



DELTA NATURALISTS SOCIETY

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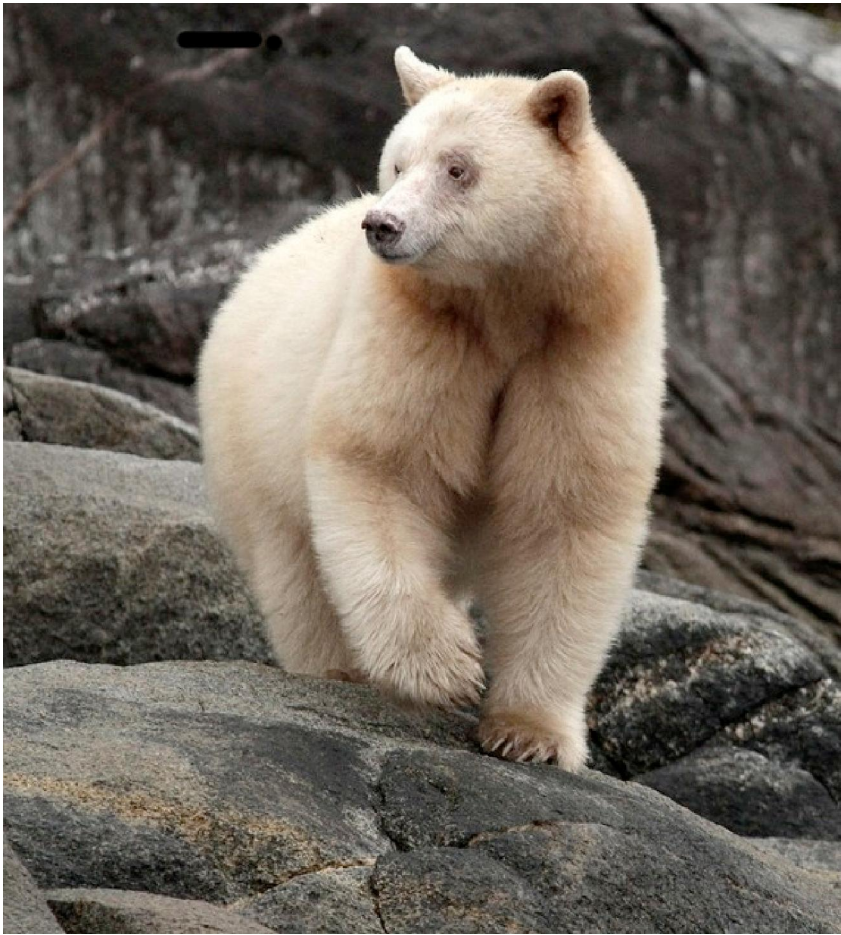
Hey, guys - it's only 12 weeks until spring is back with us! And according to the amateur astronomer I live with, daylight will be 2 minutes, 40 seconds longer each day. So stop sulking, and start counting! I still have two Anna's hummingbirds in my garden, first time they've wintered over - if they can take the weather, then so can I!

COMING EVENTS

Monday, January 14th, 7:30 pm - the monthly meeting of the Delta Naturalists at Camridge House in Boundary Bay Regional Park. This month our speaker will be our own Ursula Easterbrook, with a slide show documenting her journey to photograph a Spirit Bear in the Great Bear Rainforest of the BC central coast, starting in Tsawwassen, driving to Prince Rupert over the Duffy Lake Rd, flying to Hartley Bay, sailing to Bella Bella and catching the ferry back to Prince Rupert and then driving home in colder weather, with stops in Prince Rupert, Lakelse and the Nisga'a Lava Beds and further North.

A staunch environmentalist, she acts and speaks out on many environmental issues. She expresses concern about how much we may be changing the natural environment by going into its remote locations to visit, hike, photograph and possibly affect the natural balance negatively by our presence. Her own philosophy is: "try to be a naturalist first and a photographer second."

Ursula is involved with many environmental and nature organizations including the Vancouver Natural History Society, Reifel Bird Sanctuary and Delta Naturalists by contributing extensive time and talent to their work. Her photos have won many awards including one from the World Wildlife Federation.



