Lexi Harrington: Director at Large

After the meeting we visited the Frog Lane Park on Coopers Road to listen to the chorus of mating frogs.

Summer Events

April 30, 2010, was "Save-the-Frogs-Day" and was celebrated by a ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil the interpretive Frog Lane Sign, donated by the Sargeant Bay Society in partnership with the HMB Citizens Association.

This original and successful project is located on a public right-of-way and has the status of a Regional Park under the jurisdiction of the SCRCD



Photo: Joop Burgerjon

The "Birding-by-the-Bay event on May 16 with Tony Greenfield and the Nature Interpretation walk around Triangle Lake with Kye Goodwin, were both well attended and favoured by good weather.

Invasive Plant control at Sargeant Bay

When the Provincial Park was established in 1991, Himalayan Blackberries were widely distributed over the beach area, the wetland, between the wetland and Redrooffs Road and at the Trail Head on Redrooffs Road. There was a large patch of Scotch Broom near where now the double bench is and a smaller one at the Trail Head.

The first clearing was done by volunteers in 1993: blackberries at the Trail Head, to clear the way for what became the Colvin Creek Trail and the patch of broom on the berm near the double-sided bench. In subsequent years we employed summer students, UFAWU workers, and the Environmental Youth Team. In 2000 we hired a team of workers, supported by a grant from EcoAction Canada. Yellow Flag on the shores of the lake and Evergreen Blackberry on the island were also eliminated.

At this time the park is essentially free of these invasive plants. Himalayan Blackberry keeps appearing here and there, Scotch Broom keeps sprouting up every year near the bench and Evergreen Blackberry is tenacious on the island. We maintain our Invasive Plant Control program by way of contracts with Kye Goodwin. We encourage other organizations and private individuals to follow our example and clear invasive plants wherever they can.

The Greenways Group, who built and maintain a trail system in Halfmoon Bay, recently acquired an effective tool, that makes uprooting broom and blackberries a breeze. The group intends to make it available to others as well. The "Extractigator" is pictured below, applied to Scotch Broom:



Photos: Rand Rudland

In 2003 the Society published a 30-page report: "Invasive Plant Control in Sargeant Bay Provincial Park". It shows a map of the invasive plant infestations at the start of the project. It is available on our website. Click: <http://www.sargbay.ca/IPC.pdf>

Birds

On June 30 Penny Hall saw a Virginia Rail running on the road to the beach: a totally unnatural habitat for this secretive marsh bird. She jumped out of her car and was quick enough "on the draw" to get this unusual photo.



Photo: Penny Hall

On August 14 and 15 Sue Hayer and Tony Greenfield saw a very tame Yellow-headed Blackbird near the double bench on the berm.

There were several sightings of Wood Ducks this year, mostly juveniles, some females. Tony saw 9 on August 15, Joop saw 3 on August 18, 3, on August 26/31, 1 and on September 5, 2, all at the fish ladder. The conclusion is that they probably bred here. There was no evidence of nesting in the duck boxes.

Turkey Vultures were feasting for several weeks in September on the smelly carcass of a big dog that washed up on the beach at a high tide.



Photo: Joop Burgerjon

Grey Whale

A Grey Whale visited Sargeant Bay on July 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 27 and August 6. By way of announcements in the local newspapers we have invited the public to email us the date, time and location of their observations, so we could keep track of the whale's movements.

By the end of September we had received 170 sightings; 11 were of 2 whales; five were of 2 whales seen together.

The whale was first sighted at Welcome Beach on April 27 and the latest sighting to-date was at Roberts Creek on September 11.

At Sargeant Bay the whale came quite close to the shore, where it was feeding. The Gray Whale is the only bottom-feeding baleen whale. The following photo shows the whale's vapor plume close to the beach.



Photo: Joop Burgerjon

The next photo shows the whale near Eureka Point.



Photo: Joop Burgerjon

Grey whales are making a remarkable come-back in the North Pacific. Early this year there was even one seen in the Mediterranean near Israel. The Atlantic population was extirpated about 100 years ago. A full record of whale observations can be found on our website:

<http://www.sargbay.ca/GreyWhale.pdf>

The file is rather large, because it has photos attached, so let us know if you have difficulty downloading it.

Salmon

The spawning season will soon be here again. We expect some Coho and Chum to climb the fish ladder between November 15 and December 15. This spring again there were Coho fry in Colvin Creek. Therefore, it is important to keep the beaver dam at the fish ladder cleared during that time.

There is a potato rake under the bridge which makes the job relatively easy. Please use it as needed.

Feedback

We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. 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 sargbay@dccnet.com.