

Newsletter #104 – Spring 2021

Editor – Rand Rudland

AGM 2021 – May 19th, 7:30 PM

The 2021 Sargeant Bay Society AGM will be held as a Zoom meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A Zoom link will be provided in advance of the AGM. Please ensure your membership is up to date in order to vote.

Agenda:

1. Call to order – 7:00 PM
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Adoption of 2020 AGM minutes
4. Business arising
5. Reports
 - a. President's – Rand R.
 - b. Finance – Garry P.
 - c. Membership – Rand R.
 - d. Salmon Update – Dave Spicer
6. New business
7. Election of directors
8. Adjournment

Loop & Jessie Burgerjon Endowment Update

As of year-end 2020 the total endowment established to benefit the Sargeant Bay Society was valued at \$27,900, with subsequent directed donations and Society contributions in early 2021 bringing the total to over \$30,000. Annual income generated by this endowment supports Society activities, so all donations large and small are much appreciated. Tax receipts are provided.

Summer Activities - 2021

All group activities in BC Parks requiring congregations of people are to be avoided, therefore we will not be scheduling any educational activities for the immediate future.

It is possible that subsequent Public Health announcements may allow such gatherings to occur in the future, at which time announcements will be made of any programs to be offered this summer.

Rare Hummingbird Visitor

It is not very often that we get to see such a rare specimen as the leucistic Anna's Hummingbird that attracted many visitors over its 7-day stay on the berm. I have re-printed here my article—slightly modified—that was published recently in the BC Field Ornithologists' journal "BC Birding"

Leucism & Albinism—exploring (lack of) colour in birds



First of all, let's be clear on some definitions. Albinism is a genetic deficiency resulting in failed melanin production whereby the body is unable to produce any colouration in skin, hair, feathers, bills or eyes. Birds with albinism have pale or white feathers and eyes, along with pink bill and exposed skin—from the colour of the blood showing through the pale skin. Leucism, producing leucistic individuals, is also a genetic variant with a loss of colouration in skin, hair and feathers, but not the eyes. Whereas albinism is more often an all-or-none phenomenon, leucism is a spectrum of melanin deficiency ranging from a few white feathers or small patches of white, to an entire lack of pigmentation in all integumentary structures excluding the eyes. The Dark-eyed Junco in the photo (above) exhibits incomplete leucism, with scattered patches of white feathers over much of

the body. This would be better termed a “pied” or “piebald” individual. Similarly, this pied American Robin below shows white feathers on head, under-tail coverts and a single primary feather.



There are a few downsides of standing out in the crowd as an all-white, or pied individual. It may, for instance, be harder to find a mate if colour plays an important role in mate selection as in many bird species. Melanin is also an important structural component of feathers, so the lack of melanin makes feathers more prone to physical damage and may reduce insulative properties or alter the flight dynamics of damaged wing feathers. The question is still out on whether or not these colouration differences significantly impact survival. Predatory birds, for instance, may rely more on shape and movement than colouration in their prey selection.



The Sunshine Coast has been visited by at least two, maybe three leucistic Anna’s Hummingbirds in late 2020 into 2021 with one reported from downtown Sechelt as well as one (or more) individual birds in Halfmoon Bay. This photo of one of the Halfmoon Bay birds shows the persistence of dark colouration of the eye, bill and primaries. Although not visible, the feet and legs are also dark.

I could not find a list of Canadian records, but a site for USA white hummingbirds detailed around [60 sightings](#) of either albino or leucistic hummingbirds of various species over the 2018-2020 time period.

Berm Invasive Species and Trail Cleanup

March 23rd saw Jeff Muckle and a group of volunteers tackle berm invasive species once again. Large Himalayan Blackberry plants were removed from both sides of the berm trail. As well the areas set aside for Consumption Plant regeneration were hand-cleared of a significant growth of Oregon-grape. Nootka Rose was trimmed in some areas to maintain line-of-sight from benches and trails.

Rick’s Pond

This wetland is located at the Phare Lake turn-off of the Forest Service Road accessed from the top of Mason Road, driving through the minesite, and keeping left at the Y-junction.