Christmas Bird Count Report

Once again, the Ladner Bird Count came out tops in Canadian Christmas Bird Counts. While final results are not in, Jude Grass reported on January 1st that Ladner had a total of 146 species, including unusual and rare birds like Ruddy Turnstone, Spotted Sandpiper, Bohemian Waxwing, Glaucous Gull & Common Redpoll. Anna's Hummingbirds were seen in record numbers, as were Eurasian Collared Doves, both relatively new arrivals in Delta. We easily beat our nearest rival, Victoria, that had poor weather on their count day and only got 139 species (including Brown Pelican and Heermann's Gull). This was the 113th North American Christmas Bird Count and the 56th for Ladner. Delta Naturalists participated enthusiastically in several of the walking counting groups as well as in feeder watching. The Tsawwassen, Beach Grove, Lily Point group (Peter Candido and myself, plus a great group of counters) were once again hosted for lunch by Rochelle and Don Farquhar, which made our count day very convivial and fun. Thank you so much! Jude Grass did a great job of organizing the count and the post-count gathering and managed to once again get the media interested in this traditional event.

Anne Murray

Delta Nats Casual Birding

Most of you know that Tom Bearss takes his DNCB (Delta Nats Casual Birding) group out every Monday, but do you all know just how much they really see? Here's a sample of what they saw last Monday – perhaps it will entice some of you to go and try it out yourselves!

On New Year's Eve Monday morning, twelve DNCBer's (Donna, Lorna, Jane, Ken & Anne, Roger, Paul & newbie Susan(?) with Quinn, Bryan without Janet, Kay and me) enjoyed an initially foggy and occasionally snowy morning, that cleared up nicely as we wound our way through the Ladner farm fields to Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Lots of hi-lites including four Sawhet Owls, Barn Owl, Evening Grosbeaks, Ruddy Ducks and lots more. Check out Ken's photos on our Picasa site which you can link to from our DNCB Blog at: www.dotdncb.dotwordpressdotcom.



Four cars left Petra's shortly after 8:00 a.m. and our first stop was the Kingfisher Bridge at the entrance to the Tsawwassen First Nations 'reserve' (not sure what the proper name for the TFN land is now). Tide was high and as usual, no Kingfisher was around, but lots of Great Blue Herons and Bald Eagles. We continued on and saw that the high tide had pushed mixed flocks of Black-bellied Plovers and Dunlin onto the farmer's fields. Some of us got good looks through the scope, while others dilly-dallied behind over the continuous Purple/House

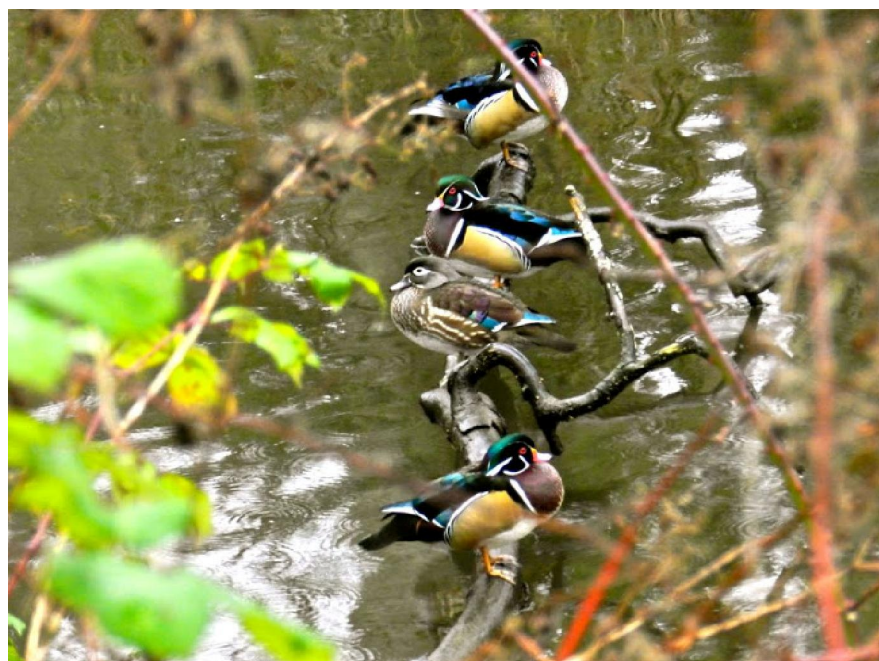
Finch debate (Purple have forked tails). Trumpeter Swans were in their regular fields, along with Mallards, American Wigeon, Northern Shovelers and Northern Pintail. Northern Harriers and Red-tailed Hawks around too and Roger spotted a neat Peregrine Falcon perched for good viewing. While examining the Peregrine, Kay found some owl pellets under some conifers along the road. Our search eventually roused a Barn Owl.

