# THE HARLEQUIN

## VERMILION FORKS FIELD NATURALISTS

POST OFFICE BOX 2074 Princeton, BC V0X 1W0

Newsletter #66

June to October, 2014

Editor June Hope 295-3524


## Vermilion Forks Field Naturalist -

### Hummingbird Season

This year the Princeton area seems to be having a super hummingbird season. April 10th was the first time someone in our group saw a hummingbird and two of us did at almost the same time!! Put this date on your calendars, although each year is different, but this would be a good reference point for putting out your feeders next year. It is recommended that the feeders be put out at least a week before the expected arrival of the birds. This way when they arrive, usually exhausted from their migration, the food will be available waiting for them. Don't wait for the birds to knock on your window to wake you up!!!

As for the banding group, we have been working very hard this year. We started banding April 30th, three days earlier than last year. So far we have banded 403 birds and have 56 recaptured birds. Forty-five of the recaptured birds were banded in previous years and eleven from previous banding sessions this year. We actually had two birds, a Rufous male and a Calliope male, that were banded in 2011. This was a training year so there were actually only two days of banding so this in itself is amazing. It shows clearly the site fidelity of birds. 2014 would be at least their fifth year of life cause they were banded as adults. Male hummingbirds usually have a life expectancy of three to five years because of their high octane activity. Females have been known to live ten or eleven years. So far the oldest bird we have recaptured has been five years old. This stat should change the longer we band and the more banded birds there are.

Some of our sites have had exceptional volume. So far the banding has shown a huge return of Rufous. To date we have handled (new bands and recaps) 197 Rufous males compared to 218 handled in the entire 2013 season, 90% of last year in only 15 days. Females are lower but still significant as we have handled 96 so far compared to 157, 61% of last year in only 15 days!! The Calliope arrive later than the Rufous so the comparison is not really available yet. The Black-chinned have just started arriving and the Anna's seem to appear late June or July. What we have found amazing is, for the most part, the healthy and sometimes FAT birds that are returning and moving through. Some Rufous males were so fat they felt like ping-pong balls! The fat on these birds is stored in their throat area and when that overflows they start storing on their sides. Well these fellows were so fat they could be called morbidly obese!! To put this into perspective, usually the males weigh between 3 and 3.5 gr.

The fat ones we handled were 4.7 to 4.8 gr. This would be an increase of one third of their normal weight!! I have been asked about the negative aspect of the weight of a band. I took the time to try and weigh a band and finally came up with the biggest of our bands weighing .007 of a gram. When the birds can carry the fat we see, the band is nothing!! Since the birds put on fat for migration, Alison Moran of Rocky Point Bird Observatory is of the opinion that these birds are passing through and going further north.

Also this year we had what appear to be two more "foreign" recaps. These are birds with bands that are not ones we applied. Unfortunately we don't seem to be able to solve the mystery of who actually did band these birds. The band numbers were tracked to a location in Ohio but the records show a different species and a different sex for one of the bands and no information for the second. The only clear fact is that they were foreign recaps which is exciting in itself.

All in all we can say the season started with a bang and we can hardly wait to see what else transpires.
Submitted by Sue Elwell, Thanks Sue, great job!

These are some Winter pictures taken by the Telliers.


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# PROVENANCE RECORDS **Submitted by Kelly Cook**

VFFN members inquired about propagating some of the **Whitebark Pine** seed themselves and Randy has been in touch with me and would like to know who would be interested in this project? It sounds like we will be allotted 300 seeds but there is only a 20 % success rate so a few people could be involved. He is scheduling a visit to Princeton sometime in February to give us instruction and the seed. He will confirm at date ASAP so those interested can plan for it. Perhaps next year.

SPECIES: **Whitebark pine**

STAND NAME & NO**: Blackwell Peak 2013**
Collector: D. Pigott

Date: August 16, 2013

Biogeoclimatic Zone & Subzone:

Ecosystem Association: Lupine, Dwarf blueberries, Mountain avens.