As part of the Sargeant Bay Society commitment to ponds and wetlands in the Halfmoon Bay area, we partnered with the SC Wildlife Project (SCWP) and the SC Trails Society to plant native species and install educational signage at Rick’s Pond, named after Rick O’Neill, who was a driving force in the conservation of wetlands on the Sunshine Coast.



Present at the “official” dedication of the project were representatives of the SC Wildlife Project (Dave Stiles, Kai Bosch, Scott Hodges), SC Trails (Elise Rudland) and the Sargeant Bay Society (Rand Rudland). In addition, members of the Sunshine Coast Community Forest (SCCF—Warren Hansen & Kathleen Suddes) and the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association (SCCA—Suzanne Senger & Richard Carton) were also present. Local funding from SCCF, SCRD and Sunshine Coast Foundation partially funded the reclamation project, along with numerous off-coast donors. The SCCA was present in recognition of the significant endowment made by Rick O’Neill to the SCCA.

The following earlier press release from Michelle Evelyn of the SCWP provides a bit of the background for the project.

“This spring, the Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project led a team of community volunteers to plant native vegetation along the shorelines of a restored wetland near John Phare Lake. In 2015, the West Sechelt Wildfire burned through 400 hectares of forest; 100 hectares were subsequently harvested in a salvage logging operation. With permissions from the Community Forest and the shishálh Nation, and with funding from Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Wildlife Habitat Canada, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Gencon Foundation, and the SCRD, the Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project is working to restore wetland ecosystems in the fire area. In October 2019, two wetland ponds were excavated with the help of Husband Contracting. Throughout 2020, volunteers of all ages will help to replant native shoreline vegetation and build and install wildlife nest boxes. The goal of the project is to increase wetland quantity and quality, aid in the recovery of species at risk, increase climate change resilience, and improve habitat for frogs, salamanders, waterfowl, and countless other species.

Welcome to Rick’s Pond

In memory of Rick O’Neill, whose dedication to the preservation of wetlands and all the creatures that survive within is an inspiration to all.

We are honoured to be welcomed to *shíwla 7e shíshálh wíya*, the traditional territory of the shishálh Nation since time immemorial.




This wetland ecosystem was created by the Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project to restore habitat damaged by the 2015 West Sechelt Wildfire and subsequent salvage harvesting. In 2019 the pond was excavated and in 2020 community volunteers helped to plant over 1500 native plants. The goal of this restoration project is to increase wetland quality, quantity, and connectivity; increase climate change resilience; aid in the recovery of species at risk; and provide valuable habitat for waterfowl, amphibians, aerial insectivores, and the countless inter-dependent species in a wetland food chain.



Margined White
adults settle on this flower.



Rufous Hummingbirds
One their arrival with the flowering of this species.



Red Alder
Used for carving, making tool, and smoking fish.



Red Alder is a primary larval foodplant for coastal **Pale Swallowtails**.



ECHO Aranes
lay eggs on Red Alder leaves, Ocean Spray and Thimbleback.



Red-flowering Currant
Berries used as a food source. Bark, leaves, and stems used as a medicine and topically.



Salmonberry
Berries and young shoots a source of food. Branches and roots used to make fishing traps.



Black Twinberry
Used topically and as a medicine. Berries avoided.



Red Elderberry
Mixed with other berries to make jams. Flowers and bark used as medicines.



Deer Fern



Tahiti Salad
Berries used as a food source. Leaves used in decorations, tools, and medicines.



Painted Lady
adults settle on dogwood, deadwood and shrubs.



Red-osier Dogwood

These plants should not be used without the proper training and knowledge. All harvest should be done mindfully and to avoid over-harvesting, ensuring their availability for future generations. Thanks to *shíshálh* Chief & Council for sharing information on the traditional names and uses of some of the plants shown here.