At the river lookout at Canoe Pass, there were Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneye and Double-crested Cormorants in the Fraser. I forget whether we saw the Western and Horned Grebes that we often see there, and of course, the resident Mute Swans. We crossed the bridge onto Westham Island and saw more mixed Shorebird flocks. Ken & Anne stopped to photograph a Cooper's Hawk feeding on a Robin in the middle of the road. It flew into a nearby tree where Jane found it and scared it away before anyone else could see it. She was forgiven because she brought some tasty cookies.



We continued on to our “Mecca” Reifel and chatted with Laura and later on Shanna. The resident Black-crowned Night Herons were there and Ken took the obligatory Group Photo by the Snow Goose display. We followed the east dike trail and saw lots of Sparrows (Song, Fox, both Golden- and White-crowned), Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creepers, Spotted Towhees and of course enjoyed hand-feeding the Black-

capped Chickadees. Quinn and I especially enjoyed the up-close-and-personal views of the gorgeous Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers in breeding plumage. We found four separate Sawhet Owls roosting in the area where we usually find them, near the old Great-horned nest. Nearby a flock (6) of Evening Grosbeaks was feeding in a berry tree. That was a good sighting for me because we don’t see them often in Delta. The Sandhill Cranes called and some saw them later. Nothing new at the Tower, but Ken took some people shots. On Kay’s instructions, we took the inland upper trail toward the west lookout and found in the slough below three beautifully-plumed Ring-necked Ducks, along with some Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, American Coots and Green-winged Teal. At the lookout were the two Ruddy Ducks. Roger spotted another perched Peregrine Falcon, quite different looking from the earlier falcon; probably a juvenile.



We may have seen more species on Monday, but I am a bit mixed up on sightings since I saw so many species on the Ladner and White Rock Surrey Christmas Bird Counts on the two preceding Sundays. Indeed the Ladner count of 144 species will probably again be Number One CBC in Canada. On the pleasant drive back to Tsawwassen with the three chicks (Jane, Donna and Lorna), while munching Lorna’s peanut

butter and banana sandwich and Donna's home-made bickies, we saw a nice Rough-legged Hawk. Sandra and I spent a quiet New Year's Eve at home, with my rum-drinking, cigar-smoking neighbour who also liked Sandra's chili and specialty salad. Hope you all have a Happy and Healthy 2013, full of love, luck and good birding.

I will be at Petra's next Monday, January 7, departing at 8:00 a.m. on an outing to Surrey. Hopefully Ken & Anne (if they're not in Belize) will lead us on this outing in their territory. For those wanting to meet us there, our first stop will be in the parking lot at Surrey Lake Park (east side of 152 St, about 74 Ave). Bring goodies because we may not be back to Petra's until 2:00 p.m. Again, comments encouraged and let me know if my weekly driveline annoys you. Cheers:

Tom

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

@ Cammidge House, Monday Dec. 10th, 2012
Tom Bearss, President, chair
Judy Kilcup, recorder

Welcome: The Chair welcomed an overflow crowd and introduced our Executive Committee members. Hans-Ulf Schellhause is still convalescing and welcomes visitors. Geof Hacker's excellent poster for tonight's meeting was displayed. 58 folks were in attendance.

Terry Carr delivered a bear pelt, donated to the Delta Nats by Diana Lobsinger, to the Delta Nats meeting. This is a much-appreciated addition to our Display.

Minutes: The approval of the Nov. 12th, 2012 minutes was moved by Ursula Easterbrook, seconded by Jennifer Melville-Roberts and carried.
The Executive Committee did not meet in November.

Treasurer's report: Jennifer Melville-Roberts reported a current balance of \$6115.31 and noted receipt of \$500 for Environmental work from a friend of Hans. Jennifer is to check if we can acknowledge the donor publicly. (Thank you note has been sent.) Jennifer has sent a get-well card to Hans on behalf of the Club.

Mail: none due to Hans' absence

Social: Thanks to everyone who brought Christmas goodies and wine for tonight's meeting. It was an amazing spread.

Publicity: Chair Dorothy Graham reports all is well – despite computer problems. CBC News and Delta Connect carried stories on the recent influx of the Snowy Owls with interviews with Anne Murray and Tom Bearss.