Species Composition: Se, Bl, Pa

Age & Distribution of Ages: 25-100

Stand History: Unknown.

Landform & Terrain: Ridgeline

Site/Stand Comments. . Manning Park

- **Identified by: Purple ribbon**

| TREE NO. | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | ELEV. | DBH (cm) | HT. (m) | Comments | Seed Wt. | **Seeds/gram** | **Total Seeds** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | 49.10648 | 120.75914 | 1973 | 16 | 6.5 | No rust seen. One dead branch. Fork. | 68 | **9** | **612** |
| 1202 | 49.10779 | 120.75932 | 1972 | 22 | 2.5 | no rust seen, bent | 0 | **0** | **0** |
| 1203- | 49.10357 | 120.75887 | 2001 | 10 | 6 | 2 dead branches, fork at 3m. cages with purple ribbon. Same clump as 1203-A | 105 | **6** | **630** |
| 1203-A | " | " | " | " | " | 3 cankers, one active. Cages with orange ribbon | 64 | **7** | **448** |
| 1204 | 49.10364 | 120.75878 | | 18 | 8 | 1 dead branch canker, but no real sign of rust. | 89 | **6** | **534** |
| 1205 | 49.10361 | 120.75871 | | 30 | 8 | several high forks, no rust seen | 71 | **8** | **568** |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | **Total number of seeds** | | | **2792** |

# Good Greens

***By Lisa Scott***

For multiple generations, our mothers have told us to eat our greens. Mom's advice is clearly supported by facts. Green leafy vegetables are among the most nutrient dense foods available - high in calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, phosphorous, zinc and vitamins A, C, E and K. Each one is packed with fiber, folic acid, chlorophyll and many other phytochemicals and micronutrients. When eaten raw, you get the added benefit of live enzymes needed for improved digestion and nutrient absorption.

So, why not carry forward this concept to our unwanted garden greens? There's a plethora of edible weeds growing on our properties, so I recommend we eat 'em to beat 'em. Just a word of caution that you only consume those plants you can identify and know are safe to eat.

Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) is an edible plant that is native to India and the Middle East. It is a low growing succulent annual with reddish stems and alternate leaves clustered at stem joints and ends. It contains more omega-3 fatty acids than any other leafy vegetable plant. It also contains vitamin C, vitamin B and carotenoids, as well as dietary minerals, such as magnesium, calcium, potassium and iron. The whole plant is edible and it may be eaten raw, steamed or stir-fried. It has a slightly sour and salty taste and is eaten throughout much of Europe and Asia.

Lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*) is a European native that can be found almost anywhere the soil has been disturbed. The seedling of this weed has grey mealy particles and its flowers are green, inconspicuous and crowd in leaf axils or the end of the stems. When the plant matures, the undersides of the leaves receive a chalk-like covering. Both the leaves and the shoot of lamb's quarters are edible. Young leaves are delicious in salads and contain more calcium than lettuce. The plant can also be cooked and used like spinach.

Everyone's favourite, the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), is also edible. Native to Europe and Asia, dandelion is a good source of vitamin A and carotenes. It also stimulates liver function and improves digestion. Every part of this plant can be eaten. Roasted roots can serve as a coffee substitute, but beware of the diuretic effects. The young leaves go well in salads or steamed. Some like to cook the leaves into dandelion gravy and serve it over mashed potatoes. Young flowers can be dipped in egg, then cornmeal and finally fried for a tasty treat. The flowers can even be used to make dandelion wine.

Mallow (*Malva neglecta*) is an invasive species from Europe. It has clover-like leaves and button-like fruit. This mat-forming weed invades lawns and gardens. Both the leaves and fruit can be eaten in salads. The fruit has an okra-like flavour.

If you're looking for seasoning, shepherd's-purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) is a great option. This European annual is quite evident in gardens right now, noticeable by its small, white flowers. Its name comes from the triangular or heart-shaped seedpod, which looks similar to an old-fashioned European shepherd's bag.

The seedpods have a peppery flavour so are a great addition to many dishes. The leaves of shepherd's-purse can also be eaten raw or blanched and sautéed with olive oil, garlic and chili.

Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*) is another edible Eurasian weed named for the sharp spines on the backside of the midrib of the leaves. While this plant becomes bitter tasting as it ages, the young leaves and shoots are tasty. Young, tender leaves go well in salads and the young shoots can be cooked and used as a substitute for asparagus. One caution for this plant is that an excess of consumption can cause an upset stomach. Prickly lettuce also has medicinal qualities related to the milky fluid that exists within the plant.

Recipe for Weed Salad:

- 3 cups mixed greens (lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard)
- 1 cup mixed weeds such as:
    - lamb's quarters leaves
    - dandelion leaves
    - mallow leaves
    - shepherd's-purse leaves
    - prickly lettuce leaves
    - purslane leaves and stems
- sprinkle with dandelion petals and mallow fruits
- add a handful of berries and nuts (dried cranberries, roasted almonds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds)

Toss all the ingredients together in a large bowl with a dressing made of olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Remember to use only young leaves of the weeds, as older plants tend to increase in bitterness.

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*For further information on invasive species go to our website: www.oasiss.ca or contact the Program Coordinator for the Okanagan-Similkameen, Lisa Scott, at 250-404-0115 or email her at oasiss@shaw.ca*

# Proper Disposal of Invasive Plants

***By Lisa Scott***

One of the most common questions I am asked is how to properly dispose of invasive plants. This answer is much more simplified if plants are controlled before they set seed.

Knowing how a particular plant reproduces indicates its method of spread and helps determine the appropriate disposal method. Most are spread by seed and are dispersed by wind, water, animals or people. Some reproduce by vegetative means from pieces of stems or roots forming new plants. Others spread through both seed and vegetative means. Some plants continue to grow, flower and set seed even after pulling or cutting. Seeds can remain viable in the ground for many years. If the plant has flowers or

seeds, place the flowers and seeds in a heavy plastic bag “head first” at the weeding site and transport to the disposal site.

Bagging (also known as solarization) is a suitable technique for plants with softer tissue. Use heavy black or clear plastic bags (contractor grade), making sure that no parts of the plants poke through. Allow the bags to sit in the sun for several weeks and on dark pavement for the best effect.

Tarping and drying is another method that can be effective if done correctly. Plant material should be piled on a sheet of plastic and covered with a tarp, fastening the tarp to the ground and monitoring it for escapes. Let the material dry for several weeks, or until it is clearly non-viable.

On some properties, burying plant material may be an option. This is risky, but can be done with watchful diligence. Check with me before trying this technique, as some species require fairly deep burial. Japanese knotweed, for example, must be buried at depths of 2 metres. Other species, such as puncturevine, only require burial of 15-20 cm.

Probably the most commonly used disposal technique is composting. However, composting of invasive plants must be done with extreme care. Some aggressive plants can take root in compost. Species such as knotweed, morning glory (bindweed), sheep sorrel, ivy, several kinds of grasses, and many other plants can re-sprout from their roots or stems in the compost pile. Do not compost any invasives unless you can be sure there is no viable (living) plant material left. Use one of the above techniques to render the plants non-viable before composting. Keep this in mind as you dispose of the annual plants in your planters and hanging baskets later this fall. Improper disposal of garden waste can result in undesirable ornamental plants moving into natural areas or parks adjacent to your property.

Closely examine plants before composting and avoid composting seeds. The majority of composting practices and processes often do not reach and maintain the temperatures needed to assure the destruction of all viable seeds; this is particularly the case with backyard composts. A study by Agriculture Canada indicated that some species of weeds, including wild mustard and stork’s-bill, were killed early in the composting process, with the temperature held at just 39 degrees Celsius for a week – a fairly low temperature for compost piles, which should be generating temperatures of 55-60 degrees Celsius. However, a graduate student in Washington illustrated that temperatures in excess of 100 degrees Celsius were required to effectively destroy the seeds of Dalmatian toadflax.