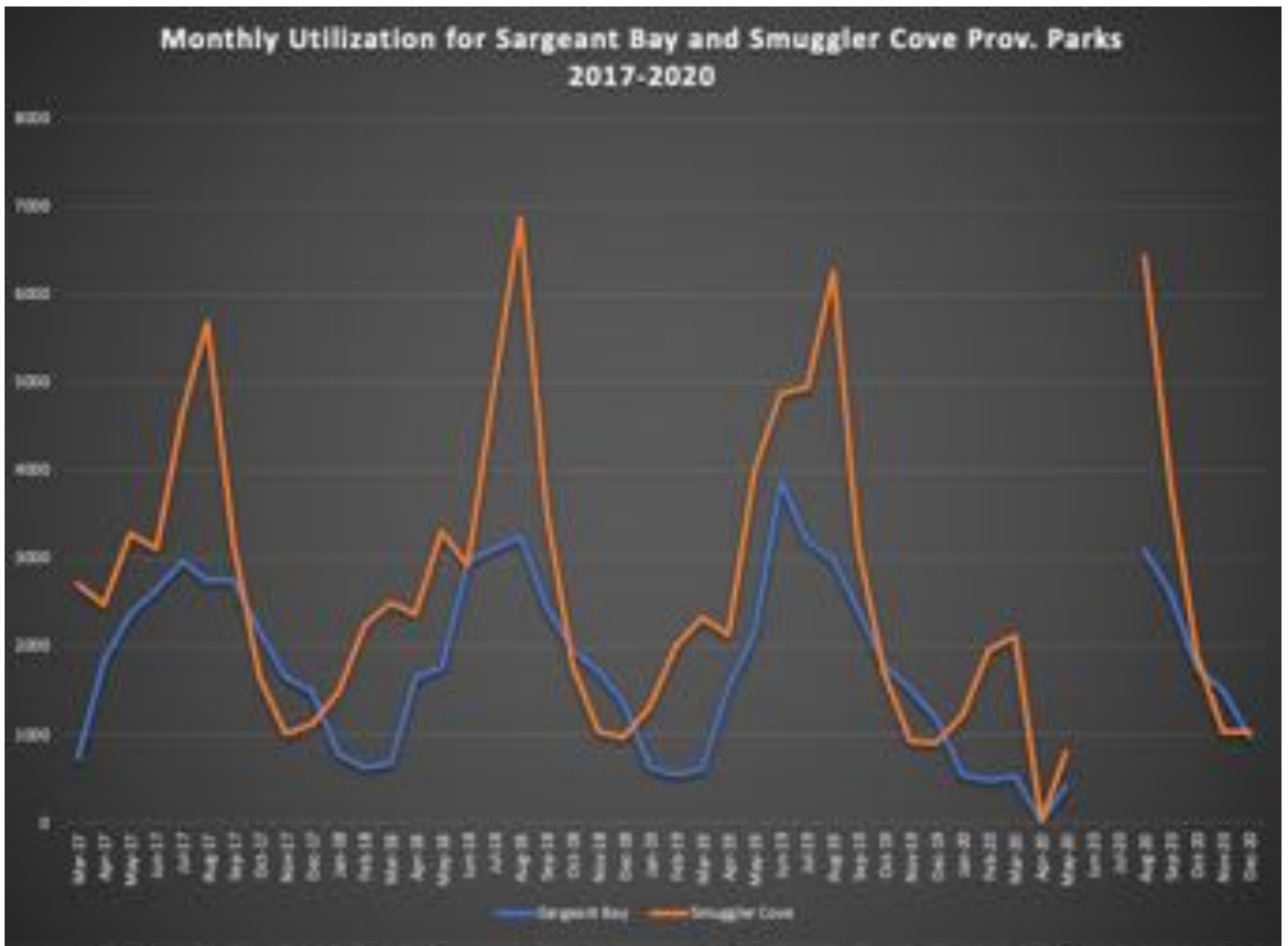
The easy accessibility and topography of the location makes it an ideal demonstration site to educate about the importance of wetlands and showcase ecological restoration techniques. This is the second site where the Wildlife Project has constructed wetlands on Community Forest lands, and more wetland projects are planned in the coming years to increase connectivity of wildlife habitats across the landscape. The Community Forest looks forward to continuing this valuable partnership with the Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project.”