BCN & Speakers: BCN's next meeting is in May in Abbotsford/Mission. Remember that with your Delta Nats membership you receive a copy of B.C. Nature magazine. Next month's speakers are from the South Coast Bat Society.

Newsletter: The Nov. newsletter by Mary Ronback was enjoyed. Mary is always appreciative of contributions to the newsletter.

Environmental Issues: a) Cosmetic Pesticides. No updates b) VAPOR – Jim Ronback reported that letter writing continues in support of VAPOR's argument against the need for tankers and advocacy instead for the use of jet fuel pipelines to local refineries.

DNCBS.(Delta Nats Casual Birders): Roger Meyer led the weekly bird walks and did last week's write-up in Tom's absence. Check out our Blog at www.dncb.wordpress.com for reports on these outings - #2012-40 to 2012-43. Link easily from the Blog to our photos on our Picasa site. NOTE: Outings changed to Mondays. Meet at Petra's in Tsawwassen at 7:30 a.m.

Projects: Bird Box Project: Peter Ward has made 15 bird boxes, at cost, for Delta Nats Bird Box project in Boundary Bay. Peter is holding bird box building workshops on Dec.13th, 15th and 20th at his house. He can take 2 persons at a time.

Business Arising: The motion tabled from last meeting was brought forward. "that a person cannot be a member of Delta Nats if his/her dues are not paid up." Clarification given that this was mainly in terms of receiving the newsletter. Discussion briefly ensued, question was called and the motion was defeated.

A. UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 1) Dec 12th – Birds on the Bay Outing, 9 am at Cammidge House.
- 2) Dec 23rd – The Christmas Bird Count. Jude Grass is the main contact person/organizer. Backyard bird feeder counts can be phoned into Jude as well.
- 3) Jan 11 – Cammidge House Car Boot Sales 2013 Planning meeting.
- 4) Jan. 14 – DNS Monthly Meeting
- 5) Feb 26th-17th – Reifel Bird Sanctuary is giving a course on Basic Raptor Field Identification – cost \$150.

B. RECENT SIGHTINGS:

- Reports of an influx of brown pelicans in Victoria
- Richmond City Council is about to take action vs their snow geese population. Matter referred to Executive Committee to decide what action Delta Nats might wish to take.

BREAK – goodies and 50/50. Thanks to Diane and David, our guest speakers, for their donation of a beautiful poster and rolled print photograph to our raffle tonight.

TONIGHT'S SPEAKERS: Diane and David Reesor presented on "Greenland to Baffin Island – including Iceland".

SNOWY OWL WATCH -

In collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, the Corporation of Delta, the Boundary Bay Regional Park volunteers and local birding groups, Metro Vancouver West Area Regional Parks has initiated the Snowy Owl Watch. This program responds to volunteers and citizens calls for action in support of the Snowy Owls as they winter in Boundary Bay – maybe you've seen the posters, signs, and Code of Conduct posted along the dyke at strategic locations. One group of volunteers was trained last week and is ready to schedule shifts over the holiday season.

We have a short training session (1.5 hour) for volunteers – please click on this link, you only have to type in your name and click on the dates that work for you <http://www.doodle.com/q57bbtfenzrm24qz>. Feel free to pass this on to people you think would be interested in participating. This is not a policing or enforcement program; this is an education and public awareness program. Learning from some exchanges last year, we see a role for knowledgeable people, 19 years and older, with good communication skills. Working in pairs, we aim 2-hour shifts at least once per day Monday to Friday and two or more on Saturday, Sunday and Holidays if there are enough volunteers. The program has two approaches which volunteers can choose from each time you arrive to do a shift:

1) Stationary education centre tent, displays, materials set up on the dyke, at 64th and/ or 72nd depending on location of the owls and availability of volunteers

2) Rovers with info/education kit back pack walking along the dyke

We anticipate holding one more training session in February if you can't make the January session. Email me if you want to receive notice of the February session. I will be back in the office Jan 2 and by Jan 4 will advise everyone of the day for training that works best for the majority of people.

Wishing you a warm and wonderful holiday season and looking forward to seeing you at the training in January – Happy New Year!

Theresa Harding, MA Planning

Community Development Coordinator Parks West Area

Metropolitan Planning, Environment and Parks

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Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary 604 946-6980
OWL (Orphaned Wildlife Rehab) 604 946-3171
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Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust 604 940-3392

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