Or better yet, any mature invasive plants with seeds should be carefully bagged or loaded into the back of a truck (covered with a tarp or canopy), and disposed of at the landfill. Be sure to inform the landfill operator that you have invasive plants and not simply yard waste, to ensure that your weeds are disposed of in the proper location. And if you have curbside pick up, do not include any invasive plants with your yard waste.

# Similkameen River Dam Forum

If you have **????Questions ????** be sure to attend the Forum on June 5th 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. At the Seniors Center on Angela St.. Guest Speakers will be:

**KEN FARQUHARSON**, ELDER FOR PARKS, OUTDOOR RECREATION COUNCIL OF BC, COMMITTEE ON ENDANGERED RIVERS
**LEE MCFADYEN**, ENVIRONMENTALIST, ACTIVIST, ORCHARDIST, OKANAGAN RESTORATION RIVER INITIATIVE
**TRACEY WAKEGIJIG LAWLOR**, LOWER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR

## VFFN Speakers List for May to September

Joann Gabriel ( 295-3361)
Speakers committee

May 13 - Jessica Hobden - Invasive plant species
June 10 - Lauren Macfarland - Lewis Woodpecker
Sept. 9 - Bruce Archibald – Fossils
Any questions - please phone Joann.

Photo Collage Quiz Answers
Left to Right
1.Dodecatheon (Shooting Stars) 2. Myra –Trapping hummingbirds , 3. Red Columbine
4. Canoe with mystery person 5. Calypso Bulbosa at Allenby,
6. Frittiloria, Delphinium, dodecatheon and sage Buttercups picture taken in John's Creek alpine
7. Fisherwomen Mia and Charlotte.

**VFFN Executive February 2013 – January 2014**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| President | Jean Turner | 0878 |
| Vice President | Charles Weber | 6419 |
| Past President | Cathie Yingling | 4802 |
| Secretary | Joan Kelly | 7743 |
| Treasurer | Ida Larson | 6419 |
| BC Nature Directors | Trish Reid (Coordinator) | 6002 |
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| Directors | Peter Antonik, Trish Reid, Madelon Schouten, Janis Wright | |
| | Joann Gabriel, Cathie Yingling, Anthea Pugliese, Joan Kelly | |
| | Jean Turner, Ida Larson, Trish Reid, and Doug Rebagliati (Director at large) | |
| Evening Programs | Anthea Pugliese (Coordinator) | 6821 |
| | Joann Gabriel | 3361 |
| Field Trips | Peter Antonick (Coordinator) | 3640 |
| | Thea Adamo | 0162 |
| | Janis Wright | 7560 |
| Historian | Joan Kelly | 7743 |
| Memberships/Publicity/Communication | | |
| | Janis Wright | 7560 |
| Newsletter | June Hope | 3524 |
| Social Convener | Joan Kelly | 7743 |
| Swan Lake Committee | Madelon Schouten (Chair) | 7078 |


"Know nature and keep it worth knowing."

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION--THE VERMILION FORKS FIELD NATURALIST SOCIETY**

I, **the undersigned, apply for membership in the Vermilion Forks Field Naturalist Society (The Naturalists) and acknowledge that I am aware of the risks inherent in participating in the activities of the society, and do hereby, in consideration of this membership, for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify the Naturalists, their members, directors, officers, trip leaders, agents or representatives from and against all claims, actions, costs, expenses and demands by reason of any damage, loss, death, injury, disability or psychosis arising out of or in any connection with my participation in these activities, notwithstanding that the same may have been contributed to by the negligence of the Naturalists. I (we) accept the terms of this release from liability. I (we) are 19 years or older.**

**Date** _____

**Signature(s)** _____

**Please print name(s) in full**

_____

*Box Number* _____*City* _____ *Postal Code*_____

**Phone Number** _____ **Enclosed are $** _____

**E-mail Address**

_____

**Student Membership is $10.00 Single Adult Membership is $25.00 Family Membership is $35.00**

**Fees may be mailed to Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists Box 2074 Princeton, B.C. V0X 1W0**

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