Park Usage Statistics for Sargeant Bay & Smuggler Cove Provincial Parks

I think we all recognize how popular these two Parks are for both our local residents and visitors alike, but without numbers it is a bit difficult to define. The graph below is generated from usage statistics provided by BC Parks for the past four

years. Smuggler Cove has only one heavily used access point that has a counter at the beginning of the trail, so each person is counted, more or less. If two visitors pass through the light beam at exactly the same time, they will only register as a single entry.

Sargeant Bay has a car counter on the main access road, and a formula is applied to generate the visitation numbers. The estimate may be a bit low as there is no adjustment made for access from Kenyon Road for those coming in over the fishladder. It is also not clear how walkers are tallied entering from Redroofs on the main access road. Regardless of these factors, the graph confirms the significant combined utilization during the summer months reaching upwards of 10,000 each month. Average usage of Smuggler Cove is about double that of Sargeant Bay. The blank months in 2019 represent the COVID-19 closure.



Salmon Report – Dave Spicer

The first salmon near Colvin Creek last year were seen jumping in October in Sargeant Bay. We then had the first Chum salmon spotted at the top of the fish ladder on November 2nd. I was able to get a short but good video of the salmon in the ladder which we plan to add to the Sargeant Bay Society (SBS) website soon. Sargeant Bay Stream Keeper volunteers worked to clear the fish ladder from beaver debris almost daily. The volunteers also checked fish ladder, lake and the creek for signs of salmon. Not too many returning salmon this year. 4 Coho were seen spawning in the creek on November 17th. That was it for salmon spot last fall although others likely did enter Colvin Lake and Colvin Creek and were not spotted. I was able to take a DNA sample from the Chum salmon remains in early November and this was kept frozen and given to DFO for testing in early 2021.

In previous years we have always tried to guess what may eat the salmon in the creek after spawning as they are often seen one day and not there the next. Thoughts have been that salmon enter the creek to spawn but also return to the lake at other times. Of course, predators like coyote, raccoon and otters in the creek are a reality. In the effort to gain more information we set up a game camera that SBS purchased last year about 10 feet from the bank of Colvin Creek and we did capture some photos of the beaver, raccoon and a Bobcat all walking the edge of the creek. The Bobcat was a welcome surprise.

Going forward for 2021 the Sargeant Bay Stream Keepers plan to do an assessment of the Colvin Creek health in September: turbidity, temperature, PH and invertebrate health will all be tested again. This was originally done in September 2019 but due to Covid it was decided to not have a group stream-check last September. Our test in September 2019 gave us a benchmark for future tests of Colvin Creek health and will allow us to monitor any changes over time.

Plans are also in the works now for the replacement of the aging fish ladder which is just over 30 years old. BC Parks has secured some funding to investigate plans and design for replacement of the Colvin Creek fish ladder with expectation to complete installation in 2022.

The original ladder was built off-site and then dropped in place and this will likely be a similar project. SBS directors Jeff Muckle and Tony Greenfield were involved in the original installation and may have some good insight & ideas on the replacement project. The current ladder has worked well and allowed fish passage for over 30 years.

New Website

The new website is now up and running. Thanks to Heather Newman for the recent update in the server that hosts our website.

Our website will remain www.sargbay.ca. Please let us know if there are any errors when you visit it next. If you have any suggestions for additional content, please let us know. All appropriate contributions also welcomed.

Upcoming Webinars

The Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society is hosting a series of nature-related webinars, two of which are upcoming and may be of interest to some of the SBS membership. Check out their Facebook page for registration details.

<https://www.facebook.com/coastbotanicalgarden>

May 12 – 7PM Butterflies of the Sunshine Coast – Tony Greenfield/Rand Rudland

May 26 – 7PM Dragonflies of the Sunshine Coast
Rand Rudland

If you photograph any interesting events or activities in the Park, please send along for inclusion in the Newsletter, with a short description of what you saw.

Send to: srgntbay.soc@gmail.com

Contact us at [604-885-4642](tel:604-885-4642)

604-885-4642
srgntbay.soc@gmail.com